

# MOTIVATIONAL TECHNIQUES

## *The Trainer Isn't the Only One Who Can Give Positive Reinforcement*

In addition to positive feedback given to participants from the trainer, allow them to also congratulate and compliment each other.

1. Ask each participant to write his or her name on a piece of flip chart paper, and then hang the pages around the room. During breaks or directly after team efforts, participants may write a complimentary note about another participant on a Post-it Note and attach it to that person's poster. Attendees take their posters home with them at the session's conclusion.
2. Encourage participants to "give one another a hand." Ask participants to draw an outline of their hand on a piece of paper and tape the outline to their backs. Throughout the day, people can write positive comments on the hand, and at day's end attendees remove the paper and read the comments.

## *Traveling Trophy*

To show the merits of cooperation versus competition in team-building settings - and to illustrate the motivating power of peer recognition - use a small, plastic character as a traveling trophy to reward group participation.

A Daffy Duck with straw hat held high in salute for example (any character in a similar pose will do) could be called the "Daffy Duck Hats-Off Award." The award

is passed to any participant who offers a thoughtful question or makes a valuable contribution.

The facilitator gets things going by asking, "Don't you think that was a 'duck-worthy' comment?" and giving the recipient a round of applause.

The person given the award is responsible for listening carefully for the opportunity to "pass the duck" to the next person who makes a worthy contribution. (Note: Because people usually toss the character, choose something lightweight.)

## *Trick AND Treat*

Hand each person a small bag containing 20 treats (jelly beans, M&Ms, candy corn, etc.) and ask them to eat no more than half of them.

Ask participants to count their remaining pieces and add the digits (for example if 15 remain, add 1 + 5 to get 6). Then instruct students to remove that number of pieces from their bags and eat them.

Tell the class you can "magically" determine how many candies remain in any individual's bag. Ask a volunteer to hand you a random number of pieces, then quickly count the candies before closing your hand and *dramatically* concentrating. The trick is that every participant has 9 pieces at this point - so if a person hands over 3, that means 6 remain in their bag.

This trick can be adapted to match seasonal themes by putting pastel candies in plastic eggs at Easter, or gift wrapping little boxes of red and green candies during the December holidays.

## **Now, How Did You Do That?**

1. Ask everyone to think of a number between one and 10. (It can't be 1 or 10; it must be *between* the two numbers.)
2. Multiply that number by 9.
3. Once you have that number, subtract 5.
4. Now each person should have a two-digit number. Add the two numbers together until everyone has a one-digit number. The goal is to come up with a single digit number, so keep adding the numbers together until you get a single digit. For example, if the number is 66, then add the two numbers together to get 12. Now add together the one and two to come up with three.
5. Assign the corresponding alphabet letter to this number. For example: one = A, two = B, three = C, etc.
6. Think of a country in Europe that begins with this letter.
7. Think of an animal that begins with the second letter of the country. For example, if the country you are thinking of is Italy, then an animal beginning with T could be a tiger.
8. Now think of the color of this animal.

Finally, ask how many of the participants are thinking of a gray elephant from Denmark. Not too surprisingly the vast majority of the participants will think of the elephant. This is because all the combinations add up to four and Denmark is the only country in Europe that starts with a "D."

To add to the exercise, you can draw a gray elephant on a flipchart and show it at the time you ask the final question.

Then explain the symbolism: Different people start with different numbers, but they still come up with the same answer. This is like coming to training in that *everyone arrives with different ideas and*

*expectations, but everyone can leave with the same basic understanding and goals.*

## **Visible Assessment of Group Interest Levels**

Instant evaluation is helpful in gauging participant interest. To find out how you are keeping participant's interest during a training session:

Fold a piece of heavy construction paper into thirds and stand the "tent card" on end (or on its side, depending on the method). Ask participants to draw an obvious happy face on one side, a sleepy face on another and a confused face on a third side.

Throughout the course, ask participants to show the faces that reflect their interest in the material being covered. This keeps them active in providing feedback and allows those who are less comfortable speaking up in a group the opportunity to voice their opinions.

