Merethe Drønnen

Positive Leadership

Using Positive Psychology for a Better Workplace Culture

 Springer

Management, Change, Strategy and Positive Leadership

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Preface

This book is written for you who are in charge of leading people in one way or another. You want more knowledge about how to exercise your leadership in a way that makes employees more engaged at work, and at the same time you are looking for techniques to increase your company's results. These are namely two sides of the same coin.

If managers understand the human mechanisms about what creates motivation, and which psychological criteria make peoples' performance optimal, they can create win-win situations in the workplace for both employees and management.

Throughout the book, the readers will see that this is all about simple things, and by taking small steps one can actually reverse destructive patterns in a work environment.

The book is rooted in the science of positive psychology, as well as motivational, behavioural and organizational science, and gives the reader insight into the latest research results pertaining to those areas.

In the nearly 20 years that I have been a leader, human resource manager, pedagogical-psychological advisor, and associate professor, I have experienced that leadership first and foremost is about simple things, and that one must understand human mechanisms of behaviour to lead people.

The leadership of large reputable companies such as Microsoft, Disney and Google have all understood this, and have implemented positive psychology techniques in their organizations.

Successful leaders know that organizations can only achieve increased performance through their employees. In this book, the reader gets suggestions for simple techniques on how to do just that. Best wishes on implementing them in your organization!

Tromsø, Norway   Merethe Drønnen

Leadership is lifting a person's vision to higher sights, the raising of a person's performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond its normal limitations

Peter Drucker

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About the Author

Merethe Drønnen PhD, is Associate Professor II in the School of Business and Economics at The Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø, Norway, and managing director of Positive Change International. She has worked for 20 years as a personnel manager, pedagogical-psychological advisor, consultant, team leader and associate professor. She has been keynote speaker at large international conferences in positive psychology, and is a renowned speaker and seminar leader within leadership, positive psychology and motivation. Her work has appeared in the news media, radio interviews and in magazines.

Chapter 1
Introduction

Do you want employees that are engaged and productive?

Do you want to know how you as a leader can create a positive culture that fosters work engagement and well-being, increases production, develops teams and increases inner motivation for your employees?

Did you know that new research has shown that organizations that have implemented positive psychology techniques have employees with higher well-being and higher work engagement? And that such organizations have increased their productivity, decreased their turnover and reduced sick leave? For instance, do research show that companies that scored in the top quartile of the engagement-scale were 17% more productive and 21% more profitable than those in the lowest quartile? (Gallup 2017).

So what is the key and what can you as a leader do to concretely achieve such results?

Positive psychology is a research-based knowledge about what human beings do when we function optimal, are motivated, perform at our best, thrive and achieve desired results. In short, leadership is about motivating people to act so that leaders and employees together can pull the load to achieve collective goals in the organization.

According to governmental laws in most countries, companies must ensure that employees have good psychosocial working environments that promote well-being and good health. Many techniques in positive psychology can contribute to a better psychosocial work environment and give greater health benefits for employees.

The key is to gain knowledge about what triggers individuals and teams to perform optimally, and what make employees walk in the same direction to achieve their company's goals. It's about how you as a leader can release the human capital – the potential of your employees.

In this book, you will gain knowledge based on recent research from positive psychology and leadership. You will learn how to facilitate such a culture in your workplace, optimize performance and productivity, increase work engagement and

well-being, with the side effects of also lowering sickness absence and lowering turnover. This knowledge is anchored in scientific research; which means it has been proven to work, with verifiable and legitimate results.

In the book, we go through different aspects of the leadership role and the leader's influence. Leadership is, among other things, about setting and achieving the organization's goals and inspiring and motivating for performance. It is about being able to communicate messages both externally and internally in the organization, in such a way that one achieves positive interaction. Leadership is also about relationships and building teams.

The new generation that has entered work life in the last decade is different from previous generations. They are more driven by the desire to have jobs that bring meaning, as well as having influence in their own work tasks and workplaces. Whereas previous generations were happy just to have a job to go to – where the gold watch after 30 years of service was enough incentive – younger generations are concerned with the meaning of the job and the opportunity to positively influence with their own ideas, solutions and creativity.

Today, many leaders base their motivational leadership on incentive systems and compensations, although research shows that this is a system that does not work in the long run. In order to motivate employees over time, managers must understand what lies behind increased motivation and engagement in the workplace. A leader must initiate action and exercise his/her leadership in such a way that others want to follow their leadership. This requires knowledge and competence in more fields than just the purely professional field.

The book thoroughly reviews the new popular positive psychology and puts it in a management context. By the way, did you know that the introductory course in positive psychology has been the most popular course at Harvard University ever, and that positive psychology is gaining momentum in popularity around the world?

Positive psychology techniques can be used in many arenas, such as for individuals, in mental training, in coaching, teams, leadership and in organizational development, in schools and so on. Positive psychology is a new way of looking at challenges and potentials. In the leadership role, you can, for example, apply this knowledge directly to your employees, when you put together and lead teams, in various measures for the work environment, in the development of the organization and in your strategic and operational management.

In the book, results from scientific research are transformed into concrete advice and techniques that can quickly be implemented. It is not the authors' intention that the reader must follow the book slavishly. The reader can choose certain techniques and interventions that suit their own workplace, based on needs and desires.

How This Book Is Structured

In the first chapter, the reader gets an introduction to what positive psychology is, and in which areas a leader can choose to use it in the workplace: in teams, leadership, work environment and organizational development processes. Chapter 3 presents scientific facts and research on positive psychology in the workplace. Here you will find examples of what it actually costs a company in dollars and cents to have disengaged employees, how implementing positive psychology techniques affects sick leave and turnover as well as scientific evidence that the health of employees is affected. Chapter 4 deals with the leadership role and how a leader can use his or her opportunities to influence the environment in the workplace in a good way with the help of positive psychology.

The theory of positive psychology used in leadership, called positive leadership, is presented with ten elements in Chap. 5. Here is where the term MEGA IMPACT comes in, where each of the letters represents one of the elements. These ten elements are further described in the rest of the chapters of the book, which are divided into three main parts. Chapter 6 deals with factors in the manager himself, Chap. 7 deals with the manager's tasks, and Chap. 8 deals with the results a manager can expect to achieve by introducing positive psychology in the workplace.

The content of Chap. 6 has the goal to make leaders aware of factors that influence people to think the way they do, how one can become aware of these thoughts and how to change them. Here the reader becomes familiar with the concepts of growth-mindset or growth-perspective and fixed-mindset or fixed-perspective. Furthermore, the chapter presents how authentic leadership provides increased creativity and motivation and higher levels of performance among employees.

Chapter 7 presents positive leadership through a leader's various leadership tasks. One subject is about the manager's job of leading the employees to work towards given company goals. The readers also get recommendations of different analysis tools that can be used in organizational development. An important leadership task is to inspire and motivate; and how a leader motivates, how the leader is a carrier of culture and how he/she builds attitudes are discussed here. The chapter also presents how science has shown that positive communication is linked to higher performance and how our words create our reality. Furthermore, we look at the concept of meaning and how employees that find meaning in the workplace perform better. At the end of the chapter, the reader gets suggestions on how a leader effectively can build good teams and relationships in the workplace.

Chapter 8 deals with the results of positive psychology for employees. Here a description of what is called "flow" in the workplace is presented, and how increasing the engagement in the workplace is worth its weight in gold for the company. Furthermore, advice is given on how managers can make employees perform better. Research-based results on the use of employees' strengths in the workplace is also presented, and the reader becomes familiar with the concept of Appreciative Inquiry, which is an organizational development process within positive psychology. Throughout the book, the reader receives concrete suggestions for interventions and techniques from psychology that he/she can use in his/her own workplace.

Positive Psychology-Concepts

The concepts of *flourish*, *thrive* and *mindset* are much used in the field of positive psychology.

"Flourish" means to grow, prosper, increase and bear fruit. The term "thrive" is related to flourish and means to prosper, grow, thrive, develop well, dynamically and prosperously.

The word "mindset" means something more than a mindset, as it also includes having a mental attitude.

The concepts of *growth* and *fixed mindset* are used in the book. A fixed mindset is a mindset where people believe that their own and others' basic qualities – like talent or intelligence – are simply fixed traits, which cannot be changed. A growth-mindset is a mindset where people believe that with effort they can substantially change their personality, way of acting and intelligence.

The terms leader and manager are used intertwined throughout this book, as positive leadership can be used both by those in leadership roles and in management roles.

Chapter 2
What Is Positive Psychology, and Why Shall We Use It in the Workplace?

> *The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things.*
> *He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things.*
>
> Ronald Reagan

Abstract What is this new science of positive psychology really about, and how can we – and why should we – apply it in the workplace? What are the characteristics of organizations and teams that have highly motivated employees scoring high in well-being and perform at their best? And what are some of the techniques that successful businesses like Google, Disney and Microsoft are using to build and develop their work cultures?

The science of positive psychology gives the reader knowledge about how to identify and implement factors that contribute to positive cultural transformation and increased performance at work.

This first chapter starts with presenting the foundations of positive psychology and sets it into the organizational scene. The focus is on teams, work culture, leadership and organizational development. Positive psychology is thereafter presented and compared with some of the existing organizational and motivational theories and put into the big picture of organizational theories. Results and examples from Google, Disney and Microsoft are presented.

Positive psychology is a relatively new popular science about how people and organizations can function optimally. It identifies factors that contribute to positive transformation and increased performance in the workplace. What conditions must be present in a work environment to get people to perform at their best? What does it take for employees to thrive and be highly motivated in everyday work?

Is there a methodology that allows managers to make it easier for both organization and employees to feel that they are winning? Something that provides increased well-being and happiness for the employee and increases the bottom line results for the organization?

Yes. Positive psychology practiced through leadership is the answer.

Companies that have introduced positive psychology principles have had a high return on investment (ROI). Research has shown that working groups that have worked with positive psychology interventions have increased sales by 10% and

profits by 14%. Happy and satisfied employees are 31% more productive and as much as 300% more creative.

Research from Gallup have shown that as many as 80% of the global workforce produce 31% less than what they are capable of. In these numbers, there is a great potential for economic growth in companies, which with the right action from the management can pay off.

Satisfied and committed employees give increased bottom line results. More figures and concrete research results from organizations that have implemented positive psychology in the workplace can be found in Chap. 3.

From a workplace perspective, positive psychology is about what increases work engagement, well-being and productivity. It is also about physiological and emotional benefits, about better relationships and an improved work environment. All this is rooted in and based on empirical evidence; that is, knowledge that has been tested through scientific methods in recent research.

This is all about knowledge that, if implemented, creates win–win situations for managers, organization and employees.

Techniques from positive psychology can be used in developing the work environment, leadership development, organizational development and team development.

> Positive psychology is the scientific study of what activates the individual, organizations and society to "thrive", which means to flourish, have progress, grow, thrive, develop well, dynamically and successfully. (Definition pos.psych.– International Positive Psychology Association – IPPA 2004. Def. thrive – Merethe Drønnen 2019.)

The fact that positive psychology is rooted in science means that scientific methods have been used to test and prove that it works. It thus differs from theories, which are thoughts and ideas about different topics, and it differs from philosophies and schools of thought, in that it has been researched using scientific methods in a university or college environment. Thus, positive psychology has been established as a science.

Gable & Haidt defined positive psychology as "The study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups and institutions" (Gable and Haidt 2005). Flourishing is a term in positive psychology which means to flourish, grow, make progress, increase and bear fruit.

Positive psychology.org includes a value system in their overall description in which they believe positive psychology is rooted in. They start by defining positive psychology as "the scientific study of forces that put the individual and society in a state of thrive". And then they continue to say that "the field is based on the belief that people want to live meaningful lives, cultivate the best in themselves and improve their experiences of love, work and play." (http://www.positivepsychology.org/). The author of this book also shares this view.

In the overall literature that positive psychology embraces, one can recognize research from several known psychological areas, such as motivational theories and the study of emotions, but it was in 1998 that professor Martin Seligman, who was the then president of the American Psychological Association (APA), established

positive psychology as a science. After some holiday meetings with Professor M. Csikszentmihalyi and a few revelatory moments in the garden together with his daughter Nikki (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000), Seligman described he begun to reflect on the fact that psychology at that time actually was a discipline that had the main focus on describing and healing mental diseases and difficulties. He missed something important and saw a need to expand the psychological perspective to also include research on how to help people live more productive and rewarding lives, and to study the factors that must be present in peoples' lives in order to achieve this.

He desired to expand the perspective in psychology to also embrace research that looked at criteria for positive functioning in humans, hence the name positive psychology.

Seligman then used his position as head of the APA to put together a group of researchers to conceptualize and start the first official research on positive psychology. Thus, the Positive Psychology Steering Committee was established. It consisted of the members Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Ed Diener, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Chris Peterson and George Vaillant.

The next step was the establishment of the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the first conference, the Positive Psychology Summit, was held in Washington D.C. in 2002 with 200 psychologists from 20 different countries.

From this beginning, since the 1980s, new science has emerged about positive strengths, positive emotions, learned optimism, executive leadership, organizational development models, coaching and positive psychology used in the school sector, and the subject areas are constantly expanding. The positive psychology field is thus a completely new science that is still in its infancy compared to the other psychological disciplines. More research and new knowledge are constantly being developed, which will help to establish positive psychology as a field. Empirical research has now shown that managers who have implemented positive psychology techniques in their workplace produce results that go beyond normal or expected work performance.

Traditional Psychology Versus Positive Psychology

Developments in the field of psychology are related to world history in general. After World War II, there was greater awareness around the world about the subjects of disease and pathology. This awareness affected many arenas, including science and also the field of psychology. Research in psychology had evolved around difficulties and disorders in the human mind. The research in psychology at that time had much of the focus on mental illness and problems, why and what made people fail and so on.

This type of research is both necessary and important for gaining knowledge about how the human mind works and functions. Important to say about positive psychology is that it is not intended to replace, but to supplement, traditional psychology. It is not either-or, but both-and.
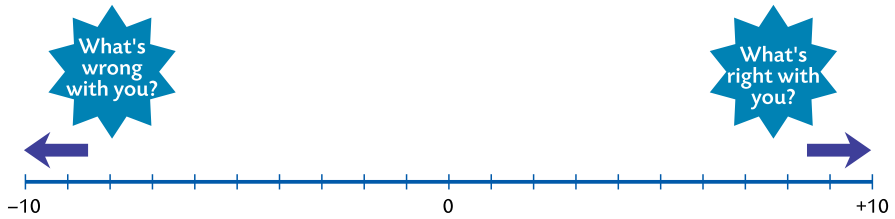
Fig. 2.1 The main question in traditional versus positive psychology

Since then, researchers all over the world, and from many different disciplines, have increasingly researched various elements within the umbrella term positive psychology. Positive psychology should provide answers to questions such as:

- What are the factors that make individuals and organizations function optimally and perform their best in the workplace?
- What causes the employees to find motivation and engagement?
- Which factors do we find in organizations that have satisfied employees that thrive, have less sick leaves and lower turnovers?
- Which criteria can be found in organizations that work well, deliver good results and where employees are efficient and committed to the company doing well?
- Which factors differentiate companies that achieve such results from others?

In the new positive psychology, we shift our attention from examining our weaknesses and limitations to looking at what our strengths and potentials are. Instead of asking "why do these individuals or the organization fail?", we ask "what is the reason why some individuals and some organizations work well and deliver good results despite challenging and/or difficult circumstances?" See Fig. 2.1.

It is about shifting the focus from examining "what is wrong with us" to "what is good with us". What are our strengths, and how can we reach the potential we have in individuals, in teams and in organizations. What are the factors that are bringing out the good emotions, motivation, engagement, joy, satisfaction, feeling of mastery and the general good in human beings and relationships?

What Do Google, Disney and Microsoft Have in Common?

Mutual for all these companies is that the leaderships in these companies have implemented elements of positive psychology in one form or another. They have all wagered on the employees and acquired knowledge and facilitated for optimal motivation and work performance in their organizations. In other words, they have wagered to find and develop the human capital in the company.

Satya Nadella is the name of the leader taking over the top leadership role in Microsoft in 2014. By 2018, Microsoft under his leadership had tripled the value of the company. Many believe that Microsoft could be the first company with a value

of one trillion dollars. One of the things Nadella did when he took over the company was to change the focus and emphasized on building the corporate culture. His philosophy was among other to develop a growth-mindset in everyone throughout the organization.

Nadella videoblogs every single month to Microsoft's employees all around the world about the importance of having a growth-promoting culture. The growth-based culture has become one of the cornerstones of the company after Nadella took over as the CEO of Microsoft. In Chap. 7, you can read more about how to build growth-based culture in teams.

Another company, Disney, has for long focused on establishing a culture of recognition in its organization. The leadership has established #castcompliment to highlight positive actions of and to the employees in the organization. Google has done exactly the same, and Lazio Bock, senior president of People Operation at Google, says that "public recognition is one of the most effective and least used management tools."

Google also researched its own organization to find which factors made its own teams more effective, and the conclusion was that it was all about investing in the human capital of the company. In Chap. 7 you can read more about this and about recognition as a leadership tool.

Successful companies take employees seriously and create win–win situations for employees, management and organization.

Successful leaders know that organizations can only achieve improved results through wagering on their employees.

Positive Psychology Used in Team-, Leader-, Work Environment- and Organizational Development

Positive psychology is thus a perspective or a set of glasses through which we can see psychological and organizational processes and human potential. In addition, it is about looking for opportunities, potential, strengths and solutions in both individuals and organizations. It is important to emphasize that this perspective expands traditional psychology, it does not replace it. That is, we need both.

It is based on a belief and a basic view that people want to live meaningful and rewarding lives, that humans have a desire to find and cultivate the best in us, and that we want to use our potential to a greater extent.

It is also about building and using our own strengths and seeing and appreciating the strengths and contributions of others. It is about good communication, meaning and how to build a healthy, engaging and positive culture in the workplace.

Many people want this, but they do not quite know how and where to start. This book will give the reader techniques on how to do this in practice.

An organization's success is closely linked to the employees' efforts and motivation. Employees who are committed and feel a sense of belonging to the

organization give the company important competitive advantages in the form of higher productivity.

Companies that want to expand or compete should focus on what makes employees engaged. Through techniques from positive psychology, one can create motivation for work and greater belonging to the workplace.

Positive Psychology in the Light of Existing Organizational Theory

Correlations have been found between employees' perceived sense of belonging to the organization and satisfaction with the job. Employees who feel a sense of belonging to the job have established emotional ties and identification with the organization. Positive psychology at the workplace deals a lot with emotions and a sense of belonging at work. Thus, positive psychology is linked to research on organizational commitment.

Organizational research have included research on, among other things, attitudes, motivation, job satisfaction, job engagement and organizational commitment.

Positive psychology at work deals with attitudes towards colleagues, management and organization. Research on motivation in the organizational context have addressed criteria determining employees' motivation for work, as well as what the triggers are. Positive psychology contributes to its research on what makes people perform optimally, and what conditions must be present.

Organizational commitment has been linked to both absenteeism and turnover in the labor force. Employees who feel valued at work, to a greater extent, want to remain in their workplace and make an effort.

Perceived Support, Belonging and Work Effort

Many organizational theories and organizational research have looked at connections between perceived support, belonging and work effort.

Woo and Chelladurai (2012) researched employees' attitudes towards the job when it came to perceived support from management, colleagues and the organization. They found that it was crucial for the employees to feel supported in order to feel a sense of belonging to the organization. Feelings of belonging to the organization had a very positive effect on work effort. At the same time, the feeling of belonging meant that there was less risk of quitting the job.

In other words, managers who want increased work effort from their employees can achieve this by giving them support. This is an important management task, which will also prevent employees leaving the workplace prematurely.

These and several other results clearly show that there is a need for managers to have knowledge of what influences employees, work culture and organization in a positive direction. Positive psychology techniques for leaders can be a start.

As mentioned, there are also many research results from positive psychology that can be used in a number of areas in the workplace. We will take a closer look at some of them, but first we will look at some of the research on positive emotions.

Positive Emotions

Much of the research within positive psychology includes studies of positive emotions. We are emotional beings and not machines. We react with emotions – positive and negative. Common to the emotions is that they are reactions to different experiences and people we meet in everyday life, as well as reaction patterns from previous experiences and experiences throughout life.

Examples of positive emotions are feelings of joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, fun, inspiration, awe and love. Take a moment now and reflect on when *you* last felt some of these emotions in the workplace.

Within the field of positive psychology, some of the research focuses on what can be done to increase positive emotions at the workplace. More positive emotions at work will in turn bring a number of positive effects to the employees, to the work environment and in turn for the organization. Even the employees' families or his/her surroundings might also receive some of the positive effects.

We know today that positive emotions expand people's attention and thinking and enable us to use several higher-level thought processes. These processes expand the mind and our mental capacity (Fredrickson 2001; Cohn and Fredrickson 2009).

In addition, can positive emotions produce relational intimacy between people, be it in the workplace or in other relationships? Positive emotions also have the ability to erase traces of negative emotions, and they can also increase our resilience. In short, positive emotions and focusing on strengths will be an important part of positive psychology in most arenas.

> Resilience is a kind of psychological strength which includes factors related to maintaining mental strength and health despite stress and strain (snl.no).

Therefore, working to create arenas where one can build positive emotions in the workplace will bring great benefits, both for employees' personal lives and for the company. Satisfied employees who thrive in the workplace are worth their weight in gold to the employer.

Positive Psychology Used in Teams

Scientific studies have shown that there are connections between high- and low-performing teams and how often they felt positive emotions in the workplace.

There is a lot of research on this, but here we only look at some excerpts from the most well-known research about teams and positive psychology. The Chilean psychologist Marcial Losada has done a lot of research on teams and the functioning of teams. One of his major research projects was done together with psychology professor Barbara Fredrickson, and this research resulted in his Losada Line Model, also called the positivity ratio or Gottman ratio.

The Losada Line model says that for a team to perform optimally, the members should receive or experience an average of three positives for every negative feedback/experiences.

The difference between teams that flourish and those that languish is three positives for each negative.

Losada also researched positive emotions according to team performance. He wanted to find factors that laid the foundation for higher performance in an organization. In his research, he divided the teams into two main groups: the high-performing and the low-performing.

The high-performing teams were defined as those who scored higher on (a) profit, (b) customer satisfaction and (c) 360-degree feedback scores. Some of the readers are familiar with 360-degree feedback scores in work life. It is about scoring feedback from people above, next to and below in the organization. In concrete terms, this means superiors', colleagues' and subordinates' evaluations of the teams.

The low-performing teams were the ones who scored low on these same factors.

Losada's research showed that the high-performing teams had a 6: 1 ratio of positive emotions; that is, six positive emotions for each negative, while the low-performing teams had a ratio of 1: 1; that is, one positive emotion for every negative (Losada and Heaphy 2004).

Thus a connection was found between teams that produce well according to (a) creating earnings for the company, (b) satisfied customers, managers and employees and (c) degree of positive emotions in the workplace.

When we know that we can learn to increase positive emotions both in our own and in our company's life, it turns out to be an interesting fact for those leaders wanting larger earnings for the company and more satisfied customers, managers and employees.

This is much of the core of positive psychology. You can read more about positive psychology and teams in Chap. 7.

Positive Psychology Used in Developing the Work Environment

International Labour Standards on Occupational Safety and Health, for instance, the ILO Constitution, European Agency for safety and health and work (EU-OSHA), and the United Nation's sustainable development goals sets forth the principles that workers must be protected from sickness, disease and injury arising from their employment. Most Western countries, for instance, Norway, have laws to protect the employees. The Norwegian Work Environment Law, which is similar to many other western world countries' laws, says that "the work environment, both the physical and psychosocial work environments are to be fully secure and justifiable to all workers and shall secure the workers integrity and dignity, contact and communication with other workers in the company, hinder harassment and other improper strains, work-related stress and conflicts" (AML § 4–3).

The first point about integrity and dignity includes mutual respect for each other and the feeling of being able to contribute to the workplace in such a way that one is able to act in accordance with what oneself means is right and reasonable. Recognition of others and showing respect are some of the pillars in positive psychology and will definitely give contributions to these points in the international laws.

Likewise can the point in the law about employees' right to have contact and communication with other workers, secure that the workers have contact with and receive social support both from leaders and colleagues, be taken care of via some positive psychology techniques. Example of a couple of positive psychology techniques that can be used at the workplace is for instance collegeagues looking for and recognizing each others' strengths. Or recognizing communication styles in the workplace and continue to improve the communication patterns at work. These techniques, among many presented in the book, will automatically lay a foundation for social support, good contact and communication, and in this way fullfill the law's goal in this area.

