

sleep deprivation can be offset by even a single rested member who shares the right solution with the team. But when sleep-deprived teams are called to come up with innovative solutions to problems with no obvious solution, the team is at a great disadvantage. Even if a member comes up with the right solution there is no guarantee that he or she will be able to convince the rest of the team.

What do all these insights mean for Christian leaders? If critical functions depend on the whole team working in an innovation-generating problem-solving mode, SD may be playing with fire, waiting for an accident to happen.

Source: Barnes, C. M., & Hollenbeck, J. R. (2009). Sleep deprivation and decision-making teams: Burning the midnight oil or playing with fire? *The Academy of Management Review*, 34(1), 56-66.

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

Susan and Peter Glaser, in their book *Be Quiet, Be Heard: The Paradox of Persuasion* (Eugene, OR: Communications Solutions Publishing, 2006, chapter 6), describe gratitude as one of the keys to changing the relational chemistry in an organization and unleashing the power of encouragement. Building on the work of neuroscientists, they observe that the brain typically notices patterns that are out of alignment with expectations.

The Glasers call this ability of the brain the “uh-oh factor” (p. 107). For example: The smell of smoke would most likely send us searching for the source so we can do something about the perceived

threat. The problem is that this ability to notice things that are wrong can quickly turn into a climate-setting habit that poisons morale.

Contrary to the typical “praise sandwich” managers use to praise workers first in order to soften the blow of correction, the Glasers suggest that leaders use a more pure praise sandwich:

Step 1: Thank (offer sincere thanks for someone’s effort)

Step 2: Offer specifics (mentioning the specific behavior you found helpful and would like to see repeated)

Step 3: Note benefits (indicating how this behavior contributed to some positive outcome for you, the team, the organization)

Step 4: Thank again (ending by reinforcing how grateful you are)

Here is an example: *Thank you so much for rearranging your schedule so our committee could meet. This enabled our candidate to meet the deadline and stay on the graduation list. I know that this meant extra work for you. I really appreciate it.*

During the holiday season—and throughout the year—you may want to work on your gratitude skills and spread a little thanksgiving to enhance the power of encouragement in your organization.