## **Seen That, Heard That, Done That**

When a session deals with seemingly mundane or routine subject matter, this exercise demonstrates that we haven't necessarily mastered every aspect of even the most mundane objects and activities.

Ask participants to draw a touch-tone phone pad. Key points for the instructor to remember:

- There are no letters on the 1 button.
- Q and Z are omitted from the alphabet.
- The bottom row, in order, is \*0#.

Most participants will miss one if not all of these. It's a good reminder that we don't

always have the everyday basics mastered, much less the everyday complexities. And we can all stand to gain something by

### **Marker and Water Show**

To demonstrate how training changes individuals and entire organizations:

Standing in front of the class at the end of training, the instructor dips a marker in a glass of water and swirls it around. As the ink from the marker colors the water, the instructor explains how training has changed the skills, knowledge level, and attitude of each participant just like the marker changed the water.

Then the instructor pours the glass of now-colored water into a nearby pitcher of water, and as the color dilutes through the pitcher (it will change the color of the water in the pitcher substantially, but it will be lighter than the water in the glass) the instructor explains how each trainee will have a similar affect as their training begins to change the workplace environment.

Going a step further, pour a glass of colored water from the pitcher, saying, "Suppose another person goes on the training program." Then put another marker in the glass to color the water even darker and say, "That person also gains new knowledge, is energized, and changes his behavior, then returns to the workplace." At this point, pour the glass of newly colored water back into the pitcher, making the entire pitcher still darker than before. "If you repeat this process, slowly but surely the entire organization will change."

### **Managing Time Better - with \$86,400**

Hand each participant a check made out to them for the amount of \$86,400 (non-negotiable, of course) and explain they

listening, even if we think we could teach the course.

have only 24 hours to spend the money. Participants then share how they plan to spend the money and each person's response is recorded on a flip chart.

When the exercise is completed, note that most trainees spent every penny of the check. This leads to a discussion that each day has the same amount of seconds as the check has dollars - 86,400 - and ask, "Why we are so much more likely to prioritize how we spend our money than our time?"

### **Your Assignment Is ....**

In new-employee orientation training, where employees often feel tentative about asking questions, use this technique to get them immediately involved and focused on class material.

Type questions concerning class content on index cards, one question per card and one card per participant. After class introductions, pass out the cards and explain that each participant is responsible for answering - in writing - the question on his/her assigned card. Assure everyone their question will be covered in class before they are called upon for an answer.

### **Human Bar Graph**

Used a stand-up "bar graph" to evaluate your sessions. Designate various positions in the training room with a number on a 1-10 scale, with 10 being the highest.

Then ask a series of questions about the program regarding usefulness of content, appropriateness of the meeting room, the interest of the instructor, and so on. Participants move to the various parts of the

room to reflect their evaluation in response to each question. (Also serves as a stretch break.)

## **Show Trainees the Consequences of Making Assumptions about People**

This simple group exercise quickly shows students the consequences of jumping to conclusions and making assumptions without careful consideration.

Post the addition problem below on a transparency, but reveal only the top figure. Tell the group that the object of the game is for the class as a whole to add each number from top to bottom, saying the total aloud as you reveal the subsequent numbers. As you uncover the last figure, ask the class for a total. Most of the class participants blurt out, "5,000."

Repeat the process a few more times and then uncover all figures so they can see them all at once. They then discover that the sum is 4,100.

$$\begin{array}{r} 1,000 \\ 40 \\ 1,000 \\ 30 \\ 1,000 \\ 20 \\ 1,000 \\ + 10 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Discuss with the class how easy it is to come to a conclusion that seems crystal clear, yet still be completely wrong. Remind participants to stay open-minded and to look at all options before passing judgment.

## **Know Your Lemon**

To sharpen participants' observation skills - and to illustrate that no observation is too small or insignificant - use the help of a bunch of lemons.