The law's regulation about hindering harassment and other improper behavior can be achieved by laying the foundation with positive psychology techniques that embrace a "collective us", where the team is gathered as one. Likewise will the law's point about the employers duty to protect the workers against violence, threats and unreasonable strains be prevented through such techniques.

Last, but not the least, can these laws' regulations about implementing action to hinder work-related stress and conflicts be reached directly through many of the techniques from positive psychology? Chapter 3 encompasses concrete health-related positive consequences from the use of positive psychology at the workplace. Among other results, scientific research has shown that these techniques have large positive effects on blood pressure, inflammation levels, stress and diseases among the workers.

A leader can use positive psychology techniques with a specific goal of increasing work engagement and well-being in the workplace. One can introduce positive psychology techniques individually in one or more arenas or levels of an organization. Examples could be establishing a post focusing on positive psychology in one way or another at the weekly meeting or sending weekly reminders through the internet or e-mail. One can arrange specific days, seminars or kick-offs where the

focus is on the development of the work environment using positive psychology techniques. Or one can choose to work systematically with the entire organization as a whole, and thus add positive psychology to the organization's routines and system, and anchor it in the workplace at all levels.

Here, choices and desires set the standard when it comes to how large an arena one wants to implement it into or the scope of the measure one wants to implement. One can implement measures such as a major organizational development process or just establish some new positive routines.

An example of the latter can be to focus on the way one talks to one another inside the workplace, in other words, communication. Another area one can choose to focus on is on how to create more meaning in the workplace. Or one can choose to work on how to motivate and inspire improved performance. One can choose to work on a team level or on a whole organization level. All of these topics mentioned here are discussed further in this book.

Positive Psychology Used in Leadership

Positive psychology in leadership is the main message of this book, and as mentioned in the previous section with the heading "Positive psychology used in developing the work environment", this is about how a person as a leader can create MEGA IMPACT in the workplace through his/her leadership role. The term MEGA IMPACT corresponds to ten important elements in positive leadership. The factors are grouped into three main categories: (1) factors in *the leader him/herself*, (2) factors *in the leadership tasks* and (3) the *results of* positive leadership on the employees in the organization.

As for the leader him/herself, he/she can work with his/her own mindset (**M**) and authenticity (**A**). In this book's definition of positive leadership, the leader's task is defined as building teams (**T**), inspiring (**I**), reaching goals (**G**), working to create a meaningful workplace (**M**) in addition to establishing and using good communication (**C**).

This will in turn build new attitudes (**A**) and lead to results in employees such as engagement (**E**) and increased performance (**P**).

As a leader you can create and use MEGA IMPACT in your positive leadership within your organization.

Positive Psychology Used in Organizational Development

Positive psychology in organizational development includes research, theories and practices from both existing and recent organizational theory. It is about research on the processes that take place within an organization, and the characteristics of organizations that use and do not use positive psychology.

There are several analytical tools and techniques for organizational development that can be used in positive psychology. The best known is the Appreciative Inquiry (AI). An entire chapter is devoted later in the book and will therefore be described in more detail there.

Another example of a widely used positive psychology analysis tool used in organizational development is the SOAR analysis. This analysis model can be quickly implemented in an organization, and it is related to a SWOT analysis.

In a SWOT analysis, strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O) and threats (T) in an organization are analysed. This analysis is a well-known and good strategic planning tool that is widely used in organizational development all around the world.

The term SOAR stands for strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results. SOAR is an analysis that many see as a continuation of the SWOT analysis, but in a positive psychology context. The SOAR analysis replaces the SWOT analysis's two factors – threats and weaknesses – with a strategic planning method based on an expansion of the factors' strengths and opportunities. In good positive psychology spirit, one focuses more on strengths and vision for the future than one does in a traditional SWOT analysis.

The SOAR analysis can be used as a supplement to other techniques in organizational development, for example, as a supplement to a PESTEL, Porter's Five Forces or stakeholder analysis or other analysis tools one might prefers to use.

The SOAR analysis is presented in more detail in Chap. 7. In the next chapter we will look at what the implementation of positive psychology in the workplace can specifically come to mean for the organization, the managers and the employees.

Chapter 3
Research Results from the Use of Positive Psychology in Organizations

If you fail to honor your people, they will fail to honor you.

Lao Tzu, founder of Taoism

Abstract There is growing evidence through numerous studies showing that using positive psychology in organizations can give back a high return on investment (ROI). In this chapter the reader will be taken through research that show how executing positive leadership positively can influence the employees' well-being, work engagement and work performance. Studies are being presented that links positive health effects to higher levels of positive emotions and positive practices at the workplace. We also look at how positive psychology interventions give higher scores at numerous dimensions important for companies; innovation, customer satisfaction, productivity, quality, creativity and even profit.

Ever since the research on positive psychology at the workplace began around the turn of the century, a number of research results have pointed out that it pays to invest in such techniques. In this chapter, we will look at research results showing that disengaged employees cost companies much in the form of reduced productivity, increased sickness absence and higher turnover rates. These have a negative influence on the bottom line and may adversely affect the company's competitive edge. In addition, it might also have an impact on the health of both the employees and the leaders. All of this can be very costly for a company.

Disengaged Employees Cost

Having disengaged employees can be costly.

Research has shown that disengaged employees were linked to a 37% higher absenteeism and as much as 18% lower productivity.

Furthermore, research from, amongst others, the Queens School of Business and the Gallup Organization show that companies with low-engaged employees had 16% lower profits (Seppala and Cameron 2015; Gallup 2017; Queens School of Business 2014).

Due to this, engaged employees can thereby also give the company financially profit, in addition to all the other positive consequences for both the employees and the company alike. Investing in positive psychology techniques in an organization will therefore provide a return on investment (ROI) that is quite high.

The Corporate Leadership Council researched strengths and leadership and found in its research that in units where the leader had had a conversation with an employee and focused on weaknesses and shortcomings in the work, the work performance of this employee was reduced by as much as 36.4%.

Furthermore, they found that after a manager had had a conversation with an employee and given feedback on the employee's strengths, work performance in this employee increased by as much as 26.8%.

What would *you* choose? For certain, managers must point out and guide an employee in a positive way if he/she is making direct mistakes and if there are significant shortcomings in the work. In doing this, the way of communicating the message is quite important. If a leader wants to increase the employee's engagement, start looking for his/her strengths, good work, good input, explain the importance of his or her contribution as a whole and make the person feel seen, heard and significant. And yes, then the leader will get the employee more active and involved in the work of his/her team. Doing this, the employee will automatically feel more valued, because you as the leader have genuinely acknowledged what that person stands for and how he/she contributes to the company. As a result it will bring out the employee's best performance in the workplace.

We all have a basic need to be seen, to contribute and to hear that we are an important part of a community. People are people and act and react in a human ways, with emotions and drive and with an inherent willingness to contribute positively to the communities we are part of. We all seek relationships, and we all seek positive feedback when we give in to something.

If a leader understands the psychology behind human actions, and what triggers performance, motivation and drive, the leader will get a lot of free goodwill in the workplace. He/she can also actually achieve results reflected in dollars for the company's profits or in the number of work tasks performed in the workplace. On the opposing side, not focusing on the employees will increase the risk of having employees that might resist working for mutual goals or are cooperative. In many cases, when an employee doesn't feel seen or heard, he/she can quietly protest by slowing down the pace of work.

The smartest thing a leader can do is to create fair systems for the distribution of goods and to make sure he/she sees all his/her employees and not discriminate between people. Equally important is to map and use the strengths of his/her employees, to let people be seen, heard and experience that what they do makes a difference in the workplace. Every employee and every company wants such leaders.

Research has shown that in units where the manager him/herself received strength-based feedback on his/her own role, the result was as much as 12.5% greater productivity for the whole of this leaders unit than in units where the managers did not receive this (The Center for American Progress).

Reduced Turnover

> When an employee quits, it costs the company about 20% of the annual salary to replace that employee (The Center for American Progress).

These are expenses and costs associated with recruitment, training of new employees, incorporation of routines and relationships with customers and colleagues, in addition to lower productivity for a period. The latter applies to both the employee who leaves and the new one who must have education and training in new work tasks.

Fortunately, this also works in reverse. Managers and companies that implement positive psychology techniques in their workplace can enjoy thriving employees that have a higher commitment to the work tasks and the workplace, which in turn gives even more positive effects.

In Fig. 3.1, we see nine factors of positive leadership that have a positive effect on a workplace. These factors are well-being and meaning, engagement, production, reduced absenteeism, reduced turnover, favourable health effects, fewer actively disengaged employees, increased profits and increased competitive advantage.

Positive leadership provides beneficial health effects for employees in addition to reducing active opposition. Research have shown that positive leadership increases profits for the company and thus also provides an increased competitive advantage.

This in turn leads to increased employee thriving and the feeling of the work having a greater meaning. This continues in a positive and self-reinforcing spiral. See illustration in Fig. 3.1 below.

Poor leadership, as illustrated in Fig. 3.2 below, can lead to less work engagement, lower productivity, higher absenteeism and higher turnover. It can also give negative health effects such as higher blood pressure and elevated cortisol levels in employees, in addition to active resistance (against management). These negative factors will again lead to weakened profits for the company and an overall weakened competitive advantage.

We will look at these factors more thoroughly in the coming sections.

Increased Work Engagement and Well-being

Gallup is a worldwide company that conducts international opinion polls and surveys. They regularly carry out studies and surveys of the global workforce and publish a report called "State of the Global Workplace". The report in 2011–2012 was based on surveys among almost 180 million workers from various organizations and industries and 142 countries, and the number of workers and countries participating in the survey is constantly increasing.

According to Gallup's 2017 edition of the State of the Global Workplace report, as many as 85% of all employees in the global workforce are either "not engaged" or "actively disengaged" in the workplace.
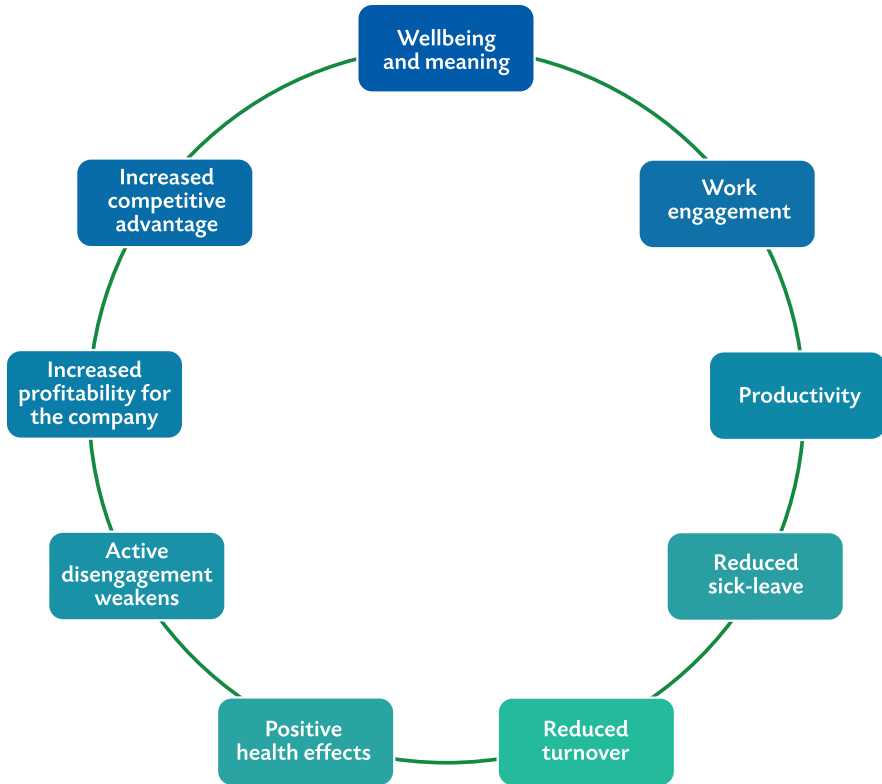
Fig. 3.1 Positive leadership at the workplace influences many essential factors

The majority of employees want to make a difference in their workplace, but no one has ever asked them to use their strengths or to contribute anything to create a better organization (Jim Harter, PhD).

According to Harter (2019), this means that worldwide one loses 7 trillion dollars as a result of lost productivity in the workplace. According to this survey, 18% of the global workforce is actively disengaged in their work and in their workplace, while 67% are "not engaged".

Gallup describes the latter group as the majority of employees in working life; they are not the worst performers, but they are indifferent towards the organization they work in. They give of their time to the organization in which they work, but they do not offer their best ideas or the best effort. According to Jim Harter, most of these people want to accomplish something in their workplace, but no one has ever asked them to use their strengths or to contribute to making the organization better.

Several similar research results point in the same direction. Among other things, the well-known professor of positive psychology Shawn Achor found similar results in his studies. He concluded that only 45% actually liked their job (Achor 2010).
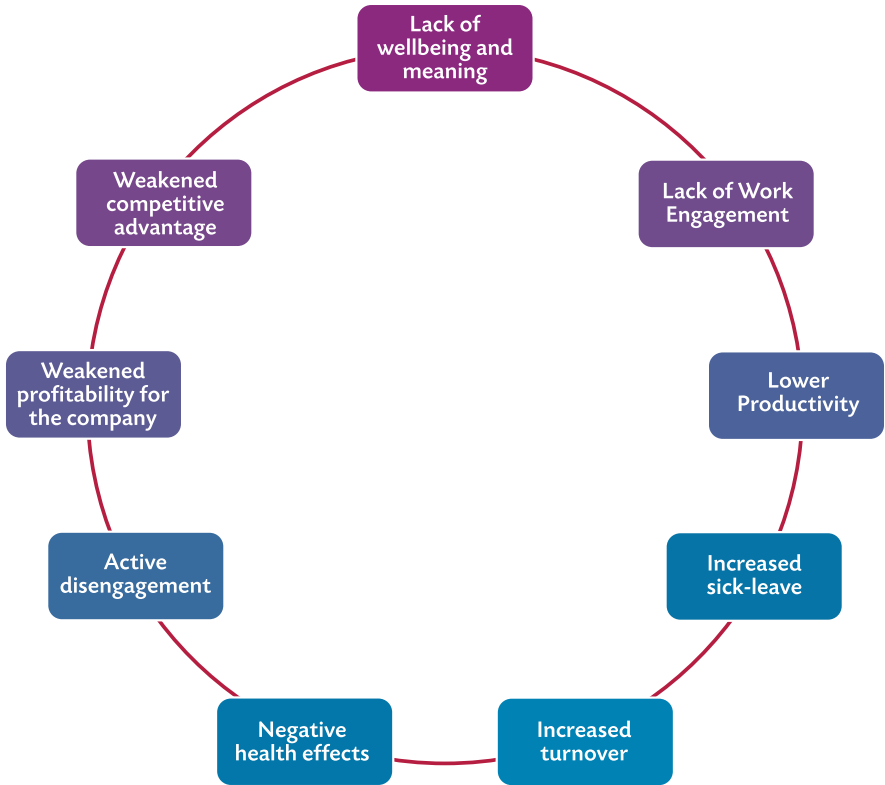
Fig. 3.2 Poor leadership at the workplace influences many essential factors in a negative degree

O'Donnell (2018) is a researcher that for 15 years has studied why people do not like their jobs. She claims that more than 70% of workers say they are not happy with their choice of job and career. She summed up the reasons for this in three points; one was that people are more concerned with impressing others and choosing jobs accordingly. The second point was that people are too preoccupied with external motivators such as money, benefits and so on. Results of research have many times shown that these things do not make us happy over time. One must rather focus on inner motivators, an inner driving force that persists over time. The third factor O'Donnell described was that the fear of going outside the comfort zone is great among most people. It is difficult and uncomfortable, and therefore people stay where they are, even if they are not happy with the work tasks they have (O'Donnell 2018).

What does this all mean for your workplace? Do you know employees who give of their time, but not of their best ideas or of their best work? Did the management in your company ever map out the employees' strengths and asked them to use them at the workplace?

Figures from Gallup show that 80% of the entire global workforce produces 31% less than they are capable of (Gallup 2013).

How this is reflected in dollars is seen in the illustration in the next section.

Correlations have also been found between work engagement and the concept of meaning at workplace. Finding meaning in the job has, through several research studies, proved to be a strong indication of work engagement (May et al. 2004). Several major studies have shown the connection and the predictive effect between these two variables.

> Harvard Business Review, a world-renowned magazine published by the renowned Harvard University in the United States, who publishes research from working life, conducted in 2013 a survey among 12,000 employees.
>
> The results from this survey showed that half of the respondents felt that their job had no meaning or any great significance. As many as half said that they could not relate to what the company was doing (Harvard Business Review 2013).

In Chap. 7, we will go deeper into the topic and look at the connection between meaning in the workplace and performance, motivation and productivity. Meaning in the workplace has, through scientific research, proved to be an important predictor of work engagement among employees, and it is therefore included as an important factor in the terminology positive leadership, as defined in this book. This is well worth noting for managers and employees with overall responsibility for others.

Increased Productivity and Bottom Line Results

If we take Gallup's research a step further, we can calculate in dollars and cents what a fall in productivity will cost companies. If we assume that Gallup's surveys and research are correct, then only 20% of the global workforce is actively engaged at work (Gallup 2013, 2017).

According to Gallup's State of the Global Workplace-report only 20% of the global workforce is actively engaged at the workplace (Gallup 2017).

This in turn means that 80% of the entire workforce produces 31% less than what they have the capacity for. We can turn this into a calculation and calculate the impact it can have on companies, regardless of company size. On average, the workforce of any company will potentially under-produce by 24%!

Converted into dollars and cents we get the following figures:

For $ 1 trillion companies, the production loss is $ 240 million.
For $ 100 million companies, the production loss is $ 24 million.
For US $ 10 million companies, the production loss is $ 2.4 million.

In other words, one will be able to receive a large return on investment (ROI) if one applies positive psychology techniques in the workplace.

> «The 2017 State of the Global Workplace»-report from Gallup's refers to research from 50.000 companies in 45 countries. This report refers among other to research results from workgroups receiving strength-based interventions. Meaning that these groups had used

positive psychology and worked with the use of the strengths of both employees and managers.

   In these groups the sale increased from 10% to 19%. Also the profits increased from as much as 14% to 29% compared to control groups (Gallup 2017).

In the report the Gallup Organization estimated that organizations working with strength-based leadership in the workplace can double their employee engagement and virtually eliminate active disengagement. Read more about how this can be achieved in Chap. 8.

Managers should make arrangements for employees to use their strengths to the greatest possible extent, because this creates win–win situations for both the company and the employee. This is an important key, but it often requires a fundamental change in the management perspective of many.

If we look more broadly at the science of positive psychology, for instance, the happiness research, there are results that point in the same direction. For example, the renowned psychology professor Sonja Lyubomirsky conducted a meta-analysis of 225 academic research articles on happiness in 2008.

   The analysis showed that happy employees were as much as 31% more productive, they were as much as 300% more creative and produced 37% more in sales! (Lyubomirsky 2008).

Cameron et al. (2004) conducted a survey including seven companies in the transport industry. They found that the more companies had implemented positive psychology interventions, the higher were the scores on six key dimensions: profit, productivity, quality, innovation, customer satisfaction and the number of years employees worked in the company. In other words, important key areas for most companies today.

Next, Cameron et al. extended the study to also include organizations in 16 different industries. Here, they examined large companies such as General Electric, National City Bank as well as hospitals, educational organizations and charities. They got the same results there too.

The results showed that organizations that implemented positive psychology interventions scored significantly higher and were more effective than organizations that did not. Many studies have shown similar results, and one can therefore say that positive leadership has an effect in all types of organizations (Cameron 2013).

Research have thereby shown that positive psychology interventions in the workplace have given higher scores on six important dimensions in the company: profit, productivity, quality, innovation, customer satisfaction and length of employment (Cameron et al. 2004).

Reduced Sickness Absence

Positive psychology in working life includes several types of techniques. One of them is, as previously mentioned, to work with strength-based interventions. Research have shown that in addition to the fact that in companies where employees

can use their strengths in their work have achieved increased bottom line results, through increased work engagement and productivity; organizations that implement the use of strengths in the workplace have also halved their turnover rate.

Another way to reduce absenteeism and turnover can be to work with the employees' cognitive attribution style. Scientific studies have shown that measures to change employees' cognitive attribution style have given companies a reduced turnover rate, in addition to increased productivity and increased well-being (Proudfoot et al. 2009). Cognitive attribution style is the way a person mentally explains various events. It is about training yourself to see things from other angles. For example, it could be training on learned optimism, a technique developed by professor in positive psychology Martin Seligman. It is about how we think, how we perceive something, the way we explain things that happen to and around us, and how we can change this.

Health Effects on the Employees

There is a lot of proof that introducing and exercising positive psychology practices in the workplace have positive health effects. Research results have, for example, shown that it influences on the employee's blood pressure, cortisol levels and inflammation levels, to name a few. We know that people who have high levels of cortisol over time are at greater risk of falling ill. We also know that an increased level of inflammation makes a difference in relation to developing serious illnesses.

If a leader facilitates for positive psychology practices in their workplace, positive emotions, work engagement and wellness will increase. The connection between positive affect and psychobiological processes has been established through research, among others by Dockray and Steptoe (2010).

Positive affect can be defined as «the emotions that reflect a state of positive engagement with the surroundings, such as happiness, joy, zest and satisfaction» (Tomkins 1963). Many research projects have found a connection between positive affect and positive psychological well-being on the one hand and positive health effects on the other, even in relation to life expectancy (Davidson et al. 2010; Kubzansky and Thurston 2007; Chida and Steptoe 2008).

There is also convincing proof that positive affect in various and functionally meaningful ways activates the neuroendocrine and autonomous nervous system, as well as the immune system in our bodies. Positive affect has, in scientific research, also been associated with changes in the number of cells in our immune system and how our immune system functions. Further research has shown that positive affect influences the antibody level in our blood, in other words the cells that work to recognize and remove bacteria, virus and disease in our bodies. In addition, positive affect influences how the body responds to antigens, and it also influences several other bodily reactions (Dockray and Steptoe 2010). How positive affect has influenced the cortisol levels, blood pressure and inflammation levels in the body can be seen in the following three figures, collected from the research of Bostock et al. 2011.

In Fig. 3.3 we can see a test group (lower curve) and a control group (upper curve). The straight line on the top left shows the cortisol levels from 2 to 9. At the "starting point", which is the beginning of the research, we can see that the two groups are more or less equal on the level of cortisol. The test group (lower curve) is the group that is exposed to positive practices, and the control group, the ones who are not exposed to positive practices, is on top.

Both the groups were then exposed to a stressful event and we can see how the curve of the cortisol levels rose most in the control group. The cortisol level continued to rise in the control group, also after the stressful event. In the other group, the cortisol levels of the group that received positive psychology practices were much lower and did not increase significantly as a result of the stressful event. In summary, one can see from the figures that those who had been trained in positive psychology practices and positive emotions, managed much better during stressful events than the control group – those who had not received training and practice in positive psychology techniques (Bostock et al. 2011).

In Fig. 3.4 we see differences in the blood pressure level between groups exposed to stress. One group had received training in positive psychology practices and the other had not. We can also see that there is a difference between these two groups. On the vertical line to the left in the figure, we see the blood pressure level (from low to high). On the horizontal line we see the starting point to the left, the stressful event in the middle and the recovery phase at the end of the line.
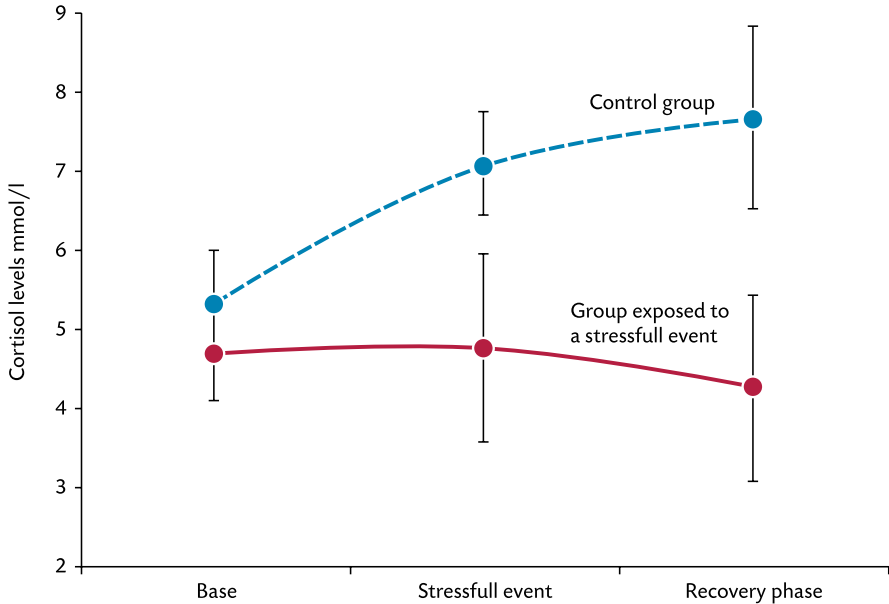
Fig. 3.3 Differences in cortisol levels between groups exposed to a stressful event – a comparison between high and low levels of positive emotions and positive practices .(Source: Bostock et al. 2011)

The figure shows us that there is a difference in the blood pressure level between the groups when the stressful event is over, where those who were exposed to positive psychological practices had a lower blood pressure than the control group. This speaks in favour of positive psychological practices influencing the blood pressure level of the employees, also after stressful events have passed.

