



Unlocking the motivational power of 'seeking systems,' with Dan Cable

SEEKING SYSTEM: one of the seven fundamental emotional systems of the human brain identified by Dr Jaak Panksepp, which drives human beings to explore, experiment, learn and develop. It uses dopamine circuits to reward intrinsically motivating behaviour.

All leaders want to get the best out of their colleagues – but how many workplaces are designed around the neuroscience of motivation? Professor Dan Cable, author of *Alive at Work*, believes the key to a creative and profitable business is activating people's 'seeking systems.' Here's how.

FOUR WAYS TO ACTIVATE YOUR TRIBES' SEEKING SYSTEMS

1. Create a fear-free workplace.

The number one killer of our desire to explore and be creative is the feeling that we aren't safe.

AVOID: motivation by threat of punishment, or ever-escalating KPIs that demand constant vigilance from direct reports.

2. Visibly celebrate people's uniqueness.

Our seeking systems are closely aligned to our sense of individuality, or what Martin Seligman called 'signature strengths'. Encourage people to discover what they have to offer.

AVOID: well-meaning attempts to replicate successful behaviour by mandating methods rather than end results.

3. Experiment. The creative parts of the human brain flourish in an environment which supports experimentation – and that means accepting failure as the price of innovation.

AVOID: Evaluating projects solely on results; process is a valuable teacher too.

4. Get beyond the money. A focus on extrinsic reward can cloud our ability to identify the deeper purpose in what we do – which extinguishes the desire to grow.

AVOID: Assuming that increased compensation alone will result in more motivated employees.

To learn more about purpose, motivation, and what regenerative leadership looks like in practise, listen to Professor Dan Cable's full *Conversations on Climate* episode [here](#).

You can find out more about Professor Cable and his work [here](#).

You can motivate by fear, and you can motivate by reward. But both those methods are only temporary. The only lasting thing is self-motivation
- Homer Rice