Greet each participant at the door as they arrive for class and hand everyone a lemon from a bucket with the instructions, "Get to know your lemon. Observe it closely, but don't write on it or otherwise deface it." The instructor participates in the exercise as well by picking a lemon before anyone arrives and secretly injects it with red food dye to drive home a point he or she will make later that afternoon.

Near the end of the day, collect all the lemons, mix them together in the bucket, and ask attendees to attempt to pick out "their" lemon. When everyone is confident they have retrieved the lemon they started with (including the instructor), conclude the exercise by telling the class that no matter how small the observation, it is always worth noting because you never know what might be going on beneath the surface. Then the instructor should slice his or her lemon open to reveal the red dye.

## **Complimenting Others "Behind Their Backs"**

Use this energizer as a quick way to have training participants help each other feel great about themselves, as a transition from one section of a training session to another, or as a way to build camaraderie in a group.

Have all attendees tape sheets of paper to each other's backs, then give them time to mingle and write compliments about each other on those sheets (like signing high school yearbooks). Takes approximately 10 minutes.

## **Flying with a Friend**

Flying paper airplanes around the classroom as a constructive exercise?

At the end of the session, have participants write on a piece of paper an action plan to be completed when they get back on the job. The action plan should include objectives, goals, a date to be contacted to check progress on the goals, and participants' names, addresses, and phone numbers.

Have attendees fold their action plans into paper airplanes and "fly" them across the room to another trainee. The trainee who catches the plane is responsible for calling whoever's "action plane" they caught, on the date specified, to discuss their progress and outcomes.

## **"Name Bucket" Ensures Fair Share of "Volunteering"**

Give each trainee a card or a poker chip and tape to write their names on. Put the names in the bucket and draw one out whenever you need a volunteer.

Sometimes you can put the names drawn back in the bucket after the activity is completed; other times you can hold out the names until everyone has had a chance to "volunteer."

## **A Tree That Grows**

Showing how a course provides personal growth to participants is one of the best ways to maintain enthusiasm.

Create a poster of a tree for each student. These can be anything from laminated posters to hastily drawn stick-trees made on flipchart paper. Label each tree with a participant's name and hang on the classroom wall.

Leaves are added as students grasp new ideas. This can be done several different ways. One is to provide students with piles of unmarked leaves, with instructions to write down key ideas as they occur and to post them on their trees, either at that moment or during the next break. Another method is to prelabel leaves with key learning points and ask students to put them up as they master each topic.

When your budget allows, each student is presented a live tree after the session, explaining the trees should serve as symbols of knowledge. They're strong, well-seasoned, and always adding leaves

## **Creative Thinking - the Ability to Break Unwritten Rules**

To stress creativity and "thinking out of the box" give each participant 12 pennies and ask them to form a square with 5 pennies on each side.

After giving trainees an appropriate amount of time to solve the puzzler, the explanation of the solution helps participants realize their thinking was unnecessarily restrictive.

### **Pennies Puzzler Solution**

Stack 2 pennies on top of each other for each of the 4 corners, then place one penny between each corner to form a square.

## **Penny Exercise**

- Source:** Bob Pike
- Objective:** To build a team
- Audience:** Any
- Group Size:** Enough to form participants into teams
- Time:** Five to seven minutes

### **Equipment:**

Flip chart and markers or write-on transparency film  
Some pennies  
A blank sheet of paper per participant

### **Note:**

At the end, when dealing with participants who think they already know everything there is to know about the subject, point out that we are selective learners and there is always something new to be learned.

### **Process:**

Up in the corner of a blank sheet of paper, ask each participant to write down the numbers of pennies he/she's handled in his/her life. Have some or all (depending on group size) call out the figure they wrote down. Record these figures on flip chart or foil.

Ask each to draw two large circles on the piece of paper. Ask them to refrain from taking a penny from their purse or pocket. Have them label one circle "front" and one "back." Ask them to reproduce the front and back of a penny in one minute. Point out how many they've handled.

At the end of a minute point out how we can be overly familiar with an object or situation or event and not really see it. Expand on this.