Similar results have also shown that there are connections between positive practices and higher levels of positive emotions as well as levels of inflammation in the body. In workplaces where positive psychology practices were established, lower levels of inflammation were measured in the employees' bodies (Bostock et al. 2011). We know that lasting and high levels of inflammation can lead to the development of cancer and other diseases, so it is important to limit the influence of this.

The researchers Lac et al. (2012) looked at psychological damage (anxiety, depression and exhaustion) that occurred as a result of bullying in the workplace. They found, through their scientific examinations, significant differences in DHEA-levels in spit tests from those who were exposed to this compared to the control group, those who did not have psychological damage as the result of bullying in the workplace.

Checking the DHEA-levels (a type of hormone) in spit, appears to be a good way to measure chronic stress in the group that was exposed to psychological damage in the workplace. This and similar results show that psychological strain has physiological consequences. In the same way, positive psychological events in the workplace produce positive emotions and have positive biological consequences for the body.
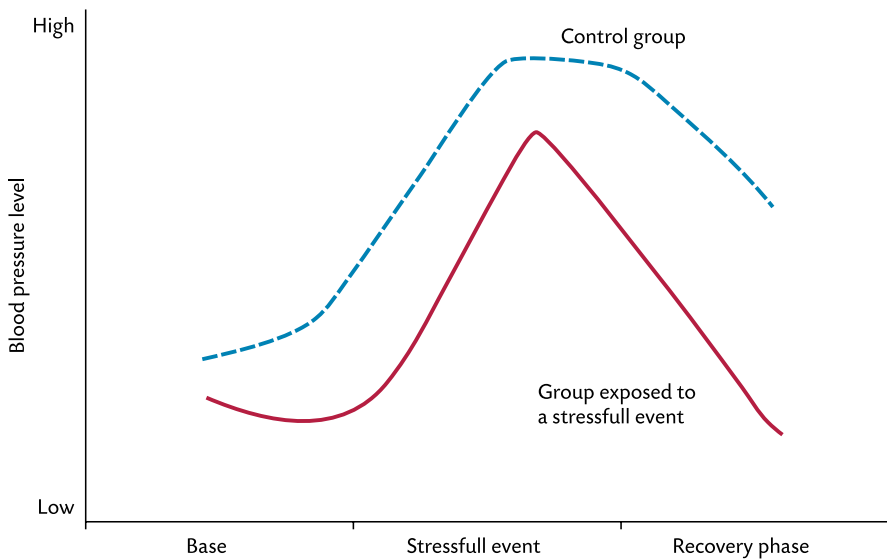
Fig. 3.4 Differences in blood pressure levels between groups exposed to stress. Comparison between high and low positive emotions and positive psychology practices. (Source: Bostock et al. 2011)

> A leader who uses positive psychology techniques in his/her leadership, can achieve great effects, also when it comes to their employees' health (Lac et al. 2012; Fredrickson 2009; Bostock et al. 2011 etc.).

Professor Barbara Fredrickson (2009) has done a lot of research on the relationship between positive emotions and biological reactions in human beings. She found, in her research, that positive emotions were associated with among other things – lower blood pressure, less pain, lower rates of depression, fewer colds, lower risk of disease and better sleep. Research results from different researchers around positive emotions and health have even shown that positive psychology practices that increase the level of positive emotions in turn can lead to a longer life expectancy.

As you now can now see, research have documented that through positive leadership; a leader who uses positive psychology in his/her leadership can actually achieve great effects when it comes to employees' health.

This can happen in several ways, but here the focus is on different techniques a leader can use to increase the level of work engagement in their employees. Being engaged releases positive emotions, internal motivation, creativity and flow, to mention a few. This creates a win–win situation for everyone involved.

PsyCap

The renowned researchers Fred Luthans and Carolyn Youssef developed a theory around the concept PsyCap – psychological capital. The concept of PsyCap is about the human/psychological capital in individuals, and thereby also about this capital within companies. The concept consists of the four elements of self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience.

PsyCap is defined by Luthans and Youssef as an individual's positive psychological developmental level and is characterized by:

1. Having self-efficacy or enough self-assurance to take on challenging tasks and put in the necessary effort to solve them
2. Deciding to have a positive attitude in order to succeed now and in the future (optimism)
3. Being able to persevere when working towards goals (hope) and, if necessary, adjust the road to the goal
4. Being able to endure, «bounce back» and get back up when experiencing problems and opposition – a form of resilience (Lopez and Snyder 2009)

PsyCap, is defined as an organization's psychological capital, and according to this theory it is based on interactions between the four positive states mentioned above.

A lot of research on PsyCap have already been carried out, and the researchers have developed a tool to help map out these four factors in companies. The researchers found in their studies that PsyCap was a better predicator of work performance and job satisfaction in the workplace than any of the four individual factors that constitute the term.

Luthans and Youssef also created their own training programme to equip companies to develop their own psychological capital. This training programme contains, for example, elements such as training employees and management to develop an optimistic explanatory style, learn how to speak positively about themselves and learn how to personally train and exercise inner control.

The researchers used tools from management literature within HR as the basis for calculating the companies' Return on Investment – or ROI. They analysed factors such as the participants' salary and fringe benefits and added the experiences the company had in relation to the PsyCap training programme. Then they calculated the ROI for the companies that had used the training programme, to be of 270% (Luthans et al. 2006). These and similar research results from the use of positive psychology techniques in the workplace show that it can be a very good investment for companies.

Chapter 4
The Leader Role

A leader leads by example, whether he intends to or not.

Unknown

Abstract This chapter presents the development of leadership theories from the focus on leaders being born as leaders, up until today' positive psychology perspective of leaders that can be trained into becoming great leaders. Leaders cannot create results in other ways than through their employees. Research have shown that leaders have strong influence on their followers' level of work engagement. Leaders can acquire knowledge on what creates optimized performance and learn how to increase the occurrence of satisfied and happy employees. In this way the leader can create win–win situations.

Much of the organizational research throughout the years have been connected to the role and the influence of leaders. Scientific research have looked at the relationship between management and other elements such as organizational culture, efficiency and various organizational results (Howell and Avolio 1993; Deal and Kennedy 1983; Denison 1990; Kotter and Heskett 1992).

The research on leadership in organizations is historically connected to different periods of time. The first period, which started in the 1930s, included research on personality traits of successful leaders, the so-called *trait theories*. This direction is built on the belief that some people are "born" leaders and have specific traits and qualities that separate them from those who are not born with leadership abilities and traits.

With time it proved difficult to measure and describe these so-called innate abilities. This led to theories being developed in the 1940–1950s about leadership that described the leader's behaviour, because behaviour was easier to measure and define (Bass and Stogdill 1990).

One common factor of those leadership theories was that they took no consideration of the situational influences in the leader's surroundings. This led to the rise of *situational leadership theories* appearing in the 1960s, where factors in the leader's surroundings – for instance those elements that could influence the efficiency of an organization – were considered. A lot of research have established a connection between the leader's executive behaviour in interaction with situational and contextual factors.

One of the most widely discussed leadership theories from the 1970s up until today is the transformational leadership theory. Transformational leadership is a leadership style where the leader is described as being both visionary and enthusiastic, in addition to having the ability to motivate his or her employees (Bass and Avolio 1994). The transformational leader exercises what the theory calls "inspiring motivation", gives "individual support and consideration" (supportive, learning-focused leadership), encourages "intellectual stimulation" (encourages and stimulates creativity and innovation) and is exercising "idealized influence" (being a positive and good role model) towards his/her employees. Transformational leadership is, in contrast to the traditional leadership theories, more concerned with emotions and values rather than rational processes.

Transformational leadership is often compared to transactional leadership; a type of leadership involving the relationship between the leader and the employee to be built on a form of transaction, so to say, where work capacity is exchanged for rewards. This can for instance be exchange of salary, bonuses, compensatory time off or other goods for employees in exchange of performing work tasks. Transactional leaders also make use of control; by the leader intervening when employees are not performing tasks as expected. This can be in the form of active control and surveillance or just waiting for the problems to appear and then intervene. Transactional leadership is in the literature often associated with external motivation, whereas transformational leadership often is associated with internal motivation.

The MEGA IMPACT theory about positive leadership presented in this book builds on many of the elements of the transformational leadership style.

Employees Are the Leader's Most Important Resource

A leader is a dealer in hope. (Napoleon Bonaparte)

Employees are absolutely the leader's most important assets when it comes to creating results for their organization.

The employees will notice the kind of attitude their leaders have towards them. They will notice it in the way the leader communicates and behaves, in his/her wording of emails and in which common goods he/she gives his/her employees, etc. Attitudes can be noticed through behavioural patterns. Signals are sent out and will be interpreted. When a leader shows that he/she actually sees and acknowledges his/her employees, he/she has taken the biggest and most important step.

In 2009 Gallup asked more than 10,000 employees about (a) which leader had had the most positive influence on their daily lives throughout their lives, and (b) if they could describe what this leader had contributed into their lives compressed into three words.

The top words these10,000 employees used to describe what the best leaders brought into their lives were (1) trust, (2) care and compassion, (3) hope and (4)

stability. Employees want leaders they can trust, who care about them and who are stable and genuine in their exercised leadership.

Employees are human beings with human needs, and most of us value fellow human values in our leaders beyond just pure professional skills. In this, one finds the key to understanding the needs the employees have, and what creates motivation in the workplace.

> Leaders cannot create results except through their employees. They are simply dependent on them to perform, deliver and being happy with their workplace.

Many leaders know a lot about their technical area of expertise but could benefit from having more knowledge about the psychology of the human mind. It is important for leaders to have knowledge about how to lead people, how to inspire and motivate teams and employees towards the goals the leader is hired to lead their employees towards.

Leaders' Opportunities to Influence the Workplace

Leaders have great opportunities to influence their employees and their workplaces. Research from the Gallup Organization have shown that leaders are responsible for at least 70% of the variance in employees work engagement (Gallup 2017). So, the fact that there is a large potential for leaders to influence the work and the rate of engagement at their workplace is beyond any doubt. In this book readers receives information about how the human mind works and what creates optimal performance that increases the occurrence of happy and satisfied employees. In this way, leaders can set the agenda to establish win–win situations for the organization, themselves and their employees.

The concept of positive leadership used in this book contains ten crucial core elements that are included in the exercise of leadership.

As you read this book, use these ten core elements of leadership to reflect on your own role as a leader and your own opportunities to influence your organization and your employees positively. Reflect upon the kind of results you can create together with your employees.

These ten points are named MEGA IMPACT. Because mega impact is exactly what leaders have. You as a leader have a mega opportunity to influence your workplace through what you do in your executive leadership. Each letter in the concept connects to one of the ten elements. These ten elements will be presented in the following chapters.

As the author of this book, I have a strong desire to encourage leaders to see the enormous possibilities leaders have in the power of their leadership role, to positively influence their workplace. Leaders can contribute to lifting both the people and their organization to greater heights, and thereby in a broader sense create more meaning.

Chapter 5
Positive Leadership

Abstract The concept of positive leadership is in this book's author's view and theory divided into three areas: (a) factors in the leader, (b) factors in the leadership tasks and (c) results in the employees. The three areas consist of ten elements of positive leadership. The elements of a leader's own mindset and authenticity in leaders own leadership behavior are of large importance in a leader's executive leadership. If a leader is to increase work engagement, change attitudes and influence the employees' performance, he/she must know how to inspire and motivate his/her employees and teams, know how to build good relationships and create meaning, work with improving the communication internally and externally and know how to lead the followers towards the organization's goals. How a leader can go about doing this is presented in depth throughout the book.

The term positive leadership, as described in this book, is split into three areas: (1) factors in the leader, (2) factors in the leadership tasks and (3) results in the employees.

Under area (1) *Factors in the leader*, the leader's mindset and authenticity are important elements in the term positive leadership. These two are discussed in Chap. 6 in the sections of the leader's own **Mindset** (**M**) and **Authenticity** (**A**).

Area (2) *Factors in the leadership tasks* are about the leader's tasks of inspiring/motivating, communicating, creating meaning, achieving goals and team and relationship building. Chapter 7 looks at the tasks of the leader relating to **Goal reaching (G)** and how leaders can **Inspire (I)** and **Motivate (M)** their employees. The chapter also looks at the leaders' **Communication (C)** with their employees, and why and how **Meaning (M)** in the workplace contributes to an increase in productivity and well-being. Another topic of the chapter is knowledge about how leaders can best go about building good **Teams (T)** and relationships in their workplace.

The third part of the term positive leadership, (3) *Results in the employees,* is presented in Chap. 8, and it includes engagement, better attitudes and increased performance in employees. Chapter 8 discusses the results in the form of increased **Engagement (E)** and how this brings gold into the workplace, as well as new positive **Attitudes (A)** the results of exercising positive leadership bring for the employees. In this chapter, the readers will also receive an overview on how positive

Fig. 5.1   Ten components of positive leadership. Illustrated through the term MEGA IMPACT

leadership can lead employees to increase their **Performance (P)**. Chapter 9 describes the strength-based leader, and Chap. 10 gives the reader insight into and examples from the positive psychology organizational development method Appreciative Inquiry.

In combination, the ten described factors form the term MEGA IMPACT and deal with the leaders' real mega impact on their employees and the organization through the practice of positive leadership. See Figs. 5.1 and 5.2.

Elements of Positive Leadership –MEGA IMPACT

All these ten factors are the cornerstones of the theory in this book on positive leadership. Each of them will be described thoroughly in the following chapters of the book.

In the leader;
Mindset, Authenticity

In the management tasks;
Goal management, Inspire/Motivate, Communicate, Meaning, Teambuilding /Relationships

Results in the employees;
Engagement, Attitudes, Peak performance
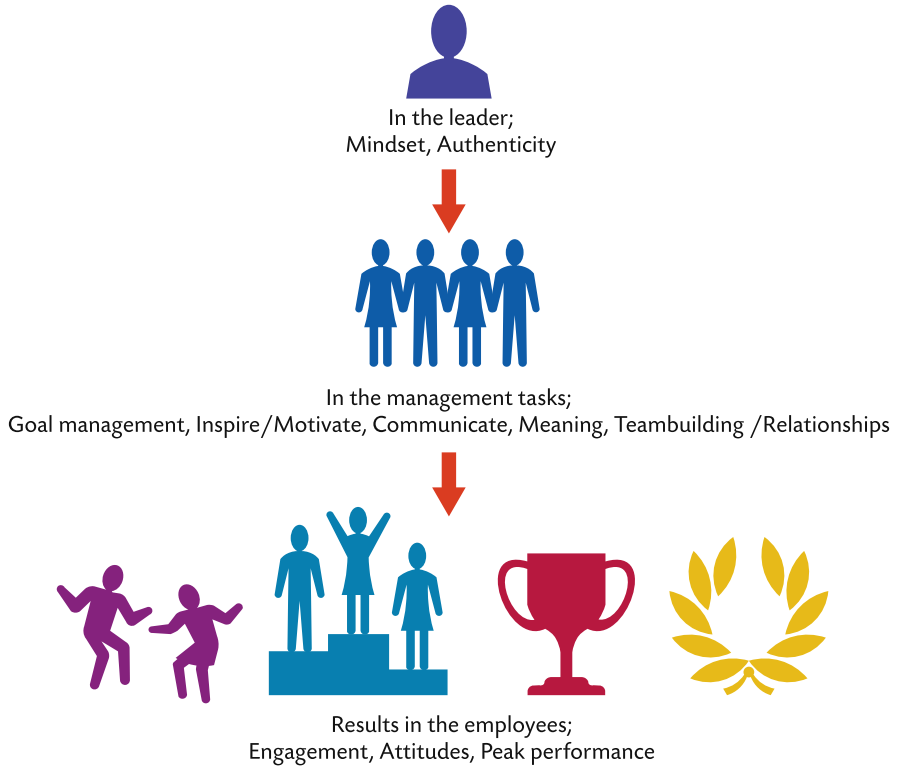
Fig. 5.2 The ten factors of positive leadership divided between (1) factors in the leader, (2) factors in the leadership tasks and (3) results in the employees

Chapter 6
Factors in the Leader

> *To move the world we must first move ourselves.*
>
> *Socrates*

Abstract This chapter deals with the leader's own mindset. How to recognize the factors that have influenced a person/leader throughout his/her life, that made him/her become and think the way he/she does now. Leaders are invited to reflect and dig into their own mindsets, and as thoughts, attitudes and perceptions can be changed, so can every person that wants to dig a bit deeper into their own existing mindsets. Numerous tools and techniques to be used at the workplace are being presented here and in most chapters of this book. For instance, techniques on how to increase your own levels of positive emotions, build your own resilience and how to grow a growth-mindset and -perspective. The reader will also receive a research-based presentation about how authentic leadership increases employees work engagement. As in every chapter, concrete techniques from positive psychology are given.

The first area in the theory of positive leadership concerns factors in the leaders themselves – the leader's own mindset and authenticity. The first area any leader should start with is him/herself. As Socrates says in the quote above, a leader who wishes to change the world – or in this case a workplace – must start by changing him/herself. An important part is to first become aware of your own thoughts, perceptions and behavioural repertoire, and to achieve an understanding of how leaders through their own behaviour greatly affect the attitudes and behaviour of their employees.

Which factors influence people to become who they are and how they think?

How does authentic leadership correlate to increased performance and motivation in the employees?

We will begin with the leader's own mindset.

The Leader's Own Mindset

«You are not free until you know what influenced you to become who you are. Until you know what are the external influences, thoughts and opinions of other people that you unconsciously have adopted as your own». (Søren Kierkegaard, Danish philosopher 1813–1855)

We are all influenced by the surroundings and the society in which we have been raised. This chapter starts with giving the reader an understanding of some of the factors that have influenced oneself and our lives. Take this opportunity to reflect a bit on what has influenced you specifically in your own life.

Søren Kierkegaard's words above indicate that you should reflect upon the influences in your life that come from outside yourself. Which thoughts have been subconsciously adopted as your own thoughts or opinions, which originally belonged to someone else. This could be attitudes common in a family, in a local-community or in a country. Did you grow up with the mindset that made you believe that you cannot change or influence people? Is this limiting mindset probably influencing and limiting you in your life?

If you have a perception that leaders should be first and foremost tough and strict, this is also only a mindset you carry.

> Do you believe that you as a leader can influence a work environment or do you think that the work environment more or less is decided by the people who work there?
>
> Do you believe it is possible to learn how to be more optimistic? Do you think there is any purpose in implementing measures to create win–win situations?
>
> Do you believe in positive psychology as a science which can contribute to creating better workplaces?
>
> Reflect a bit on your own attitudes when it comes to what you believe is possible for you as a leader to achieve in your own workplace. Take these thoughts with you into the next part of the chapter.

Throughout life we have been socialized and our mindsets have been shaped. Many of these mindsets we never question; they have become automatic thoughts we carry with us.

Which Factors Have Influenced Us to Become Who We Are and How We Think?

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed a model that described how humans develop throughout life; how we grow and socialize in a dynamic interplay with the settings we are and have been parts of. In sum, the model describes that human beings are influenced by the specific arenas in which they have roamed in, the arenas in which they still roam (the microsystem) and the interactions between them (the mesosystem).

The microsystem includes family, friends, neighbours, school, kindergarten, sports teams and organizations. The mesosystem is best described as relationships between the school and the home, contact between neighbours and school friends that come to visit in the home, etc.

We are all, according to Bronfenbrenner, influenced through the socialization processes of various cultural and subcultural norms, values and patterns in the societies we grow up in. This could be anything from cities to countries to continents,

and it applies to ethics, politics, ideology, social organizations and traditions. This is what Bronfenbrenner calls our macrosystem.

The fourth system of influence that we are all exposed to, he calls, is our exosystem. This contains current and previous influences from environments we rarely or never have visited, but nevertheless there is a direct or indirect influence upon our lives and development. Examples of this can be things reported through the media, things occurring at our parents' workplaces or in organizations they are members of (choirs, unions, etc.), decisions made in councils, court, by police, etc. In short, our attitudes are influenced by a combination of sources, as Bronfenbrenner has attempted to demonstrate in an illustrative figure. See Fig. 6.1 below.

Who we are today and many of the attitudes, values and demeanours we demonstrate have come to be through external influences.

Some of these we know about, others are more subconscious. We could benefit from becoming more aware of these.

We carry these attitudes with us into relationships with other people – at work, with our partners and our children – essentially in every human interaction we have. This is the process of how our mindsets have been shaped throughout the years of our lives.

The renowned motivational guru Tony Robbins claims that as much as 80% of all success in business life is about mindset – both your own and your employees'. However in this chapter, we are looking at you as a leader: how you developed the mindset you have and, next, how you can further develop it to create growth in your workplace.

Thoughts, Attitudes and Perceptions Can Be Changed

> The mind is everything. What you think you become. (Buddha)

We all have thoughts and attitudes that lead to the actions we take and affect our behaviour towards others. Some are good, other are less than optimal, and some are not constructive or good at all. We do not want to carry them all with us for the rest of our lives, and we have to work on them to understand which ones are limiting us more than profiting us. Consider how thoughts, attitudes, meanings and perceptions can change. But first of all, you need to become aware of them.

Whether you are aware of it or not, your mindset – your attitudes and thoughts – has a large influence on you and how you implement your leadership.

What you believe about yourself, what you believe you actually can influence and what you believe you can achieve as a leader will all influence you and your leader behaviour in a much larger degree than you can imagine.

> Your existing attitudes towards other people, your world view and what you have learned in life, schooling, leadership experience, etc., contribute to and influence your leadership performance.
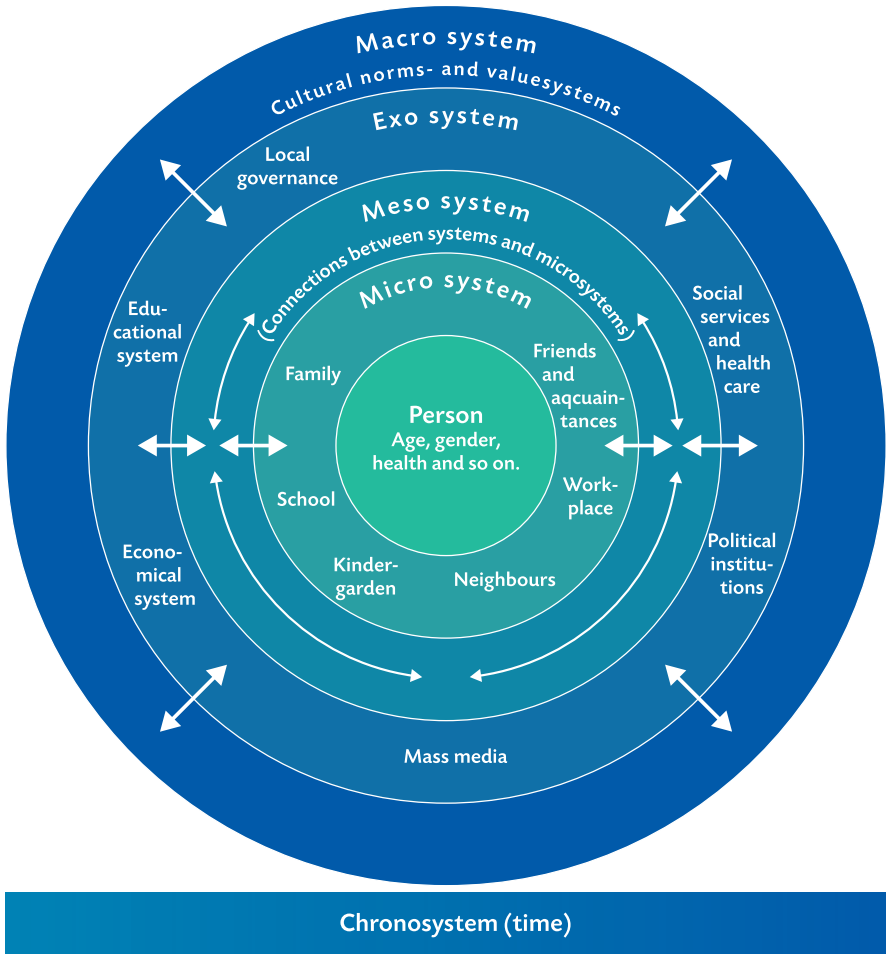
Fig. 6.1 Bronfenbrenner's ecological influence framework

What you believe deep inside about what you can achieve and where you place yourself «ceiling» will become the ceiling of what you can achieve…

> «Whatever you believe is the case, your life will go precisely after that formula». (www. positivechange.no)

Take a few minutes to consider your attitudes and what you believe today about the following:

A Leader's Reflection/Reality Check

On a scale of 1 to 10, to what extent do you think you as a leader can influence your employees' performance?

