

## Discussion Questions for *Encouraging the Heart*

### **Chapter 1: The Heart of Leadership**

1. Have you ever given or received recognition for high performance? If so, what effects have you seen as a result of this?
2. What myths about leadership and management have you encountered? What makes them myths?
3. Think about the CCL finding that the highest-performing managers show more affection toward others than do the bottom 25%. How affectionate have your managers been? How has this affected your work environment?
4. How important is affection to your success? Explain.
5. What nonfinancial rewards encourage you the most? What impact have they had on your performance?

### **Chapter 2: The Seven Essentials of Encouraging**

1. Reread the case example about Tom Melohn. What essentials were you able to gather from it?
2. Are there any essentials to encouraging the heart that you would add to the list? Discuss what your eighth essential would be and why.
3. Which essential do you value most? How have you upheld this essential in your own life?
4. Which essential would you like to see more of in your workplace environment? How could you make that happen?
5. The authors write that good stories “enable us to see ourselves.” Think about a story—concerning yourself or someone else—you have heard recently. How did the story affect you?

### **Chapter 3: The Encouragement Index**

1. Do you agree that the capacity for self-improvement is a significant factor in what it takes to be a leader? Why or why not?
2. Are there any qualities you would consider to be more important for leadership than the capacity for self-improvement? If so, what are they and what makes them significant?
3. Take the Encouragement Index. How did you score? Do you feel your score accurately reflects your “encouragement index”? Why or why not?
4. Look carefully at your answers in the Encouragement Index. Can you find any common threads about areas where you consistently scored low or high (e.g., attitude, communication, recognition)? What do you think this says about you?
5. Do you intend to boost your score? What are some ways you could do this?

### **Chapter 4: The First Essential – Set Clear Standards**

1. Consider the example of Alice at the croquet match from *Alice in Wonderland*. Has there ever been a time when you have struggled as a result of unclear standards? How did you deal with this challenge?

2. Review Dan McDonald's system of colored pins. If this system were implemented in your organization, which pin do you think you would be wearing? Would this system be valuable for you? Why or why not?
3. Think about your own personal values. Which of these must your organization align with in order for you to excel in your work?
4. The study referenced in Figure 4.2 found that a combination of goals and feedback has a far more powerful impact on motivational performance than either quality alone. Do you offer both a clear goal and feedback to others, or is there one in particular you need to work on? If so, how can you do this?
5. The authors write that "encouragement, it can be said, is a form of feedback." What are some other forms of feedback you provide (or have been given?). Which has been the most helpful for you?

### **Chapter 5: The Second Essential – Expect the Best**

1. What is your self-expectation? How has it affected the way you perform? If you are not pleased with your performance, how could you change your self-expectation to help you perform better?
2. How do you convey to your constituents your expectations of them? Do you think you have made them clear enough? If so, how do you know?
3. This chapter explores the notion that "positive expectations yield positive results." Do you find this to be true in your professional life? Think of an example. If you are unable to, how could you create an environment of positive images?
4. One experiment in the chapter emphasizes the importance of viewing skills as acquired rather than stable. Are there any skills you view in the workplace as stable? Why or why not? Will this experiment change the way you present certain skills in the workplace?
5. Think about some skills commonly considered to be stable. How might you convince others that these skills are able to be acquired?

### **Chapter 6: The Third Essential – Pay Attention**

1. Do you find yourself or leaders you know wandering often? What benefits have you gained from CBWA (caring by walking around)?
2. Do you notice people putting on different behavior when you are around? If so, how can you help them feel comfortable enough to act naturally in your presence?
3. According to a recent study mentioned in the chapter, the best leaders put others at the center of their universe. Who is at the center of your universe and why? How has this impacted your leadership performance?
4. The example of Gretchen Kaffer joining the lunch club is one way to be present and attentive to your constituents. Is this something you do (or would be willing to do)? If not, what are some other ways one could engage more with his or her workers?
5. How—and how often—do you solicit feedback? How has this been helpful for you?

## **Chapter 7: The Fourth Essential – Personalize Recognition**

1. How often are constituents honored in your professional life? Would you prefer that they are honored more or less often than they are now?
2. Taking Rebecca Morgan’s anecdote into consideration, do you think you could improve the manner of honoring constituents so that they feel genuinely honored? If so, how?
3. Where do you stand on the issue of asking before giving? Why?
4. Have you taken culture into consideration when recognizing others? If so, how did you incorporate it into the recognition? If not, what are some ways in which you could “culturalize” your recognition of people?
5. How thoughtful have your past employee recognitions been? Are you satisfied with the amount of thought put into them?

## **Chapter 8: The Fifth Essential – Tell the Story**

1. Do you agree that stories are more powerful than data? Why or why not?
2. What role have stories played in your professional life? Consider both stories you have told and stories others have told to you.
3. Look at the list of the elements involved in telling a great story. Is there anything you would add to it?
4. Follow the eight practical guidelines for telling a great story to come up with one of your own. Share the story. Were the guidelines helpful?
5. Is there a particular story that has resonated with you most? What about it made it a powerful story for you? Was it one of the guidelines from the list, or was it something else entirely? Explain.

## **Chapter 9: The Sixth Essential – Celebrate Together**

1. Do you have your own version of a community “bragging board”? Do you think a “bragging board” is worth the effort? Why or why not?
2. What lessons do you take away from the MathWorks example? Do you consider their culture of celebration to be an effective tool or a wasteful distraction? Why?
3. Why is social support such an important, potentially life-saving concept? What examples can you draw from your own life to support this?
4. What do you think are the most significant benefits of celebrating? What benefits have you (or others you know) personally experienced as a result of celebration?
5. If you have not already done so, do the exercise about writing out the circles of people in your support network. What did you learn from this? If there are relationships that need to be strengthened, how can you go about strengthening them?

## Chapter 10: The Seventh Essential – Set the Example

1. Consider the anecdote about Cary Turner and the lengths to which he goes in order to make a positive impact on his constituents. What are some actions—big or small—that have similarly motivated you?
2. How do you define credibility? How have leaders you know shown themselves to be credible?
3. Think about your own credibility. Do you always do what you say you will do? What actions could you take to become more credible?
4. What kind of example have you set for others? Are you proud of the example you have set? Why or why not?
5. Explain the difference between DWYSYWD and DWWSWWD. Is the distinction important? Which do you personally value more in your own life and why?

## Chapter 11: Finding Your Voice

1. Think about Richard Farson's statement that "It's not so much what we *do* as what we *are* that counts." Do you agree? Why or why not? Use examples to support your argument.
2. Max De Pree states, "At the core of becoming a leader is the need always to connect one's voice to one's touch." What does this mean to you?
3. Consider the explanation of the three periods in an artist's life. What stage are you at as a leader—the exterior landscape, the interior landscape, or the self-portrait? Explain.
4. Have you found your "voice"? If so, describe it. If not, ask yourself Whyte's questions as outlined in this chapter. Has this brought you any closer to finding your voice?
5. John H. Stanford claims "staying in love" is the secret to becoming the best leader you can be. What does this mean to you? Furthermore, do you agree that this is the secret to success? Why or why not?