To learn the value of a team, ask them to go around the team and each person in turn gives one thing they have on their drawing. As each gives a feature, the others add the feature to their own drawings, so that each one's "picture" become more and more complete through shared knowledge. Discuss value of team in open-forum.

Tell them they can now look at a penny. Allow time for them to do so and to comment to each other. Tell them the Treasury Department estimates we handle 1,000 pennies per year. Refer back to their estimates. Many will be over 100,000. Some may be over 1,000,000. (Considering their ages, they look MAH-VEL-OUS.)



## **Up Close and Personal With Dr. Maslow: Designing Training to Meet Trainees' Needs**

### **Goals:**

- I. To explore Abraham Maslow's (1970) theory of the hierarchy of needs as the basis for creating a positive learning climate in a training experience.
- II. To present a format for designing a training module.
- III. To offer the participants an opportunity to practice designing and presenting a training module that meets trainees' needs.

### **Group Size:**

Four subgroups of 4-8 members each. This activity is designed for use with practicing and prospective trainers as participants.

**Time Required:** Approximately 3 hours.

### **Materials:**

- I. One copy of Theory Sheet per participant.
- II. One copy of Resource Sheet per participant.
- III. Four newsprint signs prepared in advance, each listing one of the following questions:
  - A. What methods/techniques can a trainer use to satisfy trainees' needs for *safety*?
  - B. What methods/techniques can a trainer use to satisfy trainees' needs for *belonging*?
  - C. What methods/techniques can a trainer use to satisfy trainees' needs for enhancing *self-esteem*?
  - D. What methods/techniques can a trainer use to satisfy trainees' needs for *self-actualization*?
- IV. Four newsprint flip charts with easels.
- V. Four felt-tipped markers.
- VI. Four rolls of masking tape for posting newsprint.

### **Physical Setting:**

A room large enough for subgroups to work without disturbing one another. Plenty of wall space should be available for posting newsprint. Movable chairs.

### **Process:**

- I. The facilitator introduces the activity by stating that Abraham Maslow's (1970) theory of the hierarchy of needs can serve as the basis for creating a positive learning climate during a training experience. Each participant is given a copy of the Up Close and Personal with Dr. Maslow Theory Sheet and is asked to read this sheet. (5 minutes)
- II. The facilitator leads a discussion on the contents of the theory sheet, eliciting and answering questions as necessary. (10 minutes)
- III. The facilitator posts the prepared newsprint signs in four separate corners of the room and places a newsprint flip chart, an easel, and a felt-tipped marker next to each sign. Participants are assembled into four subgroups of 4-8 members each. Each subgroup is to be seated next to one of the four posted signs.
- IV. Each subgroup is instructed to spend three minutes brainstorming as many answers as possible to the question listed on the newsprint sign posted in its corner. The facilitator asks each subgroup to select a recorder to write the subgroup's ideas on the newsprint flip chart displayed on the easel (*not on the posted newsprint sign*).
- V. After 3 minutes the facilitator calls time and asks each subgroup to turn over the newsprint sheets it has filled so that a blank sheet is displayed on the easel. Then each subgroup is instructed to move clockwise to the next posted sign and to repeat the brainstorming procedure explained in Step IV.
- VI. Step V is repeated twice more so that each subgroup completes the brainstorming procedure for every sign. After the fourth brainstorming period, the subgroups are instructed to remain where they are.
- VII. The facilitator distributes copies of the resource sheet and asks the participants to read this sheet. (5 minutes)
- VIII. The facilitator reviews the content of the resource sheet and answers any questions that the participants may have. (10 minutes)
- IX. Each subgroup is instructed to spend 45 minutes designing and organizing a 10-minute training module on the information generated in that corner. The facilitator explains the particulars of the task:
  1. Each training module should be designed and presented in such a way that it meets as many of the needs in Maslow's hierarchy as possible.
  2. Any newsprint information, generated by any subgroup, may be used.
  3. Each subgroup member must have a role in the presentation.
  4. Visual aids may be used.
  5. Each presentation must follow the guidelines on the resource sheet.