    1   I--I 10

On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you believe that you as a leader can influence your employees' well-being?

    1   I--I 10

On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you believe that you as a leader can influence collaboration between your employees?

    1   I--I 10

On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you believe that you as a leader can influence the overall work environment in your department and in the company?

    1   I--I 10

Allow yourself some time to reflect on your own attitudes and mindsets around what you yourself believe you actually are able to influence positively in your workplace. Consider each question in depth and avoid rushing on to the next one. Write down your answers. You do this to map out your mindset today and discover which principles you are actually lead by. This will, among other things, also show if you have a growth/development-mindset or a fixed-mindset; a theme we will discuss in the next section. So, before you move on, reflect and write down your answers.

How You Think, Influences Your Behavioural Repertoire as a Leader: Growth- and Fixed-Mindset

Just like an athlete who desires to achieve greater athletic goals must work on his/her mindset, you as a leader must do the same. You need to expand your mindset and challenge yourself to think bigger, as well as work with your own limiting mindset.

Your mindset affects your behaviour, which again affects your influence in the workplace. If you wish to achieve greater goals, you will need to shift to a higher gear. When you find a negative, limiting mindset, you need to make changes and expand your perspective.

Carol Dweck (2015, 2016), a professor of psychology at Stanford University, coined two terms to describe different ways of thinking about development, opportunities, oneself and others, and called them fixed- and growth-mindsets. If you have a growth-mindset, you have a belief that talent and abilities can be developed in anyone. It is not a given and measurable size, but rather something that can grow and develop.

If you, on the other hand, are of a fixed-mindset, you believe talent in people is of a measurable size. You will then think, that you or others cannot train those skills and improve. Those who have a fixed-mindset believe that only a few people have certain good skills and that the skills are given at a certain level that cannot be increased.

If we take two professions; a leader and a teacher, and these two both have fixed-mindsets, they both will believe that everyone, including their students and employees, has a given and innate intelligence or ability to perform, and the size of this ability cannot be changed. Leaders and teachers who have a growth-mindset on the other hand have a belief that intelligence and skills can change, and that people can achieve better results through practice.

Microsoft is an example of a company that works to create a growth-mindset culture in its employees. It encourages and stimulates learning and creativity. The company also uses growth-mindset consciously when it develops and chooses the company's leaders (Harvard Business Review 2016). Read more about growth-mindset and fixed-mindset in the team in Chap. 7 in the section "How to create a growth culture".

What you think therefore shapes and influences your attitudes. Your attitudes constitute in turn the basis for your behaviour. Your behaviour creates your habits, your habits turn into your autopilot – your automatic way of acting. But this can be changed.

> If you have a *growth mindset*, you believe talent can be developed. If you have a *fixed mindset*, you believe talent in humans is of a given size that cannot be changed (Professor Carol Dweck, Stanford University).

Leaders' Influence on Positive Emotions in the Workplace

Positive emotions are markers for human well-being and happiness. Barbara Fredrickson's "broaden-and-build" theory says that all positive emotions expand human thought and action repertoires, and help people build resources for future success (Fredrickson 2001).

Research has shown that the occurrence of positive emotions affects and has many valuable effects on different arenas of life (Lyubomirsky et al. 2005), such as in the workplace, in the home and on our health. Some research have shown that experiencing frequent positive emotions can even affect our lifespan (Danner et al. 2001).

Losada and Heaphy (2004) found in their scientific research that there is a significant connection between the presence of positive emotions in the workplace and a higher degree of satisfaction and success in general.

> Research shows that leaders' positive or negative moods can spread in the workplace within a few minutes (Sy et al. 2005; Bono and Ilies 2006).

A leader's mood affects the workplace to a much greater extent than what the individual employee does. From the moment a leader walks in through the office door, his/her mood spreads to the employees. It is therefore especially important that you as a leader are in control of your own negative emotions and do not transfer them to others in the department.

Humans are naturally programmed to notice negative events more easily than positive ones (Drønnen 2018). Research results from Barbara Fredrickson, among other, show that we, among other things, need five positive emotions to weigh up for each negative one. This goes for the workplace, in relationships, family and other areas where people interact. This means that if we experience a negative event, we should add five positives to even it out.

Leaders who openly exhibit positive emotions in the workplace, such as for instance compassion towards their employees, build both individual and collective resilience for future events (Source: Harvard Business Review 2015). Resilience is the ability to keep going in the face of adversity and the ability to bring out strength in difficult times. This is an important quality for all humans, also in the workplace.

Newer research have demonstrated good results for exercising positive emotions at the workplace. The scientist Jonathan Haidt from New York University's Stern School of Business found, through his research, that employees became more loyal towards their companies and felt a greater sense of commitment when they had leaders who were just and fair (Source: Harvard Business Review 2015).

We can find other examples of scientific results on the topic in the research of the well-known professor of organizational psychology, Adam Grant.

> The scientist Adam Grant found, through his research, that leaders who exhibit friendliness and generosity, demonstrate a higher level of efficiency in their teams and organizations (Adam Grant 2013).

Transformational leadership is, as previously mentioned, a leadership style that is related to positive leadership. Bono, Foldes, Vinson and Muros found that employees who had leaders scoring high results on transformational leadership experienced more positive emotions on a day-to-day basis, including interactions with customers and colleagues. These employees also had a higher occurrence of work satisfaction (Bono et al. 2007).

In short, numerous scientific articles demonstrate that positive emotions in the workplace create a better work environment, better relationships and an increase of creativity in the workplace. Increasing levels of positive emotions improve the general work culture and the environment in the workplace, as well as increase the efficiency of the workplace. In addition, positive emotions give increased resistance to stress and increase employees' resilience (Seppala and Cameron 2015).

When you know that you, as a leader, can facilitate your employees to experience more positive emotions in the workplace, these findings are exciting. Spend a few minutes to reflect on the topics below and what your own status is today.

Leader's Reflection/Reality Check

Reflect on examples of where you, in your position as a leader, have established a positive environment in the workplace. What did you say and what did you do to positively influence the environment?

What triggers your negative emotions in the workplace, and is there anything you can do to minimize these triggers?

Positive Psychology – Interventions and Techniques

If you have not done it before now, you should go back to test and map out your attitudes under the Leaders' reality check 1 and Leaders' reality check 2. After that you can take, for example, the test "Are you a positive leader today?" by Kim Cameron. You can find it online by entering the phrase "Are you a positive leader today?" and his name into a search. Cameron is a renowned positive psychology professor, within the areas of organizational development and leadership, and he has written several books on the topic.

Test Yourself: Are You a Positive Leader?

Search for Kim Cameron's Positive leadership self-assessment or similar self-tests online and answer the questions. You can use the answers you get to create personal goals for where you want to go with your future leadership skills.

Questions to Reflect on Your Own Position as a Leader in the Workplace

When you have mapped out where you stand in relation to positive leadership, you can move one step further and reflect on how you wish to proceed.

- What does your ideal workplace look like? How does a positive leader behave?
- Which little steps could you take to get closer to where you want to be?
- What are you doing today that is bringing you closer to this?
- How can you show up to work and be the best version of yourself every day?

Write down your answers.

Positive Emotions 1

Think about moments when you have felt the positive emotions happiness, gratitude, peace of mind, interest, hope, pride, fun, inspiration, awe and love in your everyday work life.

- Do you believe your well-being would increase if you had more moments where some of these emotions were present?
- What do you think your employees would have answered to the same question?
- What can you do to increase the presence of positive emotions in your workplace?

Positive Emotions 2

Take an A4-sized sheet (preferably of a thicker quality) and cut it into ten equal parts. Write one positive emotion on each piece. For the next ten days, pick a card every day.

Try to carry the essence of the word with you throughout the day. Try to create the feeling for others, and for yourself, throughout the day. See what happens!

The Best Possible Self

This technique is often used in positive psychology. It has been proved to increase optimism and change mindsets. The technique can be used daily, or you can do it from time to time.

Decide on a time perspective, for example, half a year, 1 year or 5 years from now. Imagine how you desire your life to be. Or how you want your workplace to be. How would you like it to be? What does it look like? Imagine in detail how life will look once you have reached your goals. It is important that you remain realistic in this exercise and do not create unrealistic fantasies.

Then write down a detailed description of what it will look like.

This exercise will help you to structure what you desire to happen in the future, so that the goal remains straightforward and concrete.

You at Your Best – 360

Here you will reflect on one or several times you have functioned at your very best. A time where you made something positive happen in your workplace, something you were proud of.

Next, you bring the exercise above to the workplace and ask for feedback from (a) employees, (b) your management team and c) other people who know you. They are then to describe you at what your best looks like to them in the workplace. What are you like then? What can you achieve? They should say something positive they have noticed about you and what you do.

This exercise is today used in large, renowned leadership development programmes, such as in the Yale University in the US. Divide the exercise into four parts:

1. Reflect over one or more times when you have functioned at your very best in your workplace. Write down your own "you at your best" here first.
2. Then ask your employees to describe when they have seen you function at your best, with the same description as above.
3. Ask the others in the management team the same question.
4. Ask the same questions of some of the people you are closest to.

Compare the answers and see if there are any areas that are described in the same way by everyone around you, if there are any common denominators. Through this exercise you can learn a lot about yourself and how others see you. You will also find out which of your strengths are visible for others around you and in your workplace.

Before you facilitate your employees to increase their positivity, you can try out the exercises yourself. Here are a few exercises that you as a leader can do to increase you own and others' positivity:

Show Gratitude

To practise gratitude is another technique often used within positive psychology. Scientific research has shown good results when it comes to joy, unity in the workplace, good health and more. But as with everything else, there needs to be a healthy balance. You can work on gratitude in your own life, in the workplace, in the family and in school. The most popular exercise is to find three things to be grateful for every day. Every night before you go to bed, you could write down three good things you have experienced that day. It can be small things, such as looking at a beautiful flower and receiving joy from that, to someone once giving you a compliment and that you yourself made someone else happy – the little things in life. It does not have to be big things, like winning the lottery or landing your dream job. The point of this exercise is to train yourself and your brain to look for positive things, opportunities and solutions. By doing this exercise for 5 min every day, your brain will develop a new "autopilot". A new and more positive thought pattern will be established, where you start noticing more positive things around you. This is built on neuroscientific principles.

Grateful Meditation

Sit in a comfortable chair and close your eyes. Search for something in life that you are very grateful for. For example, that you have a child or grandchild, live in a safe and good country, have money every month, have clean water in the tap and have good friends. Let your thoughts flow naturally. Experience the feelings this gives you. Observe how your body reacts to the feelings. Let the feeling of gratitude just occupy your body naturally. Observe your breath to see how your body is doing when you feel grateful. Take notice of this experience on how positive emotions work.

Reflect on how your workplace would be if most people were more grateful towards each other.

Building a Growth-Mindset and -Perspective 1

Think about a time when you succeeded at or overcame something you found difficult. For example, that you managed to learn Chinese, changed tires on your car, build a wind-break wall or something else. Feel free to include experiences from various areas.

Take a few minutes to reflect on what you did, step by step, to achieve this. What were the obstacles? What did you do to overcome the obstacles? Write down as much as you can on that last question.

This exercise primes you to establish a growth- and developmental-mindset. You do this by first looking for examples at how you have mastered experiences in your own life. This will make you become aware of and focus on them again. By bringing them into the focus you can learn and remind yourself of how you handled and mastered them. The exercise can be performed daily or weekly, over a period. It will contribute to your capacity, at later occasions, to more easily think that it is possible to overcome obstacles. You will simply develop a new way of thinking. From research on the brain's plasticity or formability we know that by using the brain in this way, we can change our automatic thought pilots from, for example, pessimistic to more optimistic. The psychology professor Martin Seligman has written a whole book about learned optimism and how exactly you can proceed to train your brain for this.

Building a Growth-Mindset and -Perspective 2

In this exercise you shall mention a thing you do not feel like you excel, but you want to improve at. This could, for instance, be that you might not be as good at keeping your personal finances under control as you would like to be, or that you are not as diligent at physical exercise as you wish you could be.

Look at all the points you have described above, under "building a growth-mindset", about what you did in order to overcome obstacles. Now you should use these points and evaluate whether some of the things you did then, to overcome what you found difficult, can be repeated to overcome and master your new goals.

Spend 10–15 min reflecting on this.

Then reflect on how this wisdom can be used in relation to the employees in your workplace. Think of a particular person. Feel free to write down your reflections. These can be used for motivating others later.

Building Resilience

In this exercise you will train yourself to think in a more resilient way. Resilience is a psychological term that is about being more resilient to stresses and strains. People with good resilience manage to handle crises and stress in a positive way. This is a skill that can be trained and improved.

This exercise can be used individually, or it can be used in groups in the workplace to train the employees in their abilities to better handle different challenges, stresses and strains.

First, think of an episode when you had a negative emotional reaction in the workplace. It can, for example, be a colleague who did something unpleasant to you, which you did not handle well.

Then, think of another episode where you did manage to handle a negative emotional reaction in the workplace.

What is the difference between these two events? What made you act differently? Reflect over the differences and write down what you did that contributed to you handling the latter episode well.

Exercise used in groups: Do the exercise individually first. Then share with each other and find common denominators for the times when it went well.

Authenticity

> To find yourself, think for yourself. (Socrates)

Authenticity is a topic that has been much debated through history. The term and the topic have its roots stretching all the way back to the great Greek philosophers.

Authentic leadership is a leadership behaviour that denotes leaders who act in a real, genuine and sincere way. Research shows that this type of management inspires trust, loyalty and even improves the work performance of employees.

Authentic leadership is also described as a leader's self-conscious, open and clear behaviour.

Walumbwa et al. (2010), renowned researchers in both authentic leadership and transformational leadership, made some exciting discoveries when they were researching psychological processes that connected authentic leadership to the employees' behaviour: namely that leaders who are authentic increase their employees' work engagement to their work.

They found that authentic leadership behaviour was positively related to work engagement in employees (Walumbwa et al. 2010).

Authentic Leadership Leads to Increased Creativity in Employees

The scientists Rego et al. (2012) found in their research that *authentic leadership predicts employees' creativity*. Creativity is a notoriously significant resource to increase a company's competitive advantage and business opportunities. In addition, it has also been proven that creativity increases the efficiency in an organization.

Authentic Leaders Motivate Higher Levels of Performance

Bill George, a post-doctoral candidate at Harvard Business School, wrote in Huffington Post (2016) that authentic leaders are leaders that are faithful to their own values and to themselves. Instead of letting the expectations of others guide them, they are true to themselves and go their own way. They invite trust and develop genuine relationships to others. Because people trust them, authentic leaders manage to motivate employees to achieve higher levels of performance.

Authentic leaders model respect and altruism and are consistent in their behaviour. Employees gain trust in authentic leaders who practice equality and show respect for their employees.

Authentic leadership is not a style of leadership, it is leadership built on character.

Based on this, authenticity in leaders is an important component of this book about practising positive leadership.

Positive Psychology – Interventions and Techniques

Train Your Own Authenticity as a Leader

If you would like to work on your own authenticity as a leader, you can, for instance, follow this methodology:

The first phase is recognizing your own ways of acting. Here you can analyse previous events where you (a) acted authentically and (b) did not act authentically in your leader role.

Write down the characteristics of both situations. Identify what type of behaviour you demonstrated, and what exactly characterized the situation where you acted as an authentic leader.

When you have identified which behaviour characterized you as an authentic leader, try to repeat it, preferably in new settings.

Notice whether the new behaviour gets a different reaction from your employees and get a feel for how it is to act authentically.

Recognize Good Character in Others

Think of a person you look up to and admire, both for his/her demeanour and his/her character. This can, for example, be presidents or other famous people, both living and dead.

- Describe the character traits you admire in this person.
- How do you identify with this person?
- Do you have any leadership traits in common?

Employees seek recognition and praise. If you are authentic and real and lead by a good example, you can involve your employees on a deeper level. For example, when it comes to introducing gratitude to everyday language, and other positive psychology exercises in the workplace. Here are a few exercises you can do:

E-mails with Acknowledgement

You as a leader have great authority. What you write and send out affects the whole department or organization you work in. You can, for example, begin sending out an email once a week where you acknowledge some individuals or teams that have done a good job.

This will set the tone and culture for positivity in the workplace. This will also lead to employees wishing to put in a little extra effort in their work, because they

know there is a chance it will be noticed when they do something good or positive. Everyone enjoys receiving recognition.

At the Beginning of Meetings

Another exercise you can do is, for example, to facilitate some meetings to begin in a circle around the table, where employees are encouraged to say something positive about other employees; well-performed work that they have noticed the last week/month; or other things.

If employees feel appreciated, that is a good first step towards feeling satisfied in the workplace.

The Weekly Team Meeting

Another alternative is to begin the weekly team meeting by letting people say something positive about someone or something they appreciate or are grateful for. But this must be authentic, voluntarily and not feigned or something the employees are forced to do. *Authenticity* from both the leaders and the employees is crucial here.

Checking on the Veracity – Team Exercise

Other exercises you can do on a team level can, for example, be that you facilitate more positivity, by checking on the veracity of something before it is concluded, and to have the focus on others rather than on yourself. This will train employees not to draw negative or false conclusions based on airy observations. This is an exercise that affects yourself, others and the organization positively. You establish a culture in the organization where you do not automatically think negatively about others, but where employees learn to check out what is true first.

By doing this exercise in groups on department or team levels, the employees will also get to know each other better in a positive way.

Leader Reflection/Reality Check

Describe a leader who performed the most authentic leadership you have ever seen.

In which situations do *you* feel that you are at your most authentic? Write down and reflect on which situations you experience this feeling.

Chapter 7
Factors in the Leadership Tasks

Abstract In this chapter, five important elements in the leader's executive leadership tasks are presented. For instance the element of communication and how our words are creating our realities. Research results from how positive communication leads to higher levels of performance is presented along with concrete techniques on how to work with the culture of communication.

The leader is also given an overview of and a description on how to do a SOAR, SWOT, Appreciative Inquiry analysis as well as an organizational analysis in his/her own organization. The leader is hired to lead the culture at the workplace, and as the leader one must continue to build, strengthen, live it out, protect and fight for it. In this chapter the leader gets ideas on how to motivate, inspire and build culture at his/her workplace. Throughout the whole book, as well as in this chapter, the concrete positive psychology techniques a leader can implement in his/her own organization are presented. All from how to do job crafting, build collective optimism, how to reframe situations, learn active-constructive responding and create a culture of appreciation.

In this second part about positive leadership, the focus is placed on how leaders can use positive psychology in their leadership tasks at the workplace. This relates to tasks such as coaching employees towards new goals, as well as inspiring and motivating them. Leadership tasks are also about communication, finding meaning, building teams and relationships. These areas are presented over the next few sections. First, we will look at the leader's task of coaching his/her employees towards reaching the organization's goals.

Goal Management. A Leader's Task Is to Lead His/Her Employees Towards Goals

> A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way. (John C. Maxwell)

Leadership entails a variety of tasks. Elements of positive leadership are the ability to inspire, motivate, communicate, reach goals, create meaning and build good

teams. We will start with the biggest task any leader has: to lead his/her employees to reach the overarching goals of the company.

Store Norske Leksikon (Large Norwegian Lexicon) defines leadership this way: "Leadership can be understood as influencing a group in the direction of a given goal. The one or those who have the right to decide the group's norms and control that these are adhered to, has leadership." (https://snl.no/lederskap)

The most important leadership task is to lead your employees towards this goal. A leader always has an overarching goal that he/she should lead his/her employees towards. A leader is in a position where he/she has both the right and the opportunity to decide and influence what and how the team should reach these overarching goals.

In organizations, these goals are often related to financial gain, or in the public sector: to create good services for the citizens. In private and voluntary organizations, the goal is often to contribute to a certain target group achieving a particular performance or service.

In addition to goals, the company or organization often has a given vision. A company's vision is defined as "a company's map, which indicates what the company wishes to become. The vision leads the initiative for change by setting a defined direction for the company's growth." (Wikipedia).

> Most companies today have an overarching goal and a vision. Universal for all leaders is that they lead. They lead people. And through these people, the leader will achieve his/her specific goals.

A leader must therefore have knowledge about how people are motivated to reach goals, and specifically in relation to the organization's goals. That is not always an easy task.

A leader must have knowledge about factors in (a) themselves, (b) individuals they lead and (c) the organization, as well as about what inhibits and promotes the organization to reach its overarching goals.

The important factors in you as a leader if you wish to practice positive leadership are your mindset and your authenticity. These will be reflected in everything you do. We looked more closely at those two factors in Chap. 6.

In this chapter we will go through positive leaders' tasks, which are about inspiring, motivating, communicating, creating meaning, reaching goals and building good teams and relationships in the workplace. In Chap. 8 we look closer at which results you as a positive leader can expect to achieve from your employees, if you facilitate positive leadership.

It is the work of the leader to create goals and intermediate objectives to be so specific that they are measurable. A leader who does not have the mandate him/herself to set the organizations goals or visions must work to lead his/her employees along the lines of the organization's established goals and visions. They must create a concrete strategy for the department or area they are leading to reach their goal.

If the leader does not have clear goals to lead towards, this can be likened to a pilot (leader) of a boat (company) without a GPS (a goal). Without knowing the

harbour (the destination), the boat (company) can sail off in many different directions.

> A ship has a pilot or a guide, who guides the boat through dangerous waters and makes sure that the boat reaches its destination. This is also the task of a leader.

Therefore, it is important to check maps (situational descriptions) and weather forecast (special conditions one can encounter) and get an overview over the fairway (the plan towards the goal) and factors in the circumstances you will be navigating in.

Are there unsafe waters with a risk of running aground? Translated to an organizational context, this would entail mapping out the potential factors that could keep the organization from reaching its overarching goals.

How should the leaders steer the ship and the crew to the destination? Important factors are found in the organizational analysis: where is the organization now, where do we want to go and the creation of a strategy to get there. I addition, it is a must to have knowledge about the people who are working together on the ship and how to get them aligned with the goals set for the company.

As a leader, it is recommended to start with conducting an organizational analysis and/or a cultural analysis to gain an overview over which factors inside and outside the organization can affect the company's goals.

Positive Psychology – Interventions and Techniques

Mapping by the Help of Organizational and Cultural Analysis

An organizational analysis deals with factors inside and outside the organization that influence it positively or negatively. An organizationally cultural analysis simply maps the culture the way it is currently in the organization, department or team.

> An organizational culture is "the set of values, norms and worldviews that develop within an organization when the members interact with each other and their surroundings, and which is expressed through the actions and attitudes of the members in the workplace" (Henning Bang 2013).

By conducting one or more such mappings, you as a leader will achieve an overview of the current situation in the organization, so that you more easily can plan new goals and measures from a concrete point of view.

You can choose a more comprehensive organizational analysis, or you can choose a simpler SWOT-analysis. You will receive examples of how you can do both, below. We will begin with the organizational analysis.

Organizational Analysis

The following are important elements of a thorough organizational analysis. It is recommended that you start by writing down the overarching goals in a document, along with important dates and deadlines coming up. Here you should write down the organization's goals, the department's goal and other potential important goals. If there are any given goals for the culture in the workplace, it is important to also include them in the analysis.

Next, you will write down the organization/company's business idea and its vision. Some companies have value statements rather than visions. Feel free to describe the organization's unique value standpoint, or what separates the company from other organizations.

You should also add some lines about strategic prioritizations the organization wishes to perform in the near future.

A clear division of roles and areas of responsibility in the development process(es) are also important to put down in writing.

After that, it will be important to complete an analysis of the factors in the environment that may affect the organization (and culture), even if they are not always possible to control.

