

# Book Summary - "Walking The Empowerment Tightrope" by Robert P. Crosby (compiled by Noreen Watson 1999)

Balancing management authority with employee authority encourages decisiveness, clarity about who decides what, and the appropriate sharing of influence.

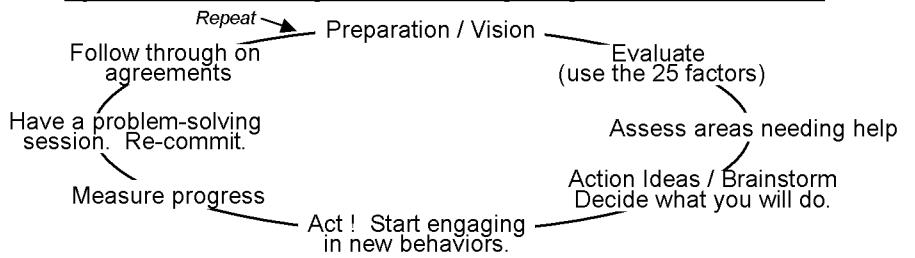
## Preparation and Vision:

1. What is the mission of your group, your organization?
2. What are the values that are important to you? Are your organizational values dynamic and referred to constantly, or are these values simply slogans that are not influencing day-to-day activities?
3. What are your business objectives? What do you want to achieve in the next 12 months?
4. Who supports and has ownership of all of the above? You? Your boss? Your people?
5. Are the mission, values, and business objectives known and integrated with the daily work life? Do employees know what they can do to impact these?
6. Are organizational progress reports regularly made available to all employees.
7. Are you able to state your specific business objectives and values for your unit, and clearly specify what you expect from your employees to help achieve these?

## 25 High Performance Factors:

1. Obtain clear sponsorship - firmly supports the group, provides resources, clarity, direction, and enthusiasm to guarantee success.
2. Be open - data flows accurately so that problems are identified. Disagreements are dealt with directly.
3. Build influence structures - employees have input and influence on factors that impact their work life.
4. Be clear about your decision-making style - managers are clear about the distinction between 'who is deciding' Vs. 'who is influencing' and communicate that.
5. Make decisions - decisions are made in an expedient amount of time.
6. Implement those decisions - decisions are effectively implemented in a timely way..
7. Identify input - we get, with quality and on time, what we need from outside or inside suppliers.
8. Create effective throughput - we are organized in the best possible way to produce quality output with clear and efficient processes.
9. Get feedback on output - we give to others, with quality and on time, what they need and provide excellent service.
10. Improve meetings - our meetings are effective.
11. Build a climate for creativity - new ideas for improving work processes, communication, product development, etc. are encouraged.
12. Clarify roles/jobs - I know exactly what I am to do.
13. Make sure there is a person/task fit - the right people are doing the right tasks.
14. Clarify authority - people have the authority to do what they are expected to do.
15. Make sure that resources are available - we are able to get the resources we need to do our job well.
16. Develop team measurements - we are able regularly to measure key factors related to our input, throughput, and output so that we can monitor and quickly problem solve low-scoring items.
17. Paint the big picture - we know the larger picture and on everyday tasks we know why we are doing what we are doing.
18. Provide for relevant just-in-time training - members of our team are well trained.
19. Set priorities - priorities are consistently clear.
20. Clarify by-whens - whenever a decision is made, someone clarifies who will do what and by when.
21. Commit to follow-through - commitments are effectively tracked.
22. Identify single-point accountability - there is one person accountable for each task.
23. Reinforce success - people are appreciated for work well done.
24. Reprimand poor performance - reprimands are clear and very specific about the unappreciated work or action, but not accusatory, judgmental or vindictive.
25. Constantly maintain good work relationships. - work relationships are maintained by being direct.

## Cycle Toward Creating and Maintaining a High Performance Team:



## Focus on System Change, Not Individual Change:

The human performance formula: *Behavior = function (Person, Environment)*

When organizations begin to think systemically, they no longer primarily focus on trying to change the individual. Instead, they seek to discover and correct the underlying issue(s) causing that system to create undesirable behavior. As long as such issues are not addressed, employees will inevitably manifest hostility.

Often people confuse phrases that *make a judgment* from those that *report a fact*. A differentiated person makes this distinction and strives to communicate with specificity. Judgments, labels and interpretations not only inflame, but worse, draw attention and energy away from the problem (specifics) and focus on the accusation.

## Openness Vs. Personal Confession:

To operate at their peak, both individuals and organizations need to be open. However, there is confusion about the difference of *personal confession*, which is the sharing of private, personal information about one's self (often about past events), and *openness*, which is clear, specific descriptions of what is happening in the now. With openness the data that flows deals with immediate situations. "You're asking me for this report by Wednesday noon, but I do not think I can finish it by then." This is the openness organizations needed. With personal confession norms, such feedback is often withheld for fear of hurting feelings, being hurt, or being too personal.

## The Interpersonal Gap:

The most basic and recurring problems in social life stem from the disparity ('gap') between what you intend and the actual effect of your actions on others. In contrast to interpersonal intentions and effects, what are private, actions are most often public and observable. We see our own actions in the light of our intentions, but we see the other's actions not in light of the other person's intentions, but by the way we interpret their actions. Bridging this interpersonal gap requires that each person fathom how the other sees the interaction.

## Survey feedback:

*What does not work?* It does not work to survey people and not show them results. It also does not work to survey people and have management or and outside expert develop recommendations. It does not work to survey people and have a general reporting session and do nothing else.

*What does work?* Begin with the assumption that the expertise to identify problems and work out solutions to most problems exists within the organization. Involve the participants in generating the data, interpreting that data, and forging recommendations for next steps.

## Characteristics of an Effective Facilitator:

1. Empowered by the sponsor.
2. Assertive - can take charge.
3. Neutral on substantive issues.
4. High skill in conflict resolution.
5. Positive regard for others.
6. High skill in the problem-solving process.
7. High skill in being clear.
8. High skill in guiding the meeting
9. Differentiated.
10. Trust of the participants.