The facilitator encourages the subgroups to be creative and to vary their instructional strategies, gives each subgroup a roll of masking tape for posting newsprint, and then asks the subgroups to begin. While the subgroups work, the facilitator monitors their progress, periodically advises them of the remaining time, and provides assistance if asked.

- X. After 45 minutes the facilitator calls time and asks the subgroups to take turns making their presentations, beginning with the subgroup assigned to safety needs and progressing through Maslow's hierarchy in order. Before each subgroup begins its presentation, the facilitator asks the remaining participants to move their chairs so that they can see the members of that subgroup. After each presentation the facilitator leads a brief discussion and critique of that training module (based on the content of the resource sheet), assessing which needs were met by the module and how they were met. The facilitator ensures that each critique ends on a positive note. (1 hour)
- XI. The facilitator leads a concluding discussion by asking these questions:
  - A. What is your reaction to developing and presenting a training module in accordance with the guidelines on the resource sheet? How is this experience different from other experiences you have had in developing and presenting training?
  - B. What similarities did you find in the ways in which information was conveyed in the presentations?
  - C. What have you learned about the relationship between Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the creation of a positive learning climate? And using those needs to design and present a training module?
  - D. How will you apply what you have learned when planning your trainings?

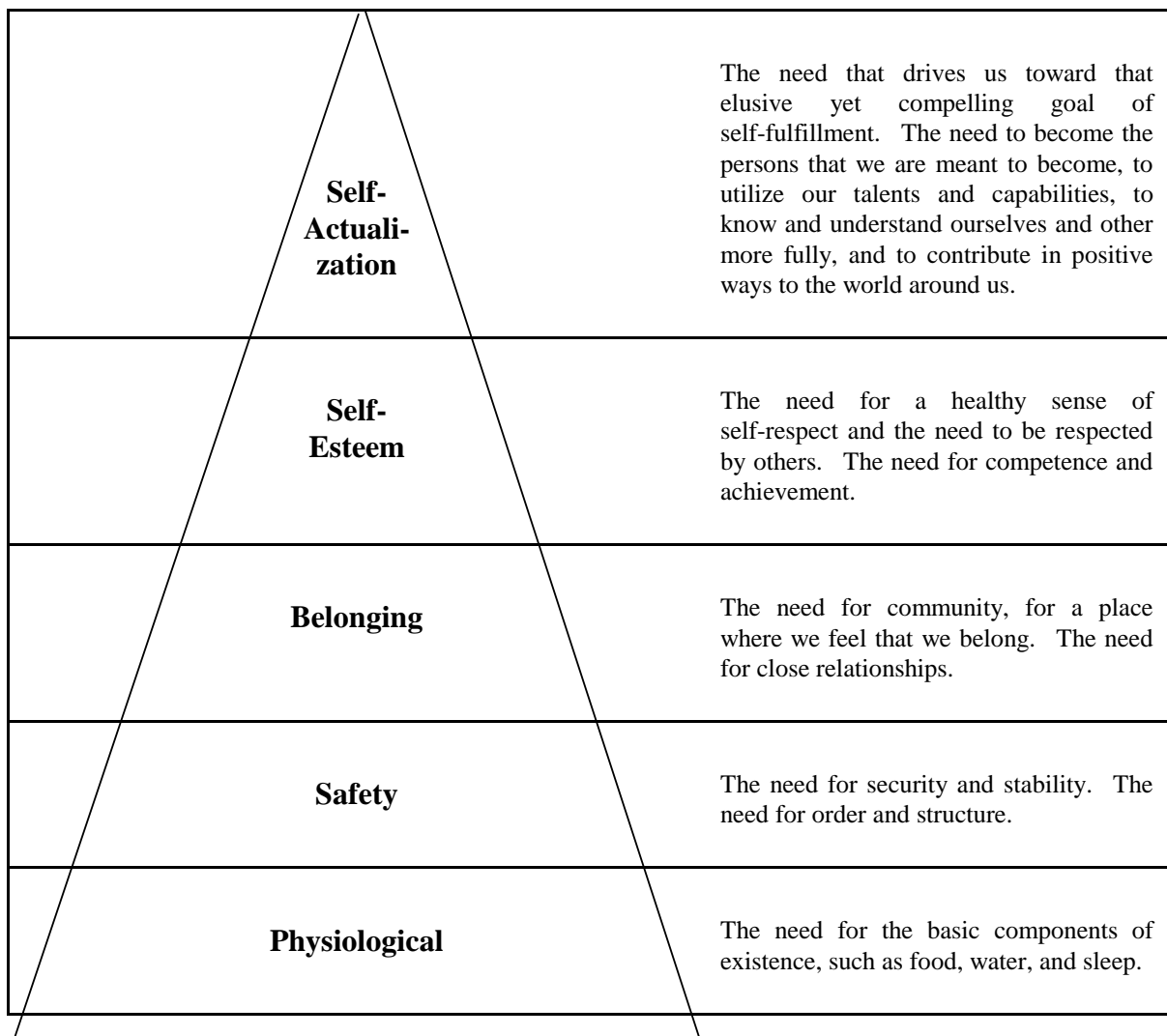
**Variations:**

- I. When clarifying the task, the facilitator may stipulate that each presentation must meet the need(s) about which it presents information.
- II. The participants may be asked to develop action plans for upcoming training events, incorporating what they have learned.
- III. To shorten the activity, the facilitator may ask the members of each subgroup to answer only one of the posted questions and then to stay in that corner and to develop a module based on the information that they have just generated.
- IV. The subgroups may be asked to follow the guidelines on the resource sheet to develop a single activity instead of a training module. Each subgroup may be instructed to show how the activity meets the need to which the subgroup was assigned.

**Reference:** Maslow, A.H. (1970). *Motivation and Personality* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper & Row.  
By Bonnie Jameson