A SWOT-analysis that looks at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is also of benefit when you are analysing an organization and its culture. Be aware of factors that hinder the desired or ideal culture. You can build a SWOT-analysis and a SOAR-analysis (see more about these two types of analysis in a later section) into the organizational analysis or perform them as separate analyses.

After completing these points, the organizational analysis should list the areas the organization has chosen to prioritize heading forward.

Then, some points should be added about which target group the organization is aimed at.

One point about how you on a regular basis will evaluate the efficiency and achievement of objectives within the organization is also important.

Subsequently you can, if you wish, focus even more closely on the organizational analysis, add an overview of the organization's financial results and a short analysis of them.

In the end, you should create a plan and a development strategy for the organization, based on what has been discovered in the earlier stages, with a timeline including short-term intermediate objectives and also long-term goals. Feel free to add an overview of budgets and other resources needed to reach the goal.

> When you have completed such an organizational and cultural analysis, you have prepared yourself and those you present the analysis to, for which goals and intermediate objectives, which direction and which focus all the work should have. This is clarifying and provides guidance for everyone involved and helps both leaders and employees to raise their gaze and look beyond their own perspective. This contributes to create a team-spirit when colleagues unite around a common goal.

The organizational analysis will give you an overview of your organization and which goals you as a leader should aim towards. These goals are the ones you should guide your employees towards. This is your first and most important task as a leader, the purpose of your employment.

This is, therefore, a significant part of your leadership and is emphasized as a separate factor in the theory about positive leadership in this book. The elements you have now gathered information of after completing this analysis, you will bring with you in your further work towards implementing positive leadership in your workplace.??

SWOT-Analysis

A SWOT-analysis (Fig. 7.1) is a strategical analysis tool that analyses and identifies an organization's (or person's) strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The analysis can find internal or external factors that promote or inhibit an organization to reach their desired goals. The analysis has existed for years and is often used in organizational analyses or analyses of different projects.

Strengths (S) are about discovering which characteristics of an organization or a project can be viewed as strengths in relation to other comparable organizations/projects.

Weaknesses (W) are about those factors that can place the organization in a weakened position compared to others.

Opportunities (O) entail the analysis of which opportunities the organization has that can benefit the organization.

Internal		External	
Strenghts	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats

Fig. 7.1 SWOT-analysis

Threats (T) is the last point of the SWOT-analysis and is about analyzing what kind of threats the company faces today. Here, factors in the surroundings that could threaten or cause potential difficulties for the organization are analysed.

> A SWOT-analysis can efficiently be combined with, for example, an organizational analysis or/and a PESTEL-analysis, in order to achieve a complete picture of an organization's or company's standpoint in the market.

A PESTEL-analysis is an analysis of an organization or business' macro-surroundings. This analysis does not fall under this book's topic about leadership but such an analysis is recommended to get a broader basis for organizational analysis, if desirable.

In combination, these analyses are good starting points in preparing and shaping the strategy for a company or an organization to reach its goals.

SOAR-Analysis

A SOAR-analysis, as seen in Fig. 7.2, is another strategic planning tool that brings the SWOT-analysis a step further and includes elements of positive psychology. The analysis should be used as an addition to the SWOT-analysis. The SOAR-analysis retains two of the SWOT elements, strengths and opportunities, but exchanges weaknesses and threats with aspirations and results. A SOAR-analysis differs from a SWOT-analysis by using a different strategic perspective. The SWOT-analysis maps the current situation, whereas the SOAR-analysis includes the future perspective by also focusing on the potential and aspirations, as well as solidifying the results the company wishes to achieve in the future. For this reason, the SOAR-analysis is more directed towards the future than the SWOT-analysis. By incorporating the result part in the SOAR-analysis, you identify and give priority to the desired goals and what is needed to achieve them.

Whereas a SWOT-analysis is normally developed by management, a SOAR-analysis is made with all employees empowered as participants. In this way, the employees will be part of the process; and all the creative ideas can flow from "those who wear the shoe and know where it pinches".

The SOAR-analysis is also more action oriented and places emphasis upon innovation and ground-breaking thinking. You need both analyses, as they complement each other, and each contributes a unique, strategic perspective.

The focus can be on the company as a whole, or you can do a SOAR-analysis of a product or a service. This analysis can be done on all levels from team, to department and organizational level.

The SOAR-analysis is constructed in the same way as the SWOT-analysis, with a two times two matrix, where each quadrant contains one of the four elements. In the SOAR-analysis, the quadrants read: strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results. In order to complete the analysis, you can start by drawing a square with

Fig. 7.2 SOAR-analysis

four quadrants and writing down one of the four headlines in each of them. Next, you will elaborate with keywords in each quadrant.

The S in strengths asks "what are our strongest resources?" Here the strengths of the organization are analysed. What are the organization's resources, abilities, what have we accomplished etc.?

Examples of questions can be:

- What is the best thing we have delivered?
- What have we already done that we are proud of?
- What have our customers been very happy about?
- What makes us unique in the market?
- What is our human capital?
- What sort of competence do we possess?

The O in opportunities asks: "What are the best opportunities we have in this organization to achieve X?" That is, the things which are desirable to achieve, such as increasing profit or gaining larger market shares. Examples of questions can be:

- What opportunities can we see in the market that we can take advantage of?
- Is there someone we can co-operate with who will drive the company forward?
- Are there any new products we can develop to adapt to contemporary society?
- Which gaps can we see in the market that we could fill?

The A in aspirations asks: "Who do we wish to be and what is our desired future?" Here you analyse what the company wishes to become or achieve in the future, what it looks like and which strategies and actions are needed to reach these goals.

- What do we wish to achieve?
- How can our company deliver services that would separate us from the competition?
- What does our future look like when we achieve what we want?
- What do we have to do to reach this?
- Which concrete steps do we need to take?

The R in results asks: "Which measurable results do we wish to achieve?" Here you need to describe concrete goals and measurable objectives and results you wish to achieve. What exactly does it look like when the organization has reached its goals?

- Which concrete goals are we trying to reach?
- What will it look like once we have reached our goals?
- Which indicators show that we have reached our goals?
- What are the intermediate objectives that guide us towards our goals?

When you have analysed these four elements in your organization, you have clarified your company's desired results, goals, strengths and opportunities. This creates the foundation for the road ahead for the leader who wishes to apply positive psychology to their leadership. In order to reach new positive goals, it is necessary to analsze and map out the current situation, in addition to mapping out desired goals, organizational strengths, human capital and advantages over competitors. It is important to "dream" and consider visions for the future, and how to reach desired situations by employing the organization's strengths.

To Connect the Company's Goals and Visions with Meaning for the Employees

Even if the company's goals and visions are clear and direct, employees do not always find this inspiring enough for them to put all their positive energy and power into their work. Companies may even have good bonus schemes and economic rewards for employees who work hard and put in that little extra effort.

But research have shown that these economic incentives do not actually work as motivational factors in the long run. Transactional leadership, where the leaders give their employees goods, for example, economic benefits in exchange for effort, has proven not to be a lasting or internal motivational factor (Bass and Avolio 1993). People become accustomed to receiving these goods and adapt to them.

Many employees find their work uninspiring and unrewarding. They go to work every day and exchange hours of their time for their pay cheque every month. When they are at work, they may be dreaming about being somewhere else entirely,

checking their phones during work time, surfing the internet, talking to colleagues or reading and writing private emails. Then the hours they spend at work will go by quicker and be more rewarding for them. There are of course individual differences, but we know that in today's society a lot of the time employees spend at work can become downtime where nothing gets done.

Can anything be done about this? Is it possible to change something in the workplace that helps employees find internal motivation and show a greater engagement in the workplace?

> New research has shown that humans who feel appreciated and who find meaning in their workplace, put in more effort. The internal motivation increases, and the employee wishes to contribute more.

If you as a leader are able to facilitate your employees to see the connection between meaning in their daily work and the company's business idea, you are making progress. If the employees are led to discover the value that leaders, colleagues and customers add to their workplace, something positive happens to their motivation. A basic need exists within all human beings: to be appreciated and to be of use to something or someone. This is what ignites a flame of internal motivation in people. More about how to concretely facilitate this will be presented in the chapter on meaning later in the book.

Inspire and Motivate

> A good leader leads the people from above them. A great leader leads the people from within them. (M.D. Arnold)

You cannot be a leader without having employees. You therefore need, as a leader, to understand how you can make your employees reach the goals of the company.

Motivation is what makes people *act* in specific ways. So how do you achieve this?

A key is to understand how people become motivated to act or do something.

We will begin with a definition of the word motivation. Kaufmann and Kaufmann (2015) define motivation as "biological, psychological and social factors that activate, give direction to and maintain behavior in various degrees of intensity in order to achieve a goal".

A leader's task consists to a certain degree of inspiring and motivating employees to do a good job. Human beings continue being human beings even after we clock in at work in the morning. Therefore, it is crucial to have knowledge of what it takes to inspire and motivate employees in a workplace.

Employees are human beings who react like human beings, they are not machines. They have emotions and are capable of dedication and can be motivated to contribute and give to their workplace under given terms and conditions.

Leaders as Carriers of Culture and Builders of Attitudes

What we believe in, the attitudes, values and thoughts we have will shine through in our behaviour. As a leader you have great ability to create attitudes and influence the behaviour in your workplace. A leader should not only show the way and talk about the way but also lead the way.

> Culture is created by everyone, but as a leader you are employed to lead the culture of the workplace. It is a task that comes with a lot of responsibility but is also a very rewarding one.
>   "As a leader you need to maintain the culture, continue building it, strengthen it, live it, protect it and fight for it." (Mike Smith)

You need to encourage and be a model for positive organizational behaviour. When your employees' daily actions and behaviour reflect your company's business idea and basic values, you have positive organizational behaviour. There are several things you as a leader can do to create compliance between these two, but it always begins with you. Do not have a double standard and create two sets of rules. Do not ask your employees to demonstrate a type of behaviour that you yourself do not follow and practice on a daily basis. Lead by example. Be authentic.

How to Motivate

As a leader you are therefore hired to motivate people to help pull the weight, in order to reach common goals that are set for the organization you work in. So how do you do this? How do you motivate employees to contribute more when it comes to tasks that they perhaps do not experience as particularly exciting? What is the key?

The key lies in the individuals' inherent desire to contribute, give something positive to something that is greater than themselves, find the meaning in what they do, feel appreciated, mean something to each other and give something to others, to mention a few factors. We are born with these needs.

> Deci and Ryan (2002) are two researchers within the field of motivation, who speak about three factors that trigger internal motivation in human beings. The first is the need for autonomy. The second is competence and the third a need for belonging (Deci and Ryan 2002).

New research confirms that there is a big connection between well-being, productivity and internal motivation, which is our internal driving force.

Ryan and Deci are the authors of the self-determination theory, which says that we humans are motivated under certain conditions. External motivations are described as rewards, as, for example, in the form of economic reward schemes, or as avoidance of punishment and sections, for example, as punishment for poorly executed work. Internal motivation, which is the motivational source that comes from within and is driven by ourselves, is affected by these three aforementioned

factors – the need for autonomy, competence and belonging. According to Ryan and Deci, these three factors give maximal motivation in human beings.

The need for autonomy means that the individual employees get to decide over some aspects of their work. This could mean that the leaders may give some freedom of responsibility, listen to the employee's suggestions and give the employees as much freedom as possible in terms of how they choose to approach their work.

The second point about competence means that employees to the greatest extent possible should have tasks that fit the competence they have, in addition to being suitably academically challenging. The third point about a sense of belonging is about the need to feel that we belong and the need to have close, meaningful relationships with other people in our workplace.

We actually spend the 8 best hours of our daily life in our workplace, and if we experience that we are included and that we are valued, we wish to give something back. If a leader manages to increase the presence of these three factors, a win–win situation is created! The company wins and the employees win.

And, of course, you will also benefit as a leader. You will have friendlier employees, who do not work against you and silently protest through absence, working slow or spending significant amounts of their workdays gossiping about leaders or others. Human beings react like human beings, and they will also continue to do so after they step into the workplace.

Then it is up to you as a leader to choose how you wish the culture in your workplace to be. You can choose to work on the culture and the work environment, or you can choose not to. You are the one who sets the standard. It is a leader's job to motivate the employees to pull their weight together in order to reach a common goal.

Building good team mentality is important, but there is nothing that seems more motivating than personal attention from the leader for the individual. This is especially important in large organizations. Leaders who take the time to talk to individuals will experience that their employees will really feel appreciated, and this again will trigger both inspiration and motivation for their work. Try it!

The best way to do this is to give direct praise when an employee performs extra well or attains a target. This will strengthen the effect not only in the co-worker who receives praise but also in the other employees who see or hear about it. It will have a positive strengthening effect on the entire environment. This might sound too good to be true, but this is how human motivation works. People will give that little extra and work harder when they receive back respect and recognition.

Leaders can be sources of inspiration for employees by showing that they care about their group of colleagues and are not just concerned about their own gain. In the next round, this could produce employees who are more willing to co-operate, are more loyal and more dedicated.

An organizational culture that shows respect and care for both individual colleagues and the team has a higher level of creative production in their company, says researcher and Professor Jane Dutton at the University of Michigan.

Dean Tjosvold at Lingan University says the same. Through his research he found a link between leaders who express warmth towards their employees and their employees' motivation and productivity (Rynes et al. 2012; Dean Tjosvold, Lingnan University 2016).

Emotions Are Powerful Motivators

Human nature is such that we to a large extent are controlled by emotions. Think about a moment where you felt controlled by revenge, jealousy, fear or passion. What do these have in common? The answer is that they are all emotions and they usually motivate you to act. You get the empowering force to do something.

Positive emotions are strong motivators and driving force. A main element in applied positive psychology is to establish positive emotions, both within the individual and within the organization.

Think for a moment about what motivated you to work hard in the workplace when you did not have a position in management. Did you have a leader who believed in you, and did that motivate you? Or did you have a leader who did not believe in you? Amazing colleagues? Was the culture positive, neutral or negative?

Which factors can you point to as motivators in your own former work environments?

What do you think are the motivational factors for your employees in the department/company/organization you are working for now? Reflect on these questions. They can give you valuable information and insight.

> The fact is that you can change people's behaviour by changing their feelings.

By facilitating more positive emotions in the workplace, you create an arena where motivation and engagement blossoms.

When employees do not feel that the work they do has any impact or purpose, their motivation dies, writes Dan Ariely, the author of the book *Predictably Irrational*. Then, the work they do will only be based on external actions controlled by the will, and people will not give that little extra.

If you, on the other hand, facilitate a culture of meaning, appreciation, recognition and respect, where employees can use their strengths and contribute, you will see that they will put in that extra mile in the workplace.

Have *you* ever delivered your best work in the workplace because a leader was nagging you? Or did you deliver your best work under the circumstances where you had the opportunity to use your strengths and creative skills?

Reflect on this for a few minutes. This will give you an indication on how both you and people in general are motivated, as well as under which conditions people will give their best.

> Professor and researcher of positive psychology, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi from Claremont University in California, USA is the father of the well-known concept "Flow" and presents how people can come into what he calls the "flow zone" (Csikszentmihalyi 1997; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2014).

Flow is about how human emotions are concretely connected to getting the right level of challenges, and how being able to use our strengths at the workplace directly influences our work engagement. The flow term and the flow zone will be discussed more in depth in the section on work ethics in the workplace in Chap. 8.

Map Out the Motivation of Your Employees

There are several tools that can map the motivation in your employees. One of them is Work & Well-being Survey (UWES), developed by Professor Wilmar Schaufeli. It consists of 17 claims from positive psychology about how employees feel in the workplace, their motivation, if they feel purpose, inspiration, joy and resilience. This is a good mapping tool that will give both the leader and the employee an indication of their level of motivation for the work. In that way you can address the areas that are showing themselves to be lacking. Feel free to look up the form on Dr. Schaufeli's own webpage www.wilmarscaufeli.nl or choose another tool that maps out the same area. By finding out what motivates your employees, and the status of motivation in the workplace at all times, you as a leader will gain insight into what you could potentially be working on.

Establishing Focus Groups

It is the employees who wear the shoe and know where it pinches. In order to increase the motivation in your employees you can find out more about what they believe would create a better work environment. You should therefore start mapping what the employees themselves think about the topic you as a leader wish to map out and focus on in the organization.

You can for example establish focus groups or create surveys, in order to learn the employees' attitudes and perception of:

(a) What can motivate?
(b) What should be improved?
(c) What can destroy the productivity of an organization?

In this way you can identify the attitudes your employees have and create improvements in the environment. This can be used as the basis for further steps.

The Employees' Best Possible Future Versions of Themselves

In this exercise, the employees should write down what they see when they imagine how the workplace will be 2 years into the future.

Let the employees first answer the following questions individually:

• How do you imagine yourself in this company in 2 years?
• Which tasks do you perform?
• Which projects do you wish you had taken on?
• Which factors will need to be in place for you to thrive and experience optimal well-being at work?

Thereafter, the employees should form groups of four to six people and share their answers with each other orally. Preferably, the groups should exist of employees that work together on a daily basis, so they will also have the added bonus of getting to know each other better.

The exercise can be repeated every year, in order to evaluate progress and potentially make adjustments.

Recognition Competition Among Employees

Recognition is an important area within positive psychology and is more thoroughly dealt with in the section on recognition as a management tool in Chap. 7. An exercise that is good for increasing inspiration and motivation is to facilitate a recognition competition among the employees, where they compete in praising each other; make boasting about each other a sport.

This can be an exercise that lasts for a day, 3 days or a week the first time around.

The task is as follows: for 3 days we will all notice positive sides, positive actions and good work our colleagues have done.

Next, you should gather the whole department and share experiences about how it felt to:

(a) Give acknowledgement to others
(b) Receive acknowledgement from others

Management is encouraged to summarize at the end. It should also be discussed if this exercise should be repeated regularly.

Open Communication Channels

Create an open environment and open up communication channels, where employees have the opportunity to communicate directly with their leader. This creates increased creativity and attentiveness.

Facilitate a two-way feedback system that opens up the channels, so that the employees experience that it is possible to communicate their creative ideas to a leader.

Let Your Employees Use Their Strengths in Their Work

Throughout this book, the reader has gained an insight into the field of strengths-use at work and the effects of using those strengths in their organizations. Organizations that have focused on and implemented strengths-use have been given very positive

results. To facilitate more strengths-use in your organization, you as a leader can for instance reserve half a day or a whole day and do the exercise of mapping out your employees' strengths as described in Chap. 9. When the map is ready, the results can be used to give the employees the opportunities to make more use of their strengths at work. Strengths-use at workplaces has been shown to increase productivity through increased motivation for the work.

Leaders' Influence on Communication in the Workplace

> Most misunderstandings that occur between people are caused by the people involved are interpreting and understanding one term differently, or interpreting and understanding two different terms as the same. (Unknown)

What a leader says, how he/she says it and how the leader facilitates what and how one should communicate to and about customers, colleagues, management and company have great significance. As a leader one has the authority to set the agenda and tone for their department.

Communication is the way we all interact with other people. The words we choose to use affect the relationships we are surrounded by. We can complain, give compliments, inspire or criticize. The way we say something can deeply influence relationships, both privately and in the workplace. As a leader you are employed to set the tone and create a culture, both in terms of what you say, and how you speak to and about each other in the workplace. You have a great influence. Use it wisely.

Our Words Create Reality

Dr. Fatemi, a psychology professor at Harvard University, has written a book about how psychology and the power of the language we use can create our reality. He claims that the language we use is not just a tool for communication, but that the words we choose can affect both our internal and external world. He writes that by changing our language, we can create and transform our reality.

Which words we choose to describe our histories and our realities will in turn shape how we perceive the world and what happens around us. He claims that by choosing other words, we can shape and change our realities. The same can be said about how we communicate at work: about work, about colleagues, about the workplace, about ourselves, about the work environment, about the opportunities we have etc.

Professor Ellen Langer at Harvard University speaks about "the power of possibility". Langer has through her research demonstrated that by changing our use of words when we speak, we can change both the health and well-being of people. She claims that by making small changes in choice of words, it can make a huge

difference, for example, by calling something play rather than work. Or by telling yourself "I want to exercise" instead of "I have to exercise". It is about which words and ideas we attach to an event, thing, person or our workplace.

The same thing can happen when we change the words we use and the way we talk to and about each other, the company and customers, in a work environment. We are training out minds to see events, people, ourselves and opportunities from a more positive angle. By doing this, we are creating a new reality, according to Fatemi and Langer. Neuroscience and newer scientific research about the brain's plasticity have shown similar results.

Positive Communication Is Connected to Higher Performance

The scientists Losada and Heaphy (2004) wanted to look at levels of positive communication and any possible connection to performance at the workplace. Their research included a selection of 60 management teams. The researchers looked at three aspects of communication: (a) the degree of positive and negative comments, (b) to what extent questions were used in comparison to statements and (c) to what degree the questions focused on the group versus external environments, such as customers.

These 60 teams of leaders were split into three categories based on the teams' success in the areas of profitability and 360 degrees feedback from superiors, subordinates, colleague evaluations and customer evaluations.

The groups were split into the three categories: (1) high performing teams, (2) medium performing teams, and (3) low performing teams.

The results were clear. As seen in Fig. 7.3 the factor that turned out to be the most important predictor for the organization's performance was the ratio of positive comments in relation to negative comments.

In the teams that were defined as high performing, those who scored well in relation to profitability, 360 degrees feedback and customer satisfaction had the most positive comments in relation to the negative. These teams had an average of 5.6 positive comments in their management team for each negative comment.

In those teams categorized as medium performing (see above), the ratio was 1.8 positive comments for each negative comment; a significant difference from the high performing group.

In the last group, the low performing teams, the conditions were entirely different. Here, the ratio was three negative comments for each positive comment. Hence, a much higher degree of negative comments.

> A significant connection has been found between the degree of positive comments in the workplace and the performance of the organization. This shows that high performing organizations have a different communication pattern compared to the low performing ones (Losada and Heaphy 2004).

Another interesting discovery from the survey was that the high performing teams had a 1:1 balance of the degree of asking questions to the degree of making statements and a 1:1 balance between questions focusing on the group versus questions about external environments, for example, customers.

Here, the low performing teams had a ratio difference of 20 or more for both these two points. This means that they were much more self-centered in the way they communicated internally in the group, as well as much more concerned with making statements than asking questions.

These kinds of results make us reflect about how important it is to communicate positively and constructively in the workplace. It also means that it is important for a leader to facilitate such communication to happen. This is where positive psychology techniques enter the picture.

Even if you focus on increasing the positive communication, it can be the sign of an unhealthy organizational culture if there is too much of it. If the ratio is higher than 30 positive for every negative comment, it is a clear sign that it is an unhealthy culture denying the negative.

Professor Barbara Fredrickson recommends that the healthy limit in an organization is between 3 and 11 positive comments to each negative comment. Then the organization is working optimally, according to Fredrickson.

Active-Constructive Responding (ACR)

Active-constructive responding (ACR) is a positive psychology technique used in communication between people in order to improve relationships. This can be all sorts of relationships, both in work life and in private life.

ACR, active-constructive responding, means that people respond actively and constructively in communication with other people. They respond to others' good

	The team's performance		
	High	**Medium**	**Low**
Ratio of positive comments	5,6 to 1	1,8 to 1	0,36 6 to 1
(supportive, encouraging, appreciation versus critical, disagreement contradiction)			
Degree of asking questions versus degree of making sta tements	1,1 to 1	0,67 to 1	0,05 to 1
(question versus statement)			
Other/self-ratio	0,94 to 1	0,62 to1	0,03 to 1
(external versus internal focus)			
Source: Losada & Heaphy, 2004			

Fig. 7.3 Communication and performance in teams. (Source: Losada and Heaphy 2004)

news with authentic, active and supportive interest, in order to build stronger relationships (Gable and Reis 2010).

Research has shown that the way we respond to others' good news, has a stronger effect on building relationships than how we respond to others' bad news.

We will look at four main approaches on how to respond when someone tells you good news about themselves. These four main approaches are active-constructive, passive-constructive, active-destructive and passive-destructive. See Fig. 7.4.

The first approach to responding is the ideal one. It creates good relationships between the parties, both for the one revealing the news and for the one responding to it. This style of response involves enthusiasm and true expression of positive emotions for the person who has received good news or experienced something good. Examples of this can be when someone has gotten a new job they have wanted, booked a great holiday, received positive feedback from an employer or passed an exam and are passing this news on to a friend or colleague. Then the friend or colleague can respond in different ways. If they choose to respond in an active-constructive way, they will say something along the lines of "Oh, that is fantastic! I know that means a lot to you! Really great! I am so happy for you." When you respond in this way, it increases everyone's positive emotions, and you both experience good feelings that again build good relationships between the parties.

