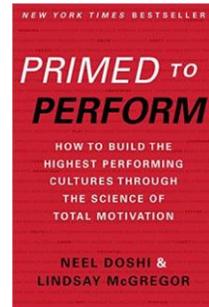


Primed to Perform:

How to Build the Highest Performing Cultures Through the Science of Total Motivation

Book's Argument: We can now measure the strength of a culture to determine where it is weak and where it is strong. Culture is the background conversation. This book aims to define culture and explain why it matters. The authors purport that the concept of total motivation (ToMo) will help create a world where every person performs at their highest levels and every organization provides an inspiring, adaptive, and thriving workplace.



Key Takeaways: To build a high-performing culture, we must first understand what drives peak performance in individuals. The answer sounds deceptively simple: *why* we work affects how *well* we work. Play – when we do something simply because you enjoy the activity – is the most powerful motive for working. Play, purpose, and potential (intrinsic, direct motives) strengthen performance. Emotional pressure, economic pressure, and inertia (extrinsic, indirect motives) weaken it. When a culture maximizes the first three and minimizes the last three, it achieves the highest levels of a phenomenon called total motivation. Most organizations manage *tactical performance* – the ability to execute against a plan. But *adaptive performance* – the ability to diverge from a plan – is just as important. In most organizations, the machinery of performance management, from dashboards to evaluations to compensation, is designed to maximize tactical performance. But a single-minded focus on tactical performance can cripple adaptive performance. In a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment, this misstep is highly costly.

We must understand the biases and reflexes that get in the way of building great cultures. Predictive measurement of the six motives enables an organization to see where culture is weak, strong, and where it needs to change. Culture drives performance (Peters and Waterman, *In Search of Excellence*, 2006). Even the most talented people will have only half the impact they should if they work in mediocre cultures. The best way to motivate people is not through rewards or threats but by inspiring them to find play, purpose, and potential in their work. Play and purpose must be built into the organization's DNA.

Play – when we engage in an activity simply because we enjoy doing it

Purpose – when we do an activity because we value the outcome of the activity; our values and beliefs align with the impact of the work

Potential – when we find a second order outcome of the work; do the work because it will eventually lead to something we believe is important

Emotional Pressure – when emotions such as disappointment, guile, or shame compel us to perform an activity

Economic Pressure – when we do an activity solely to win a reward or avoid punishment; the motive is separate from the work itself and our own identity

Inertia – our motive for working is so distant from the work itself that we can no longer say where it comes from – we do what we do simply because we did it yesterday

Best Quote: “...‘why’...its often difficult to do something exceptionally well if we don’t know the reasons we’re doing it in the first place.” – Dan Pink, *Drive* – the concept of intrinsic motivation “...the why changes the how. When people were driven by the direct motives, they started doing their work differently. They went above and beyond.” “...the biggest barriers that prevent organizations from building high-performance cultures...skeptics [who] don’t understand or believe the science [and] believers [who] lack the tools to put the science into practice.” – Doshi and McGregor

Why It's Important: The motive spectrum provides a systematic framework that uncovers the relationships between work, motivation, and performance. While every great culture has a unique personality, behind each and every one of them is the science of the motive spectrum. Using its insights, any culture, including the military service culture, can be refined for the better.