## *Up Close and Personal with Dr. Maslow* *Theory Sheet*

Abraham Maslow's (1970) theory of the hierarchy of needs (Figure 1) is generally accepted as part of the foundation of the field of human resource development. The human needs that comprise the hierarchy - physiological, safety, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization - are the primary motivators that, if satisfied, will help individuals to understand themselves and, in turn, to understand others. Maslow believed that people meet these needs in ascending order from most basic for survival, represented at the bottom of the triangle in Figure 1, to least basic, represented at the top of the triangle. For example, a person usually meets most of his/her physiological needs before safety needs become a concern; physiological and safety needs are usually met before belonging needs become a concern; and so on.



**Figure 1. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

## *Up Close and Personal with Dr. Maslow* *Resource Sheet*

When designing a training module, you start by defining the *objective*, which is based on a desired outcome. In other words, you must answer the questions “Why am I conducting this training?” and “What do I expect trainees to gain from this experience?” The objective can be likened to an organization’s mission: It provides meaning or purpose.

Once you have clarified the objective, you can proceed to designing and organizing the training experience. Every training module must have three stages: (1) an opening, (2) a body, and (3) a conclusion. The opening accounts for 10% of the training time, the body for 80%, and the conclusion for 10%.

### **1. The Opening: “Tell Them What You’ll Tell Them”**

The opening consists of two components: (1) a “hook” (question, statistic, story, skit, role play, group sharing, or example) to capture the trainees’ attention, and (2) a review of the objective and the agenda for the training experience. This stage should meet trainees’ needs for safety and belonging.

### **2. The Body: “Tell Them”**

The body of the training module should have no more than 3-5 main ideas, and each idea should be supported with information that helps to meet the training objective. This stage should meet trainees’ needs for self-esteem and self-actualization.

It is useful to vary the instructional strategies for the ideas. If you present one idea in a didactic fashion (by delivering a lecturette, for instance), then you might want to use a skit, a role play, and a group discussion to convey subsequent ideas.

### **3. The Conclusion: “Tell Them What You Told Them”**

In the conclusion you summarize the objective and the main ideas that you presented; review action plans, if the trainees have made any, and encourage them to follow through; and answer any questions that the trainees may have. This stage should meet trainees’ needs for self-actualization.