If you, on the other hand, choose to respond with one of the three other approaches, you will not achieve the same result. Take, for example, the passive-constructive response. Here the respondent is passive but gives a constructive feedback on the other individual's good news. They could for example say, "That's good news", but they would be expressing little or no emotions when they say it.

A third way to respond is by using the active-destructive approach. A person who responds to the other individual's positive news with the active-destructive approach may say something along the lines of "That sounds like a lot of extra responsibility to take on. You will most likely experience a lot of stress in that position, and more workhours than you currently have." The non-verbal response to the individual might be to show negative emotions by, for example, furrowing your brow or other negative expressions.

The last possible way to respond is the passive-destructive approach. Here the respondent shows no reaction to what is being said and may say something entirely different to the response of the first individual's news. The respondent may for example say: "What was the name of that colleague that lives in your neighbourhood again?" At the same time there is little or no eye contact between the two individuals. The respondent may even look away from the person sharing their news, or even move away from them.

None of the latter three ways of responding to other people's good news is a good way to build relationships between the parties, whether in the workplace or privately.

The first approach, the active-constructive, is the only one that builds good relationships between people. Employees can practice this technique. We can train our

Fig. 7.4 Active-constructive responding. For different approaches to communicating feedback

ability to respond in an active and constructive way to positive events that other people share with us. This is a technique that will create positive emotions and positive relationships between people in the workplace. At first these and other techniques may seem overly simplistic and obvious, but they are guaranteed to have a great effect on the work environment in a company.

Positive Psychology – Interventions and Techniques

A simple technique with a great effect is to establish a non-complaining culture. Too many workplaces are affected by an unhealthy complaining-culture, where dissatisfaction and complaining takes up much of the workday. This can lower work engagement, work capacity and well-being. This is important to deal with before it gets out of hand.

Establishing a Non-complaining Culture

As a leader you can set an agenda for how your workplace values solutions over complaints. One rule you can put in place is that every time a person complains about something, he/she is also committed to propose a solution or two for how this challenge can be solved. You can simply make this a rule.

This way you can discover constructive solutions to what employees may see as challenges and things they do not like about the organization. The person who wears the shoe is always the one who knows where it pinches, and with a rule like this, a lot of ideas for solutions and improvements can be discovered in an organization.

Behind every complaint, there is a hidden wish. Reflect over this for a moment. Imagine complaints that you as a leader have heard in your workplace or even thought of yourself. Then challenge yourself to think of a solution or two to these challenges. The next step would be to try and solve the challenge and implement a workable solution.

Again, this will lead to employees feeling appreciated and taken seriously, by being allowed both to share their complaints and also to come up with potential solutions. This simple change of culture can bring tremendous impact to a workplace.

During recruitment processes you can also mention that this is an important part of the organizational culture and create criteria for the selection of new employees in line with this.

Three Days of Speaking Positively About Colleagues

Plan 3 whole days where everyone in the workplace should be conscious of speaking positively about their colleagues. This is a practical exercise that everyone takes part in. Arrange a meeting afterwards and let employees share their experiences and feelings after hearing someone speaking positively about others. Discuss how this felt and what effect this can have on a work environment.

The Power in the Term «Not Yet»

In this exercise, individuals or groups can practice re-formulating negative statements used in communication with themselves or others. People can often limit themselves, for example, saying "I would like to read and learn more about business economy" and then immediately follow up with "*but* I never have time to read".

The practice of this exercise is to exchange the word "*but*" with *"not yet"*. The sentence will then be: "I would like to read and learn more about business economy and I have *not yet* had the time to read about this". This small change in words changes the meaning of the sentence. By saying that you do not have time to read,

and therefore negatively concluding that it is not possible to read, you will create a negative and limiting situation. The last sentence, on the other hand, gives hope and says that it is possible, but that there has just not been time for it. Here, the message is implied that you will have time for it at some point. This gives us the desire to read, the opportunity to read, soon.

Split the employees into groups of four.

Let them write down an example from their own lives and an example from the workplace, where they themselves have used or heard someone else use a similarly negative statement.

Next, everyone in the group will share what they have written down. In the end, the group will discuss how these examples of choices of words can affect the work environment positively or negatively.

Registering Interruptions

In this exercise, all employees shall write down those times they themselves interrupt a colleague who is speaking in the workplace. Through the exercise they will become aware of their own bad habits of interrupting others. This can have a preventative effect and also create a better environment for communication.

Active-Constructive Responding

By using this technique, you as a leader can facilitate better communication and better relationships in the workplace. You can first explain and go through the four ways of responding to a colleague's good news, either by finding a YouTube video describing ACR or by going through the four approaches yourself. Split them into smaller groups of four. Let the groups give examples of one or more of the destructive approaches that they have heard people use in the workplace, and then practice how to respond to those statements in an active-constructive way.

Workers Who Find Meaning at Work, Work Harder

Leadership is the capacity to influence others through inspiration motivated by passion, generated by vision, produced by a conviction, ignited by a purpose. (Myles Munroe)

Goler et al. (2018) did a survey among several hundred thousand workers across different companies to find out what they value the most in their workplace.

They identified three important factors. The first and most important motivational factor, identified as what workers value the most in their workplace, was to

have a job where they could use their strengths and have a certain amount of autonomy over their work. This meaning, for instance, to be able to influence some of the content as well as how they approach to work on their workload.

The second important motivational source in the workplace was having a community to go to, where one feels respected and recognized by colleagues and management.

The third important factor found in this research project, was the sense of meaning. This was achieved when the workers felt that they, through their work, contributed to something meaningful in their workplace. This can for instance be identification with the causes of the workplace or being proud of the organization giving support to other less privileged people or meaningful projects.

If workers feel that these three needs are met in their workplace, they will approach their work more wholeheartedly. In contrast, if these three needs are not being met, workers will feel less satisfied and less attached to their workplace. They will also contribute less (Goler et al. 2018). These top-three factors are some of the factors presented in this book, and in this chapter, we will dig deeper into how and why workers who find meaning in their work harder.

As previously mentioned, economic rewards do not give any lasting effect or internal motivation to work harder. If workers find their work unrewarding and even uninspiring, or they simply feel undervalued, their work ethic will shrink accordingly.

What can happen then, is that some may create "escape mechanisms" in their workday, in order to get it to pass as quickly as possible. People who do not feel appreciated or do not experience that they get to contribute with their competence in a meaningful way in the workplace, may be counting the hours and minutes until they are done with the minimum requirement of work and the agreed upon hours of work. They invest as little as they can, since they do not experience being seen or appreciated, or being able to use their engagement or strengths in any way. The job has simply become only a source for money, and the employees save their energy until their workday is over.

Others who do not find their work rewarding may try to make themselves other personal "reward sources" throughout their workday. This can, for example, be through making conversation with a colleague, surfing the web or other things that give them a small "boost" and can make the day go by faster.

If you as a leader create systems that make your employees feel visible, acknowledged and appreciated, and make them feel that their contributions make a difference, you will see that many people will change their behaviour. Many will place their honour in contributing positively and putting in more effort. It is all about being seen and appreciated. You need to find meaning in what you are doing. Leaders who seek to create a common platform where both employees and the company find meaning and have the same goals, will profit from this.

> To find a sense of meaning in one's workday means that one feels valuable, useful and appreciated (Kahn 1990). This means that one feel that what one invest in the job means something. The reward can often be a sort of cognitive or emotional return. It can also be to create meaning for other people.

The top leader of Microsoft, Satya Nadella who has stated that he works with positive psychology techniques has achieved an incredible increase in production in the company on a global scale. He wrote in an introduction email to his employees: "I truly believe that each of us must find meaning in our work. The best work happens when you know that it's not just work, but something that will improve other people's lives. This is the opportunity that drives each of us at this company."

As previously mentioned, a sense of meaning in the workplace is of great significance to the employees and is a strong indicator of work engagement (May et al. 2004).

In a large survey done by Harvard Business Review in 2013 among 12,000 workers around the world, half of the participants stated that their work had no meaning or significance. Half of the people they asked could not relate to their company's overarching mission.

In a different survey, also performed by Harvard Business Review, among 230,000 workers in 142 different countries, only 13.5% said that they actually liked their jobs.

A sense of meaning in the workplace is to some degree connected to the eternal question about the meaning of life. Most people have a built-in mechanism that makes them search for the meaning of life, and it has been demonstrated time after time that being able to offer someone something, or being able to contribute to something that is greater than oneself, gives people a lot of satisfaction. Today most adults in employment spend 8 h of their daily lives in the workplace, and it is therefore not uncommon for people to search for meaning there too.

As a leader, there is a lot you can do in this area. You can try to combine the different tasks in the company with the best person for that particular job. Or maybe allow for the employees to have time set aside to reflect over the meaning of the job they are currently doing. This is called "job crafting" and is a technique frequently used within the area of positive psychology in the workplace. Read more about job crafting in the exercises a few paragraphs below.

A leader can also establish visions and goals where the feeling of authentic belonging to something larger, becomes a part of it. This could, for example, be collective support to a good cause. Or the leader can establish a culture where people are aware of the importance of recognizing and appreciating each other's work. All of this contributes to trigger positive emotions and even the feeling of meaning in the workplace. Which again are two of the main sources of work engagement and well-being at the workplace. This will, as we have read in previous chapters, in turn increase profitability for the company. This is what we call a win–win situation.

Recognition as a Management Tool

Public recognition is one of the most effective and most underutilized management tools.
(Laszlo Bock, Senior Vice President of People Operation, Google)

Workers who experience recognition for their efforts in the workplace, and who feel that what they do has a purpose, are more satisfied, happy and motivated employees. On the other hand, workers who do not feel appreciated are twice as likely to quit in the coming year.

Other scientific research have shown that even simply bearing witness to gratitude and seeing others being recognized in the workplace can make workers more motivated, efficient and creative. This again means that if a leader expresses recognition of employees in a plenary, the results are positive for the leader, the employees and the company.

> Workers who do not feel appreciated are twice as likely to quit in the coming year.

The Disney Company has understood that using public recognition as a tool for leaders helps creating positive work engagement at the workplace.

If you have ever been to a Disney park, you would have surely seen how they encourage both visitors and workers who have had a positive experience with an employee to give feedback about it. They also encourage their employees to tweet to the internal Twitter feed if they observe that a colleague does something positive. This means that they are looking for the positives in their colleagues, and race to praise each other when they catch a colleague in doing something positive at work. This can for instance be putting in some extra effort to helping someone, smiling, giving extra service or assisting a colleague. It does not matter what it is, as long as it is something positive an employee contributes with at work.

A Disney employee is called a "cast member" in their internal vocabulary. When an employee sees that a colleague does something positive, the employee is encouraged to tweet this inside his/her system. The leader will thereafter take this message, add a compliment and a photo of the employee who has done something positive, to ensure it is spread throughout the whole Disney organization.

In this way, the employee who has done something positive will receive public recognition from his/her colleagues and the leaders inside their organization. These employees will be seen, appreciated and receive positive attention and feedback when they are seen doing something positive. This is what the Disney Company has named #CastCompliment.

This relatively small intervention creates a positive spiral of improved performance in the workplace.

Colleagues that are watching this can as a result decide to increase their own performance, because they can think that next time they might be the ones who will be seen doing something positive at the workplace. As a result other employees will often feel more motivated, be more efficient and creative.

In short, a win–win for both the company and the employee. Employees who feel that there is more purpose in what they do, contribute more to the workplace, while the company on their side can enjoy having happier and more content workers, in addition to happier customers and higher productivity.

> Laszlo Bock, Senior Vice President of People Operation for Google, says that "public recognition is one of the most effective and most underutilized management tools". (Lazlo Bock, Senior Vice President of People Operation, GOOGLE)

Try something similar in your organization. As a leader you have an amazing opportunity to establish policy, procedures and routines in your organizational system. It is actually one of the most important jobs you can do as a leader: inspiring your employees.

As a leader one can establish a culture of recognition that again contributes to increase the feeling of meaning for the employees for the work they do. Perhaps you, like Google and Disney, can establish a work culture of recognition. Perhaps you can create a hashtag for your company and a plan for posting positive comments. Social media has given us a fantastic opportunity to thank and recognize talented employees in the public space. This is a source of motivation for the employees.

If your workplace is working a lot with projects, one positive psychology technique could be for the teams to discuss how each project contributes/contributed to meaning; either to the workplace itself or maybe to some persons, people groups, society or to a specific important cause. It is a process of becoming aware of the meaningfulness at work. In this, one also can discuss one's own and others' values and strengths being used in this specific project. By doing this one builds up a positive work environment, as illustrated here, through finding a purpose.

When working in the field of electrical engineering, one could, for example, focus on the value of bringing electricity to the citizens. Or for instance focus on how installing new electrical systems in public buildings is meaningful for a lot of people. Feeling that one's work is bringing meaning to others is a way to feel appreciation and find purpose at work. Another focus may be on the fact that one's work contributes to secure against damage to the power mains, so that lives will not be lost. All these examples are examples of meaningful contributions in these kinds of jobs. Most jobs do contribute in valuable ways to the community in one way or another.

For instance, people working with cleaning the hospital. This can be reframed as a very meaningful job, that brings great value to other people. The workers wash and keep the place clean so that patients will not become ill. This gives the job a great purpose and meaning.

Another example is psychologists. They have jobs that can mean a lot to people who need to process their psychological challenges, and many psychologists find great purpose in their work of helping others.

Teachers working at schools also do have meaningful jobs. In addition to teaching important and foundational knowledge, they can also affect the values of emerging generations.

The debate about meaning in the workplace could continue along these lines about any workplace. Leaders who implement this will come to learn that their employees welcome this sort of discussion. When a leader is open to and can clearly demonstrate that they are using valuable time out of their workday to focus on things that matter to the employees, both the leader and the workplace will benefit.

A life is often evaluated in light of what the person has contributed in relation to something greater than themselves. We often hear about people who are getting close to the end of their life and say similar things. It is also a recurring theme in biographies and films, where people often reflect on what is important in life. Human beings search for meaning.

Collective Support for a Good Cause

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. (Winston Churchill)

When a company donates from their financial profits to good causes in society, this is a signal to employees that the leaders of the company care about more than earning money or reaching their set goals for the company. You might wonder whether such a "small" thing can contribute to creating meaning and, again, motivation to work. It almost seems too good to be true.

This effort, however, will have an effect for the simple reason that the workers in the organization are "only" human and react and act in human ways. People have built-in mechanisms that make them feel like it is meaningful to help others.

This could be something like saving children's lives in Africa or provide help to children in hospitals or shelters. This gives purpose. Helping to wrap and deliver Christmas presents or standing for 2 h by the Salvation Army Christmas kettle are other examples of possible purposeful contributions from workers to their local societies.

If the management decides to give money directly rather than performing services, the employees should be involved in the decision of where the money will go to – from a selection of good causes. This will cause the employees to automatically feel like they are part of a meaningful contribution. If this is done in a way that the employees feel they can evaluate which causes are the most compatible with their own values, this is the best approach. This can be done by allowing the employees to vote every year or every other year for which cause to donate to.

Another way of doing this is by offering employees an opportunity to volunteer to work 2–3 h extra, where the pay they normally would have received for working those hours goes directly to the people in need. Then the company can match the same amount the employees have raised.

When it comes to purely monetary donations that the company gives to different humanitarian causes, it is important that you as a leader regularly update your employees about the effects of their donations. Tell them how the money is being used. One example could be: "We are very proud that we as a company have given X Pounds and contributed to the housing and schooling of disadvantaged children in Asia, so they do not have to live on the streets". Then the employees will feel joy and purpose in their workday. These are known factors for well-being and motivation in the workplace.

You can present an overview of the amount of the contribution, for example, that Syrian refugees received x number of food rations/polio vaccines/tents, etc. You will see that the investment in and pride to work for a workplace that does something valuable for others outside the company will increase.

This can also create profit through creating purpose for the workers in the workplace; they will feel that they are making a small difference, have more positive emotions in their workday and have an experience of belonging, feeling unity and more. Such a company will, as research shows, see the results of this concretely in

their return on investment (ROI) in dollars. Even though this hopefully is not the primary motive, it is a positive consequence of investing meaning for employees in the workplace.

Look for the Meaningful Parts of the Existing Jobs – Job Crafting

All employees, including you as a leader, can choose to look for the meaningful aspects of their existing job. This is referred to as "job crafting" or "job engineering". Job crafting is about shaping a job so that it gives more meaning to the person in the position.

> People are more generally inspired and motivated by WHY we do things rather than WHAT we do. This kind of driving force exists in all of us.

Many employees only view their job as a list of duties they need to complete throughout the day, and nothing more. They may need to gather the energy just to get started, look forward to the breaks, make the time pass faster by chatting to colleagues, and look forward to signing off at the end of the day. Then their duties are over, and they can "live".

But it does not have to be like that. You can use techniques to attempt to make the existing job more meaningful. One of the ways to do this is by making a list in three parts:

1. Identify and write down the actual work tasks.
2. Identify your own motivation, strengths and passion.
3. Compare the lists and see if there are already areas in everyday routine where you get to use your strengths, are motivated and have a passion. If there are areas that overlap, it is fairly likely you are satisfied with your work tasks.

One way to identify these areas is by noticing your emotions and energy when you complete different tasks. Which tasks give you energy and trigger positive emotions? This is most likely where your strengths lie, and you have good motivation to complete these tasks.

Look at your remaining tasks: those which are neutral, and those you simply dislike doing. In a team setting, there will always be people with different preferences when it comes to tasks. Some people like simple work tasks better than others. For example, some people love having direct contact with customers, but do not enjoy planning and writing long reports. Others may love doing just that: diving into and writing long reports. The point here is to re-distribute work tasks within the team, based on strengths, motivation and passion.

After this first phase of the job crafting process, which can be performed on both an individual and team level, you can continue to re-shape the rest of the work tasks, so that they are experienced as more meaningful. This can be done by viewing the job as consisting of building blocks rather than a list of duties. Divide them into

individual blocks and analyse each of them while keeping in mind what you can do to change what is experienced as negative. After this you can, for example, make small changes to the way in which you perform tasks. Perhaps begin the day with the most interesting tasks, so the positive energy rubs off on the tasks you are performing later. Perhaps the most important thing is to follow your passion and use your strengths in the job, and in this way create innovation for the company and more interesting tasks for yourself. Perhaps you could complete some education and integrate that competence in the work. Perhaps this could, for someone who is interested in learning and teaching, be a way to gain approval to develop a training programme for the company, developing new routines or forms, etc. Being able to do something one is extra interested in could increase the employee's work motivation significantly and is definitely worth a try.

After the parts of writing down the work tasks, grouping them in accordance to time and energy use, comparing the tasks against one's strengths and the evaluation of the various measures, much is done.

Having done this, one is ready to exercise to craft one's job in other ways, such as the researchers Jane Dutton at Michigan's Ross School of Business and Amy Wrzesniewski at Yale School of Management describe in their theory about job crafting. They split job crafting into three areas: (1) task crafting, (2) relational crafting and (3) cognitive crafting.

Task crafting is described in the section above. *Relational crafting* relates to your relationship with your employees. Perhaps you could co-operate more or less with someone, switch tasks and so on.

Cognitive crafting relates to changing your cognitive view of your job. You rephrase how you look at the work tasks and your relationships in the workplace with words.

All jobs will naturally have areas that most people find boring and uninteresting. These can be identified throughout this process and be distributed evenly among the team.

> Jane Dutton at Michigan's Ross School of Business and Amy Wrzesniewski at Yale School of Management divided job crafting into three areas: 1) task crafting, 2) relational crafting and 3) cognitive crafting (Wrzesniewski and Dutton 2001).

Positive Psychology – Interventions and Techniques

Create Meaning through Collective Support of Others

In this exercise you as a leader should advocate for a system where the organization gives collective support to good causes, as mentioned in the first sections of this chapter. It is important that all employees get to be a part of the decision of whom to support, and that they receive updates proving that the contribution makes a difference. Let the employees be allowed to contribute by working more, as well.

Job Crafting

Ross School of Business at Michigan University sells complete task sets that can be used in the work forming process in your own workplace. You can also follow the steps above and create your own work forming process in the company. Find the task sets by searching on the web for job crafting and the name of the university.

Find Meaning in the Different Projects You Work on

With this exercise one can look for and discuss meaning in a project or assignment that has recently been completed. For example, an electrician who has repaired a damaged power plant can find meaning in knowing that people have not been harmed. Or teachers can make themselves aware that they through their jobs are giving children the feelings of safety and belief in themselves. Or janitors who repair damages to ceilings, floors and walls in order to help the residents. Those are meaningful jobs. The point will be to sit down and reflect on it, become aware of it, so one can actually be aware that the work one does has meaning to others. If you then, as the leader, ensure that a section of the project evaluation contains this aspect, employees will, as previously mentioned, feel more meaning in their work tasks. They will also feel a greater sense of belonging. This leads to a stronger appreciation to their workplace.

Find Your Employees' Strengths and Values in Projects

Follow the same principles as above, but here one section needs to be added: after every completed project put in a section where you discuss which strengths and values have been used for this particular project. Find strengths from each individual in the work group. The results from this exercise can be used in the job re-crafting process, or they can be used to create awareness around and recognition of each employees' strengths.

A Culture of Appreciation

> To feel appreciated is the most sustainable source of motivation in the workplace. (Adam Grant, Professor, Wharton University)

There are not many other factors that motivate people to give that little extra, than the power of feeling meaningful and appreciated at work. For people to be able to use their skills in the workplace and be able to contribute to something meaningful

creates a strong motivational force in people. Attitudes of leaders and employees are important, and as the leader one needs to establish and build a culture in the workplace where these ideas are included.

> We can all choose to be encouraging catalysts for each other and let others feel appreciated in the workplace. This factor can lead to big changes in the workplace environment.

In order to establish a culture where people appreciate each other, leaders can use one or several of the techniques in this book.

In Chap. 6, the example of the gratitude email was mentioned. The same exercise can also be used in order to give more purpose and meaning at the workplace and is therefore repeated below.

Notes of Gratitude

Another thing you can do is to boost "boring" everyday work tasks that are perceived as uninspiring and accentuate to become more meaningful. One example of this can be given in the context of working at a restaurant. You can for example create a notice board at the exit of a restaurant where one encourages customers to write a simple note of gratitude for the service, food, location or other things they appreciated while visiting the restaurant. These notes can later be read by management to the employees before every shift, in order to give them a motivational boost.

This can also result in it becoming a sport to work, as to receive positive feedbacks. Such small things can do wonders for motivation and effort expended in the workplace.

A sense of purpose in the workplace contributes to employees experiencing positive emotions during their workday. "Positive emotions" is a large topic that has been much researched within positive psychology. The next chapter deals with how important it is to experience positive emotions in the workplace, as well as how important it is for work engagement, health, teamwork, work environment, etc.

Conversations with Your Employees About Their Strengths and Ambitions

Have regular short conversations with the individual employees in your team.

Find out what your employees' strengths are, and what they long to do. Can you re-distribute some tasks and areas of responsibility, so that they fit the individual's ambitions better?

Team Meetings Where You Discuss Purpose

Facilitate meetings where the team works on finding purpose in projects and tasks, as previously described in this chapter.

Facilitating More Meaningful Events in Everyday Work Life

This technique aims to facilitate more events in everyday work life that are experienced as more meaningful for the employees.

Everyone sits down and thinks about what it would take and how it can be done.

All share this with each other in smaller groups.

The team leader then shares this information with the rest of the department/the other groups in plenary.

Thereafter, the leader hosts an open plenary debate about what "we in our business" can concretely do today in order to facilitate more events in our daily lives that will be experienced as meaningful for the employees.

Create a concrete plan of implementation.

Mapping Out Six Inspiring and Meaningful Events

All the employees in the department can be given the task to write down the six most inspiring and meaningful events that have happened in the workplace in the last month. Second, the ones who wish to share something can share this in plenary.

This will be experienced as inspiring, both for those who share and for those who listen. Leaders will gain ideas that could inspire the employees in their everyday work life and can build further on this information in order to create a more meaningful and inspiring work environment.

Compare Personal Values with Daily Routines

In this exercise, the employees are asked to compare their to-do lists or daily routines with their personal values.

The employees each get a sheet that they divide with a vertical line in the middle. They shall make notes alternately on both sides of the line. The to-do list for the day should be on the left side. Personal values are listed on the right side.

Then everyone shall reflect independently on how they spent the last 24 h, the last week and the last year.

To what degree has the co-worker spent his/her time in compliance with his/her own personal values? If, for example, personal growth and self-development are meaningful goals to someone, he/she can reflect on whether he/she should spend more time working on these areas in his/her everyday life, and how he/she would then achieve this.

How to Best Build Good Teams and Good Relationships

> Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success. (Henry Ford)

Research has shown that the single factor that creates the most positive emotions, both privately and in the workplace, is good relationships. Good relationships affect how we feel. If we experience good relationships in the workplace, we feel happier. On the other hand, negative relationships can make an entire work environment go sour and steal attention from the work.

However, both positive and negative emotions are infectious. In Chap. 6 you can read more about how and to what degree the leader's own mood and positive emotions affect the workplace. There you can also read about research that shows a significant correlation between the presence of positive emotions in the workplace and a higher degree of satisfaction and success.

For the leader it is crucial to work to build both positive emotions and good interpersonal relationships in the workplace, both between him/herself and the team and between the members of the team.

Generation Y – The Millennium Generation Has Other Demands from Their Work than Earlier Generations

Generation Y, or the millennium generation as they are also called, is the generation born in the period 1980–2000 that has now entered the workforce. These young workers have different and bigger expectations of work and workplaces than the previous traditionalists born before 1945; baby boomers, born between 1945 and 1965; and generation X, born between 1965 and 1980.

Generation Y has been described in both positive and negative ways. On the one hand, it is described as the "me-generation", lazy and narcissistic. On the other hand, it is also described as open, generous, kind-hearted, confident, liberal and open to new ideas and new ways to live and work.

This is a generation that wishes to find purpose and meaning in the work it does and to have good relationships in the workplace. It wants to receive acknowledgement for the work it does, have a good balance between work and spare time, greater

flexibility, as well as opportunities to grow. It highly appreciates authenticity and is extremely team-oriented (Forbes).

> An important research result when it comes to employees, relationships and teams, is that employees who feel highly appreciated by the people they work closely with, have a 29 % higher chance of flourishing; meaning to thrive, grow, make progress, increase and create results – in the workplace than those who feel less appreciated. (Hone et al. 2015b)

It challenges the traditional top-down leadership style and appreciates leaders who respect the perspectives and ideas it contributes with. It wishes to be involved in council and it wants leaders who listen and consult it about decisions and ask, rather than command. This necessitates a different kind of leadership style and a management approach that is skilled at relationships.

Positive Emotions and Achievements in Teams

As mentioned in Chap. 2, a scientific correlation has been found between the level of positive emotions and achievements in teams. The researcher Marcial Losada has performed a lot of research on teams and their functionality in the workplace.

In one of his largest research projects, he found that high performing teams had a ratio of six positive emotions to every negative. These teams had higher scores on profit, customer satisfaction as well as 360 degrees feedback. The latter consisted of scores from superiors and evaluations from subordinates. This scientifically proven correlation was significant and clear.

The results he found among teams that scored low on profit, customer satisfaction and 360 degrees feedback scores was measured to be at a ratio of 1:1. This meant one positive emotion for every negative emotion.

Summarized, this means that the research results show correlations between teams that perform respectively well and poorly, and the frequency of positive emotions in the workplace. Teams that had a low frequency of positive emotions in their everyday work life also had lower profit, lower customer satisfaction and a lower feedback score from the evaluations of their superiors, colleagues and subordinates.

Similar results were found for those teams that had higher ratios of positive emotions per negative. They scored higher on profit, customer satisfaction and 360-degree feedback. This gives us valuable insight into why we should strive to have positive emotions in the workplace.

Growth-Mindset and Growth-Perspective in the Team

Companies and organizations can profit from developing a growth-perspective culture in their team. A growth-mindset or growth-perspective is a mindset where people experience joy from learning and being challenged. A fixed-mindset or fixed-perspective, on the other hand, sees talent as a quality or skill that people and companies either have or do not have.

Carol Dweck and colleagues have in recent times been researching these two types of mindsets and organizations (Harvard Business Review 2015). They discovered that, roughly speaking, there is an established consensus about mindsets in every organization.

Within this consensus there is a whole list of characteristics that accompany the mindset. One example of a characteristic of an organization with a fixed-mindset culture was that the employees expressed that the company had only a couple of "stars" who were the only ones who were highly appreciated. The rest of the work force did not feel appreciated. The employees in the companies characterized by a fixed-mindset also felt that they did not receive support. They did not feel the same sense of belonging as the employees in companies that were considered to have a growth-mindset environment.

The leaders in the growth-mindset companies expressed a higher degree of positive views and positive attitudes towards their employees than those in the fixed-mindset companies. They described their employees as more innovative, cooperative and willing to learn.

Organizations that are characterized by a growth-mindset culture have employees who are happier at work, are more innovative and more willing to take risks (Harvard Business Review 2015).

Employees in companies characterized by a growth-mindset are:

47% more likely to say that their colleagues are trustworthy.
34% more likely to feel a strong sense of ownership of and belonging to their company.
65% more likely to say that the company supports risk-taking.
49% more likely to say that the company supports innovation. (hbr.org)

How to Create a Growth Culture

A leader who wishes to build his/her team and increase the organization's growth-mindset culture can look to Microsoft and how Satya Nadella focuses on this in his leadership. Nadella invites his employees to use their creativity and to contribute with their ideas. He allows employees to share their ideas with others. Those who have similar interests are placed in a team to develop a business plan, create a prototype for the idea and pitch it to the Microsoft leadership. The teams that win receive financing to realise their projects.

In another project in Microsoft, Nadella, for instance, officially valued the employees' abilities to take calculated risks. In this way, Microsoft discovers people with different competences and allows them to use their creativity in a way that triggers enthusiasm.

Microsoft also discovers their managerial talent though these types of initiatives.

Microsoft creates an environment of growth by having a yearly evaluation of every employee, where the company's CEO and its management team all participate. The goal is to consider moving employees upwards or between teams, so that they can use their competence in a better way.

This is how Microsoft creates enthusiasm and drive among their employees. The company gains the full potential of their employees because they feel valued. In addition, Microsoft receives multiple innovative ideas and products. This is a good way to create an environment of growth in an organization.

> Research shows that leaders who regularly give recognition and encouragement to their teams can increase productivity by as much as 40%.

Strength-Based Composition of Teams

As a leader you are dependent on a team that functions well and delivers results. It is therefore important to create a team consisting of members with different strengths. The leader should already have mapped these strengths of his/her employees at a previous stage and will be able to use this overview as the basis to compose teams of members with different strengths.

It is important that your style of leadership encourages creativity, that you are listening to your employees' opinions and that you understand that differences can be a source of strength to the team. As a leader you can and should strengthen and reward positive attitudes in the group. Encourage differences and the idea of valuing other's contributions as much as their own. This is a collaborative work to build attitudes that both you and your teams can be working on in parallel.

Team members who know each other's strengths can relate to each other more efficiently, and in this way strengthen the group-cohesion, whilst at the same time reducing the risk of conflicts.

Disagreements and conflicts should not be perceived as threats. You should stress that in the process of disagreeing there is an opportunity to develop new knowledge that can push the group forward. It is important to appreciate creativity and to value other people's knowledge as much as one's own. Here, you as a leader are an active role model.

Appreciative Inquiry-Processes in the Team

In order to help teams to develop and grow, Appreciative Inquiry techniques can be used. For instance, in order to create visions for the future work of the team. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a technique in four steps that focuses on the future of the team/company/organization, the goals the team/organization wishes to achieve and how to get there. It is a positive psychology technique that uses a so-called 4D circle to analyse and develop the four phases: discovery, dream, design and destiny.

The steps include to (1) discover and map out, (2) create a dream or vision together, (3) design systems and structures and at the end (4) to implement systems and structures. Appreciative Inquiry will be explored in more depth in Chap. 10. The technique can be useful in helping teams grow and develop.

Positive Psychology – Interventions and Techniques

Composing Teams by Strengths

Leaders can put together teams consisting of members with different strengths. The strengths should already have been identified through the mapping done at an earlier stage. See the chapter on strengths in this book. Whenever possible, delegate the assignments among the team members based on strengths.

Strength-Based Seminars

The company can arrange seminars to identify their employees' strengths. This can be exercised on every level: management groups, teams and departments. This is actually one of the most important exercises of positive psychology that you as a leader can initiate in your company. This exercise should be executed by all leaders who desire to work with positive psychology in their company. See Chap. 9 about strengths.

Feedback and Encouragement

As a leader, you should give regular feedback and encouragement to the team; both to the individual members and to the team as a whole. As described in the introduction to this chapter, scientific research has shown that productivity in a team can increase by as much as 40% when a leader regularly gives recognition and encouragement to their team.

Creating a Culture of Growth in the Company

By using the examples from Microsoft in the section above, a leader can advocate for an environment of growth in his/her organization.

Build Collective Optimism

Optimism is something that can be learnt through modelling and training. Research has shown that optimism has a significant influence when it comes to effort made at the workplace (Seligman 1998). Optimism will make people handle resistance better (Carver et al. 1993). In addition, optimistic team members are more able to persevere in their work, especially when the tasks are engaging (Erez and Isen 2002). Martin Seligman's book *Learned optimism* can contribute here.

Reframing

Practice reframing unfavourable attitudes and events. This relates to interpretation framework and ways of looking at things.

As a leader you can initiate this exercise by describing an example from an action you have seen or and attitude you have noticed that exists within the company. You may, for example, have heard many employees express negative statements about John, a leader at a departmental level. People often talk about how he doesn't seem to do anything at work. They have noticed that he often closes the door to his office and they have drawn the conclusion that he is not working. People also find him anti-social. These experienced interpretations by the people watching and talking can potentially become established as a "truth".

Ask in plenary if there could be other alternative interpretations of this (and other selected events that you present). Could it be that John needs some tranquility and quiet in order to be able to work? Could it be that he has so many tasks to complete these days that he has to work intensely and does not have time to take breaks?

Look for the positive in the challenging or negative.

Look for lessons in different situations where the company or the team has experienced setbacks. Ask what can be learned from the mistakes and setbacks that have been experienced.

This is a technique that can be used throughout the organization and beyond. Any place where you find human beings, there is a way of interpreting events. It is important to unveil potential sources of misunderstandings, envy, gossip and misinterpretation. By doing this one can uncover developing conflicts in advance and stop them in their tracks. Think about finding real examples from your workplace before introducing this exercise.

In my former job as a leader in HR I often opened meetings by referring to the following quote: "Many difficulties and conflicts in the workplace (and beyond) happen because people interpret the same term differently, or different terms as the same thing". How we interpret a term is influenced by our previous experiences. This is a very important principle for all people in our relationships to other people, no matter the context: romantic relationships, friendships, relationships in the workplace, etc. Reflect on what this could mean for a workplace.

Reflection on Successes and Setbacks

Teams should take plenty of time to reflect on both successes and setbacks.
Give the team time to reflect once a month on:

- Successes they have experienced
- Setbacks they have experienced
- Solution-oriented suggestions to improve and equalize setbacks

Gratitude Exercises

Leaders can organize for employees to express their gratitude through comments to others. This can be executed on several levels in the organization. The same exercises about gratitude as presented earlier in this book can also be applied on team levels. See exercises on gratitude on page XX and XX.

Appreciative Inquiry

Execute an Appreciative Inquiry process in the team. Here the same technique on the team level that is presented in Chap. 10 on Appreciative Inquiry can be used.

Team Building Exercises

All exercises that can help relationships and teams grow and develop, and are founded on respect for and recognition of the individual co-worker, will influence the team's collective and individual experience of community.

Chapter 8
Results in the Employees

> *Effective leadership is not about making speeches or being liked; leadership is defined by results.*
>
> Peter Drucker

Abstract Many organizations and businesses have employees with lower levels of work engagement. Every leader has great possibility to influence both his/her employees and their performance at work. It is very important that leaders have the scientific knowledge about how to increase work engagement and know how to help their employees increase their state of flow. Flow is a state where people are optimally engaged and a state that leads to the highest inner motivation where one is working with a higher capacity. In this chapter the reader is introduced to the theory of flow and is given techniques on how to increase flow at the workplace.

In the previous chapters we have looked at the factors in the leader (Chap. 6) and factors in the leadership tasks (Chap. 7).

In this chapter we will look at the results that executed positive leadership creates in employees. This includes factors such as higher workplace engagement, better attitudes and increased work performance.

We first look at how the results of executed positive leadership increase engagement in the workplace and how this leads to a win–win situation for the leaders, the organization and the employees. Thereafter we look into how the attitudes of the employee can be changed for the better with the use of positive leadership and how important this change of attitudes is for the company. At the end of the chapter, an outline of peak performance is given, with a description of how you as the leader can help increase your employees' performance, through your positive leadership.

Engagement in the Workplace Is Worth Gold

It is no secret that a lot of employees experience a low level of work engagement in their workplaces. A Gallup survey from 2016 showed that only 13% of employees worldwide are committed to their workplaces (Gallup 2016). Many organizational factors have been researched in several theories and research, but often these factors are beyond the control of individual employees. The employees are at the mercy of the leader they have, as well as the goals and the environment the leader desires to establish in their workplace. A leader has a lot of power, probably a lot more than the individual leader realizes. We know already that the most important factor for people leaving the workplaces is their next-level leader (Schwantes 2012).

This demonstrates that the relationships to the leader as well as the measures the leaders initiate to make the individual co-worker be content at work are crucial. The workplace consists of individual people. It is essential for a leader to have a certain amount of knowledge about the individual team members, what motivates them and what can make them thrive and perform as good as they can at work. Thus, the leader has an immense influence; they have MEGA IMPACT on what happens in the workplace.

> Research, among other from the VIA Strengths@Work Survey, shows that 77 % of employees that experience that they get to use their strengths in the workplace, say they thrive and are engaged in the job. (www.viacharacter.org)

Throughout the chapters of the book, we have looked at many equivalent research results that show the importance for leaders to invest in knowledge about how and when employees become motivated and perform their best at work. This is a crucial and critical knowledge for the leader who wants to increase their employees' engagement and productivity in the workplace.

We have also been looking at specific research results demonstrating how unmotivated workers cost companies money, in the form of lower productivity and higher staff turnover – something that is visible and directly impacts the bottom line.

> Engaged employees have a 87 % less probability to leave the workplace.
> Organizations with committed employees outperform disengaged employees by 202%.
> At the same time, we know that happy employees have 31% higher productivity, 37% higher sale and three times as much creativity. These are results that affect the bottom line directly. (www.good.co)

Committed employees are more motivated and create higher profit for the company. In short, by facilitating positive psychology techniques in the workplace, one can create a win–win situation for both leaders and employees alike.

Flow is a term commonly used in positive psychology that describes people who feel engaged. This is a term that is useful to take note of, because flow triggers motivation and is closely connected to engagement. Flow is the term Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi invented to describe how people can experience being in the flow zone: to be optimally engaged, both personally and in the workplace. See the illustration of being in the flow zone in Fig. 8.1. He describes flow as a condition of the highest inner motivation, where one has the feeling of working at full capacity.

Leaders Can Help Employees Get into the Flow Zone

Csikszentmihalyi lists nine points describing people being in the flow zone. It is not necessary for all the factors to be present in order to experience flow.

The first point to experience flow is connected to the subject we discussed in Chap. 7, namely, the experience of having clear, concise and achievable goals. The latter is important, and the goals have to be both sufficiently challenging and achievable. If the goals are set too high for the employee to reach, it will have the opposite effect.

It is therefore important to map out employees' strengths and give tasks that are sufficiently challenging and achievable. In this way, the leader can also tailor tasks to specific people.

> The feeling of being in the flow zone – being in flow- significantly increases the level of performance in the specific task. (Koehn et al. 2013)

The second point on Csikszentmihalyis' list on when people are experiencing being in the flow zone, meaning they are optimally motivated, is when having the feeling of being highly focused and centre all their attention on what they are doing.

Point number three is that the activity one is doing is intrinsically motivating, and point number four is feeling a sense of inner peace and total immersion while doing the task. One is immersed in the work and what one is doing has one's complete focus.

Point five is the feeling of forgetting time and place, a feeling of timelessness. Point number six of describing a person being in flow, is the immediate feeling of positive feedback on what you are doing. Point seven is feeling a balance between skill level and challenge, a feeling of mastery, that you manage to perform this task.
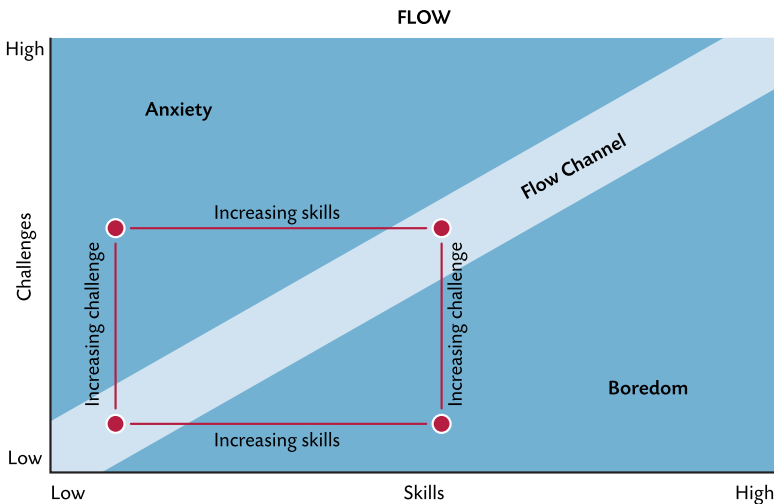

Fig. 8.1 The flow zone

Point eight is the feeling of having personal control over the situation and the result. Point nine describes how, when being in the flow zone, you can become so committed that you forget about your physical needs. This is due to having a complete focus on the activity itself.

Examples of people who are in a state of flow could be a musician playing music without even thinking; he/she is becoming so consumed by the music and the joy of playing that he/she forgets time and place and do not feel any other physical need. The internal motivation is high, and the focus is solely on the activity itself.

The feeling of being in the flow zone increases our levels of performance in a certain task significantly (Koehn et al. 2013). We have all experienced being in the flow zone, the feeling of having control over what we are doing, of being in a state where we complete tasks easily and efficiently and where the job we are doing is being performed at its highest level. We can find people who describe what it is like when they are in the flow zone for all professions.

> As a leader you can help your employees to enter the flow zone. One way of doing this is by dividing tasks and assignments by skills, education and passions. If the employees are able to use their personal strengths and skills to do a good job, they can become "consumed by the job" and as a result work harder. This is a partially hidden motivator and work force that can be advantageous to use more around workplaces.

The opposite of engagement is disengagement. If we are not challenged positively, through, for example, being given tasks adapted to our skills and knowledge, most of us easily become disengaged.

If we are able to work in a workplace that gives us meaning and if we have tasks that are suitably challenging and on a suitable level of mastery, our work engagement increases. This is also in line with Ryan and Deci's motivation model, mentioned in previous chapters.

If a leader wishes to identify both his/her own and his/her employees' flow zones he/she can reflect over the questions below. These questions can also be used for reflection in teams and groups.

Positive Psychology – Interventions and Techniques

Leader's and Employees' Reflection

Reflect on the questions individually first. Next, different workers should share what they have been reflecting on, in groups of six. In the end they should discuss and summarize common denominators in the stories they have just shared.

- When do you experience the flow zone in everyday work life?
- Have you seen examples of when other colleagues had good flow?
- Are there any common denominators for all the stories we have heard?
- How can you increase the flow in your workplace?

Increasing Flow in the Workplace

You can increase the occurrence of flow and thus the work engagement in the workplace by:

- Having clear goals.
- Giving and receiving quick feedback on completed tasks.
- Giving employees suitably intellectual challenges.
- Letting the employees have variation in their work.

Find Flow in Your Work

Let the employees try out tasks where they can use the skills they have, skills they are not currently getting full use of today.

Let everyone in the team have the opportunity to contribute alike.

Attitudes

By performing positive leadership, you can change your employees' attitudes towards work, the workplace and towards yourself. You will build new and good attitudes in your workplace in individuals, teams and work environment through your positive leadership. Through seeing and appreciating employees and using techniques to release their creative capital, you can influence disengaged employees, well-being, absence rate, turnover, achieve positive health effects in your employees and even increase the productivity in the workplace.

Attitudes in a work situation mean your attitudes towards the job itself, other employees, customers and management, to mention a few. How people view their work situation will show in their behaviour in the workplace. Our aim is that employees will carry positive attitudes towards everyone. However, if employees are not seen, heard, valued, have influence or find some purpose in what they do, this influences their performance in the workplace significantly. This can lead to a lack of commitment to their work, lower productivity, higher absence and lower profit, as shown in Fig. 3.1 in this book.

Job satisfaction is the most known factor measured in organizations today. This factor shows how satisfied employees are with working in their specific workplaces. If results show differences between different teams or departments, this generally indicates dissimilarity in relation to whether employees have a negative or positive attitude to their specific department/workplace. One can often see differences between departments in the same workplace, and this can often be traced back to whether management have facilitated for positive elements such as the employees having the possibility to influence, give their opinions and so on for employees in

that particular department. Even if the conditions and the personal political views are the same in principle, the job satisfaction could vary significantly from one employee to another in the same organization.

The term job involvement is a measure of the degree to which an employee is enthusiastic about making an effort in his/her job. Businessdictionary.com writes that "company leaders are often fully aware that if they make an effort for employees to be more involved in their job, it will pay off well as they will then help the company to a higher degree in order for it to reach its goals" (http://www.business-dictionary.com).

Organizational belonging is about the degree to which an employee identifies with his/her organization and its goals; if they feel proud to be an employee in this specific organization and whether the employee wishes to continue to be a part of the organization.

The last factor I wish to mention when it comes to organizational attitudes is the leader's own attitudes. A leader's own attitudes and manner can be mirrored in his/her co-worker's attitudes. Points of view are also shown through patterns of behaviour.

Through a leader's authentic way of behaving, the leader models good attitudes to his/her employees. Employees that see and experience authentic leaders motivate other employees to higher levels of performance (see Chap. 7). They are building new positive attitudes and values in the company.

> Throughout the book we have seen that leaders' who implement positive psychology techniques will have more engaged employees who also demonstrate higher levels of positive attitudes, such as job satisfaction, job involvement and organizational belonging. This is something every leader and organization wants.

How Employees Increase Their Level of Performance

> Leadership is the ability to get extraordinary achievement from ordinary people. (Brian Tracy)

Many leaders ask themselves what it would take for employees and teams to function and perform optimally.

The answer is relatively simple. One thing is that if you uncover and cultivate employees' strengths and allow them to use these every day this will, according to research, subsequently lead to your employees coming into the flow zone and will increase their desire to do a good job. Other things that can be done are, as we have seen throughout the book, to work on attitudes, communication, as well as your own and others' mindsets. This will inspire and motivate employees and in turn create work engagement and increased performance in the workplace. All of these are factors that fall under the term of positive leadership.

We have previously presented research that has shown that teams with high levels of positive emotions in the workplace (versus teams with a low level) also

perform well when it comes to making a profit for the organization. In addition, they have customers, leaders and employees that are more satisfied.

> The key for you as a leader to be able to increase the achievements of your employees is that you have the right mindset and an attitude that centres on motivating and inspiring your employees. You must desire to facilitate for an improved work environment and culture and for the increased well-being for your employees. This will give results in the form of increased work engagement and higher levels of performance. In short, it will create a win–win situation for leaders, the organization and employees.

An increasing number of research results are all indicating the same. Katzenbach (2000) suggested, (based on his findings) that successful organizations must have competency relating to how one balances the requirement for performance in the organization and the employees need for personal satisfaction. Secondly, the organization should be concerned to meet the employee's needs just as much as the organization's requisites. The third point is a willingness and commitment to handle emotional and mental necessities in their employees. The fourth point Katzenbach mentions is how important it is for an organization to include all these fundamentals when they develop processes and tools to reach the organization's and employees' goals and needs.

This again demands a different kind of competence performing management in an organization to know how employees are motivated, inspired and find their flow zone.

This is what lies within the term positive leadership. You as a leader have great influence (MEGA IMPACT) on this process. By first understanding for yourself and gaining knowledge about this, work on your own attitudes and performing positive leadership in practice, this could have an immensely positive effect on your organization and employees' productivity.

Keller and Price found, through their research on organizations and leaders, that successful organizations inspire employees through what they called "uplifting leadership". They found six inter-related factors that in combination contributed to success and optimal performance in organizations.

These factors can become catalytic in facilitating optimal employee performance. These elements were primarily teamwork amongst employees and consisted of (a) defining clear goals with the employees, (b) using creative paths to reach the desired result, (c) co-operating with externals, (d) developing a sense of community in the team, (e) building opinion and thereby achievement and (f) lasting success in the organization (Keller and Price 2011).

We have also seen that money and external rewards, such as various goods, do not function in the long run as motivators for stronger work engagement or higher performance in the workplace. In order for the work to be motivating, it has to be valuable, engaging and have a purpose in itself or for others (Dhiman 2017).

The world-renowned motivational guru Tony Robbins says that he has studied people for 30 years to learn what separates those who reach maximum performance from those who do not (tonyrobbins.com). He has met and studied people in all walks of life, from those who have been "handed everything", as he himself puts it,

and still do not manage to achieve anything, to those who have never received anything for free in life.

He concludes that 80% of all success in life is due to psychology and that 20% is due to mechanics, that is to say technical knowledge about which steps you should take.

Success is about knowledge of how to create optimal performance and optimal achievements. It is about how to motivate and use psychology in order to produce increased performance in people, both on an individual basis and in organizations. Robbins claims that through the help of psychological techniques he can maximize performance and profit in workplaces. The knowledge he teaches is to a large extent, related to the same principles presented in this book.

Through their "Project Aristotle" in 2012, Google studied the criteria of efficient teams. They monitored 180 of their own teams over several years, in addition to academic studies on characteristics of teams that functioned optimally. Google researched internally in their organization on many different variables in efficient teams, such as gender, gender balance in the teams, education, common interests, rewards, socializing, hobbies, extroversion/introversion, a mixture of personality types in the teams and how often the teams ate together. No matter how the researchers re-arranged the data, they could not find a meaningful pattern.

The researchers concluded in their studies of the criteria of effective teams that it was primarily related to the norms in the groups. It was related to human values and whether team members experienced psychological safety in the workplace and that success was built on emotional interactions and experiences (Duhigg 2016).

The common denominator for the studies above is that they all contain research on human mechanisms in organizations. What makes people motivated and inspired, and lead them to perform higher in their workplace?

Positive Psychology – Interventions and Techniques

In order to get the employees to use as much of their potential as possible, you as a leader need to implement the principles you have learned throughout this book. By doing this, you will be rewarded through increased motivation, work engagement and performance in your employees.

You can choose whether to go for a larger organizational development process and for instance include in this an Appreciate Inquiry process, or you may prefer to begin with smaller changes.

You could begin with changes in one of the weekly meetings; create a "wall of appreciation"; work on mapping, using and recognizing the employee's strengths; work on communication and so on.

All techniques gathered in this book will serve as catalysts for your employees to increase their performance and achievements on the job. You can work with different topics, like the MEGA IMPACT-theory describes, and handle one topic at a time, or you can implement several techniques at the same time.

Create a plan for yourself, where you prioritize the areas you find important for yourself and your workplace. Do not forget to work on your own mindset too.

If you wish to develop your organization through a larger process, it can be a good idea to bring in external people to help with the process.

Chapter 9
The Strength-Based Leader

> *The leader's assignment is to create an alignment of strengths in a way that makes the organization's weaknesses irrelevant.*
>
> Peter Drucker

Abstract At the core of positive psychology research is the knowledge of and the use of strengths. Most interventions about positive psychology at the workplace include the subject of strengths. Strengths-based leadership is how leaders can take their own and their followers' strengths in use in work life. This chapter presents research on the relationship between the use of strengths and how this influences and increases work engagement at the workplace. As most people, both employees and leaders alike, actually do not even know their own strengths, there is a huge potential in implementing interventions to find and use strengths at the workplace. Research has shown that in units where the leaders themselves received strength-based feedback on their own leadership role, the whole unit's productivity had 12.5% higher productivity than in units where the leader did not have strength-based feedback on their leadership. The reader will receive many concrete interventions to be used in the workplace, from mapping to group exercises on strengths use. Throughout the whole book we have talked about strengths and use of both employees' and leaders' strengths in the organization. We have seen that employees who get to use their strengths can, in turn, experience increased work engagement at their workplace. Research have also shown that individuals who use their character strengths are happier, more successful in life, have stronger relationships, a better balance in life and are more committed to their work (www.viacharacter.org).

If you wish to map both your own and your employees' character strengths by using positive psychology techniques, there are several tools that can be used for this. The most famous one is the Values in Action (VIA) Inventory, which is free on www.ViaCharacter.org. Other tools are R2 Strength Profile (Linley), Strength Finder 2.0 (www.gallup.com.) and Strengthscope, to mention a few. Common to all of them is that they focus on mapping human strengths and potential.

If you are reading this and are interested in learning more about strengths and how to use these strengths in your organization, I encourage you to read up on the use of one or several of these mapping tools.

The most utilized and recognized tool is from the Institute on Character, which can be found at www.viacharacter.org. The people behind this website both do and

M. Drønnen, *Positive Leadership*, Management, Change, Strategy and Positive Leadership, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-10816-7_9

present research on character strengths from across many sectors. By 2022 more than 15 million people from all over the world have taken the free strength test on this site, and the number is increasing daily. This , in terms of research, provides a very good sample, so their research can be said to be wide-reaching with representative large samples. The author of this book has, through her own doctoral thesis, performed research among Norwegian leaders about character strengths and transformational leadership, by using this mapping tool, and has entered research data into this database.

Via Institute on Character and their VIA Survey comprises a mapping of 24 character strengths, which they separate into six overarching "virtues". These strengths are the same character strengths that Martin Seligman & Co. found through their meta-analyses of research, and which are universally appreciated strengths across different cultures and religions.

The 24 strengths are: creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, perspective, teamwork, fairness, leadership, forgiveness, humility, prudence, self-control, purpose, humour, optimism, gratitude, appreciation of beauty and excellence, social intelligence, kindness, love, enthusiasm, integrity, perseverance and bravery.

These are again divided into six overarching virtues: courage, justice, temperance, humanity, transcendence and wisdom & knowledge (Peterson and Seligman 2004).

Of these 24 strengths, your five best strengths will be called *signature strengths*. These are areas where you can recognize that you experience motivation, energy and joy when using them. You feel a strong motivational power to use these strengths in your everyday life. When you use your signature strengths, you feel authentic, real and full of energy.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) defined character strengths as "positive personal characteristics that reflect virtue and human excellence, and which can be developed through conscious interventions or over time through personal experiences".

The character strengths of kindness, fairness, gratitude and open-mindedness have been shown to be worldwide strengths, which means they are recognized as top strengths in all countries. They are therefore independent of cultural, ethnic and religious differences. In conclusion, these are strengths that we all appreciate as human beings.

Connections Between Use of Strengths and Engagement, Well-Being and Productivity in the Workplace

Recent scientific research within positive psychology shows that there is a strong connection between the use of strengths and employees' engagement in the workplace. Research also shows a positive connection between the use of strengths and employees' productivity.

Employees who *get to use* their strengths *a lot* in their work have 18 times higher probability to flourish and thrive in their workplace than employees who do not get to use their strengths. (Hone et al. 2015)

Research also shows that employees who are simply *made aware* of their strengths are nine times more likely to flourish and thrive in their workplace than those who are not aware of their strengths.

The number of people who do not know their own strengths is high. Therefore, it is a good idea for you as a leader to start mapping out the strengths of the team, department or organization.

Several research results demonstrate that employees who receive feedback on their strengths feel a significantly higher level of work engagement and are more productive in their workplace than people who receive feedback on their weaknesses.

In organizations where workers are given the opportunity to "do what they do best every day", productivity is one and a half times higher than in other organizations. In other words, this directly affects the bottom-line results. (Hone et al. 2015; Niemic, 2015)

You have now learned that positive psychology is a scientifically rooted area of study, where people research, among other things, the strengths and conditions that place an individual, organization or society in a condition of "thrive". This means a positive situation where both performance and well-being flourish.

You have also been given concrete and practical tools to create positive changes in your own and other's lives, in teams and organizations.

Today, we know that to build on people's strengths and positive actions creates more benefits than identifying weaknesses and what people are doing wrong and trying to correct them. We also know that in organizations where workers have the opportunity to "do what they do best every day", productivity is one and a half times higher than in other organizations.

The use of strengths in the workplace will be mirrored in the fact that people wish to be a part of this workplace; because they feel more energetic, motivated and authentic. We know that companies that focus on strengths and employees' psychological capacity improve the employees' performance and thereby strengthen the organization's competitive advantage.

Leaders and companies that implement techniques from positive psychology in their workplaces can also see their employees experience higher work engagement and well-being, which in turn gives a correspondingly positive effect in relation to absence rate, productivity and profit.

Seen from the perspective of the leader on their own role, research shows that in units where the leaders received strength-based feedback on themselves and their position, the units had a 12.5% higher productivity than units without this. (Gallup 2017)

One can practise both seeing and finding the strengths in oneself, as well as work on seeing them in others. In the workplace, the latter could contribute to a positive work environment where employees learn to appreciate their colleagues' strengths and abilities, as well as understanding how different strengths can become a united

strength for the workplace. Distribution of tasks within a team will also become easier as one gets to know each other's weaknesses and strengths.

Some Research-Based Facts About Strengths

Strengths in positive psychology are positive traits that a person uses frequently, and where the person feels like this is "their real self". When we use them, we feel authentic and happy. In these areas we have a steep learning curve and that gives us an "internal drive" to act. We feel full of energy when we use them, instead of feeling exhausted.

Research on strengths within positive psychology has been done in countries all over the world. Likewise, extensive research has also been done across different groups: leaders, gender and different sectors to mention a few.

Scientific studies from Peterson and Seligman have shown that the VIA-scale with the 24 strengths embraces more than what the typical Big Five personality tests measure, and that they are different from, for example, talents (Peterson and Seligman 2004). New topics within strength-based positive psychology are constantly being researched, and every month new research results are presented within the field.

The Use of Strengths in Everyday Work Life

Too many employees today blame management, colleagues, the company, their work assignments, events in the home and so on for their unhappiness and dissatisfaction in the workplace. Often the cause and the answer lie with the employee themselves. Does the job role they have allow them to use their own strengths in the workplace? We know that when people are using their strengths at what they do, things flow a lot easier and people are feeling invigorated when using them.

Perhaps the leader and employee could have a conversation about the current job role and discuss whether the co-worker's resources and strengths can be used in a more efficient way in the workplace.

Is it possible for the leader to re-distribute some tasks in the team so that they are better aligned to those who work there? Often simple re-distributions can have great impact. Employees who are allowed to do more of the tasks they enjoy doing are able to handle more of the tasks that are less exciting.

Despite research showing that the use of strengths increases the degree of flourishing in the workplace, it is still a fact that as much as two-thirds of employees in workplaces today do not even know their own strengths.

So, if you as a leader start by mapping your employees' strengths, in order to compare how well their currents tasks fit in relation to their strengths, you have taken a big step forward. Many positive effects can come from this. In the next

section, you will receive tips on how to gather information, so that you can start mapping the strengths in your department.

Positive Psychology – Interventions and Techniques

Mapping Your Employees' Strengths

Take one of the strength tests mentioned above, for example, the 10-min test "The Values in Action (VIA) Classification of Strengths", which you can find on www. viacharacter.org. This can be done in a joint meeting, where everyone brings their phones along and take the test at the same time. Every person will then receive their own strength profile. The results can be used in several ways.

Come to Learn Each Other's Strengths

Sit in groups and tell your closest colleagues about your results from the strength profile mentioned above. Look for examples where you have seen your colleague use one of his/her strengths.

Group Exercise in the Workplace

If you have a deck of strength cards, you could use these. If not, use the results from the VIA test.

Get together in groups of six. All the participants will be informed of the following:

1. Everyone is to choose the three cards that represent what they believe to be is their top strengths. The strength cards have descriptions on one side, so that it will be easier to recognize oneself for those not having knowledge of their strengths.
2. Next, everyone shall introduce themselves and their strength to the others. With concrete examples of how they use their strengths in their work already.

Depending on how much time is allocated to the exercise, people can also talk about the other strengths they have, and which they are not currently using in their job.

The group leader will summarize, preferably in writing. Save the sheets for later use.

Strength Nomination

Mention one or more strengths that other members of the group have.
    Give concrete examples of when you have seen them use this strength.

Use Your Strengths in a New Way

Use one of your signature strengths in a new way once a week.

Use a Strength Every Day

Try to use one of your signature strengths every day in your work, no matter which job you have.

Group Exercises in the Workplace

Team up in pairs

    Think of a time when you felt very satisfied in your job/in your career, a period of time when you enjoyed yourself and did an excellent job.
    Discover together:

- What created that feeling of satisfaction?
- What did you do that contributed to the feeling?
- How did your workplace contribute to that experience?
- Which skills or strengths did you use?
- How can you plan to have more experiences like this?

Handling Stressful Situations

Think about a stress factor that is currently present in your life.
    How can you use your character strengths to handle this stressful situation?

Appreciation of Strengths

Encourage teams to start appreciating other people's strengths in the workplace. When someone does something good, let the rest of the team identify the strengths they were using, at the same time as they tell the colleague why they appreciate them using this specific strength in the workplace.

Make looking for other people's strengths into a competition and give positive feedback to each other. This is a simple, yet very efficient, exercise that can have a major positive effect on the environment in your workplace.

The Values in Action (VIA) Classification of Strengths

The VIA classification of strengths is built on a project that was carried out in 1997 by the researchers Donald Clifton, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Ed Diener, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Robert Nozick, Daniel Robinson, Martin Seligman, George Vaillant and Christopher Peterson.

More than 15 million people worldwide have taken the test since then, which enables us to say that the tests and the results found by the researchers who used this scale in their research are solidly rooted. The online test gives you the results after 10 min. One can download and print one's profile for free, which gives an overview of your five signature strengths and the order of how these 24 strengths are featured in your individual profile.

The strength profiles can be used both in the workplace and for private purposes. Today it is also often used in coaching and in schools.

The classification of the 24 strengths is illustrated in Fig. 9.1 below. The outer circle consists of the 24 character strengths. These are then grouped into six virtues.

The six overarching virtues that the characters strengths are grouped into are: (1) courage, (2) wisdom and knowledge, (3) justice, (4) temperance, (5) transcendence and (6) humanity.

You can find tests and literature about the different strengths and suggestions on how to use them in different contexts on http://www.viacharacter.org/. Readers who wish to immerse themselves in the topic of strengths can read more about it at this webpage.
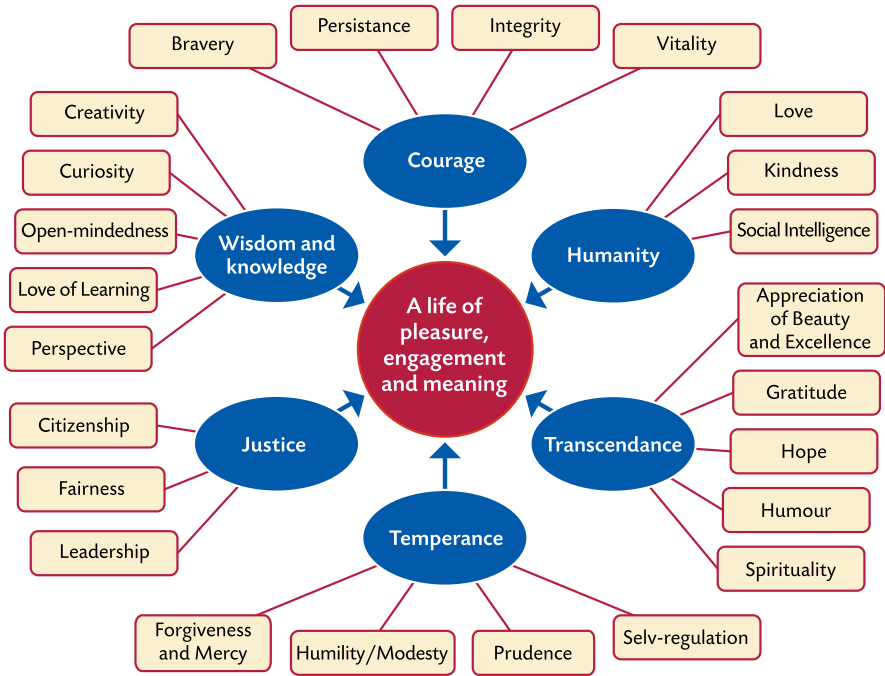
Fig. 9.1 The 24 character-strengths and the six virtues

Chapter 10
Organizational Development with Appreciative Inquiry

*What we see, depends mainly on what we look for.*

John Lubbock

Abstract This last chapter in the book is dedicated to Appreciative Inquiry (AI), the most known organizational development process within positive psychology. This technique is a game changer from traditional OD-techniques that focus on what is wrong with organizations and then try to fix this to AI exploring what can be achieved through searching for, finding and using the organization's (and also teams') core strengths and innovative possibilities. The reader is introduced to how a leader can design and redesign the systems in an organization, as to achieve higher goals and a more effective and sustainable future for the organization, all in the spirit of positive psychology.

David Cooperrider is counted, along with Suresh Srivastva, as the founder of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). He defines AI at his webpage as a developmental method and process where one sees organizational development in a completely new light. He calls the method a paradigm shift within organizational development. One goes from only focusing on the problems and challenges that need to be solved to also include what works well in the organization and how one desires the organization to be in the future. The method also focuses on creating concrete plans and goals to get where it wants to be.

Cooperrider continues to claim that Appreciative Inquiry involves radically changing the perspective from the traditional lack-based focus for change towards a positive strength-based focus for change.

> AI is the technique that focuses on finding and using the organization's "positive core strengths". It involves having a tool that helps design and redesign the systems of an organization, in order to reach the desired goals. An overarching goal in this technique is to achieve a more efficient and sustainable future for the organization.

Stavros et al. (2015) express that AI is about searching for the best in people, in organizations and in the world around them; which are all rich with strengths and opportunities. AI is not primarily about changes in the model or the method for organizational changes, but rather about a fundamental mental shift in the holistic perspective you have throughout the entire change process.
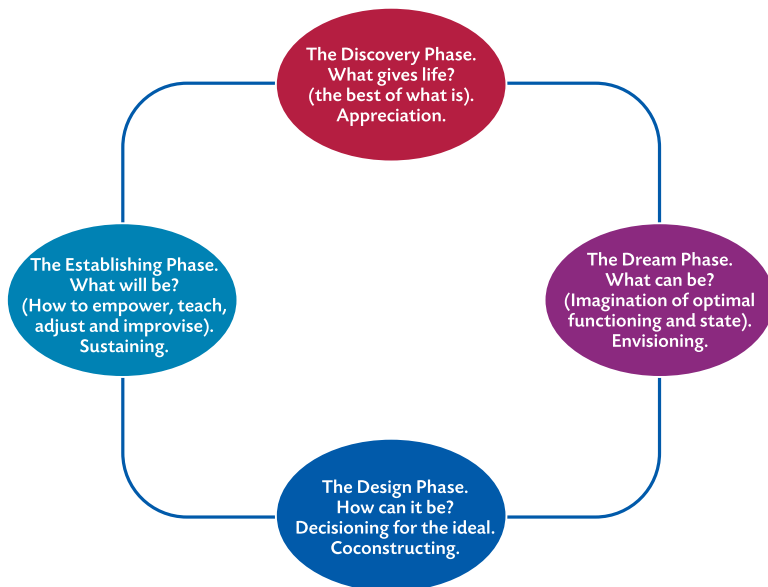
Fig. 10.1 The appreciative inquiry 4D process

Through an AI process, we get an overview of the human and organizational system in an organization and thereafter inquire after this system's strengths, opportunities and successes (Stavros et al. 2015).

> The word *appreciative* was chosen to symbolize what the focus is in an AI process, where one looks for what is appreciated in an organization and how one wants the organization to be. *Inquiry* relates to how one asks or looks for the system's strengths, opportunities and successes. This is a form of action research.

AI is implemented through using the 4D circle, which represents four phases of the organizational developmental process. The four D's are *Discovery*, *Dream*, *Design* and *Destiny*. One needs to discover, dream, design and create a destiny with what one has discovered in the previous phases and what one wishes the organization to become.

In Fig. 10.1, you see the 4D-Appreciative Inquiry process illustrated. One starts with the Discovery phase, then the Dream phase and then the Design phase. In the end you have the Destiny phase. These four points are the four main parts of the process. We will look a bit more at all of them in the following sections.

Phase 1: The Discovery Phase

In the first phase, the Discovery phrase, you map and identify the positive core of the organization. You look for what "gives life", what is the best of what is already there. In this phase you identify and appreciate the best of what you already have today.

Questions to be asked during this phase could, for example, be "when have we experienced that the organization has been vibrant and functioned efficiently?"

Here we are looking for, and will share with others, different stories about those times when things functioned optimally. Which factors were present when things worked well? What were we doing then? Make an analysis and map out these situations.

This phase falls under the appreciation part of AI.

Phase 2: The Dream Phase

When an organization has found its positive core – what gives life to the organization – the next phase is to dream of what the organization can become. You imagine and have big ideas about how you can create new opportunities for the organization.

The question you as a group can ask yourself is: "What would it be like, if we had everything just the way we want it?" Here one focuses on imagining and dreaming about how the condition of the organization would be if everything was optimal and running well.

Phase 3: The Design Phase

In this phase you ask how you can create/design your ideal organization, like we described it in the dream phase. What can we do concretely to achieve this? Which systems and structures do we need to design? What do we need to do to achieve what we want?

Phase 4: The Establishing Phase

In this fourth phase of the 4D-AI process, you establish the new image of what the future of the organization will be like, based on the previous three phrases. Here, you should also answer the question about how you will create a lasting culture of learning in the organization, with the help from Appreciative Inquiry. What do you need, how will you change and adapt, and what will you learn and focus on? What will it look like once the new systems and structures are realized?

In summary, Appreciative Inquiry is about the process of extracting the best of what you have, finding out what you want more of and setting the direction for the future.

It is important to see everything in a positive light: what works well? What brings life into this organization? How does the organization work at its best and which opportunities do we have to create more efficient ways of organizing ourselves?

The idea is to aim the spotlight towards the strongest aspects of the organization.

AI is different from the traditional management of an organization, where one first finds the problems and then work to "fix them".

If you are particularly interested in Appreciative Inquiry, there is a lot of good literature to be found on the subject online, in books and in research articles.

> Appreciative Inquiry is the process of extracting the best of what you have, finding out what one want more of, and set the direction for the future.
> It is important to see everything in a positive light psychologically. What works well? What gives life to this organization? How does the organization work at its best and which opportunities do we have to create more efficient ways to organize ourselves?

Positive Psychology – Interventions and Techniques

Reflection on Positive Situations

Sit down and reflect on the questions below. You can do these exercises on your own as a leader first. Then you can let your employees do them in groups and allow them to present their answers to each other and you.

Think back at a moment in your work life where you felt efficient and got a lot done in a short amount of time. Which factors in your workplace contributed to making this situation possible?

Which factors within you had an influence on the situation?

Were there other people who contributed to the possibility of this situation unfolding?

What would you like for it to be more of in this workplace? Write down three wishes you have for the company over the next 3 years.

Describe (a) a leader and (b) an organization that you admire, which have achieved something you would like to achieve for your organization.

Then, describe which conditions must be present in order for this to be possible, the way you believe it can.

Optimal Collaboration

Create groups of four.

First, let everyone work individually on the following:

- Describe a time when you observed a team or a group that had optimal collaboration and achieved fantastic results.
- Describe the conditions that made this possible, as you experienced it.
- Discuss the results in groups.
- Then in plenary: conclude and write down the good examples.

Inspiration and Work Engagement

Let each person answer the following questions:

- What would it take for you to feel alive, enthusiastic and inspired in your workplace?
- What is missing from the current conditions to make this happen?

Present these and discuss in plenary. Feel free to give the employees the questions in advance, so they can think through everything thoroughly before and be prepared.

Appreciative Inquiry Tasks in an Organizational Development Process

After clarifying meetings with leaders and representatives where the main goals for the organizational process are formulated, questions can be sent out to every individual employee in the organization. Each employee should reflect on these questions individually before getting together as a group with everyone in the organization present. The questions could, for example, be:

- What are the things you like the most about COMPANY X?
- Which valuable things from the culture of COMPANY X would you like to continue?
- What potential do you see in COMPANY X?
- What is your biggest and most daring dream for what COMPANY X could be in the future?

Tasks One Can Do in an Organizational Development-Programme

Use one of the stories you wrote down for the last exercise.

Create groups of four or five people, where everyone (a) shares their stories (of a story where a team/group in the organization functioned optimal and got great results) with each other and/or (b) the four questions from the technique above.

Afterwards the group, together, should try to define what made a difference. What was the positive difference?

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