

Admired:

21 Ways to Double Your Value

Foreword

You Deserve to Be Valued, Respected, and Admired for What Matters

By Frances Hesselbein and Marshall Goldsmith

How proud would you be if your organization won the top spot among *Fortune Magazine's* "Most Admired Companies" or "Best Companies to Work For?" What if Jim Collins rated you a "Level 5 leader," and Gallup ranked your colleagues among "America's Most Admired People?" What if every single person in your organization knew what it took to become J.D. Power Customer Service Champions? Impossible?

We think you have that potential for greatness within you, and so do our friends Mark Thompson and Bonita Buell-Thompson. Drawing on their three decades of corporate leadership experience, in this book they reveal new research that will help you become more valued, respected and admired—not in a superficial way or just for its own sake—but for what matters to you most.

The results of their national study may astonish you. With their colleagues at Stanford and Northwestern, the authors conducted a statistically representative survey of more than 1,000 Americans that asked (as did *Gallup* and *Fortune*), who do you most admire. But then Mark and Bonita took another step to explore something much more significant to your personal and professional success: They discovered the 27 traits Americans most admire in the best leaders and companies, and even more important—*which traits are most essential and why*.

Then they compared the traits most admired in companies and leaders with what participants would most like to be appreciated for as an individual. You may be surprised to see how many of these traits you already have (or are well within your reach) that will enable you personally (and your organization) to become even more respected and admired.

The Most Valuable People in Your Life and Work

Have you ever felt undervalued at work or home? Who hasn't! Most of us have a deep desire to be valued more by what the authors call, the *Most Valuable People* in our lives—our boss, colleagues, customers, family, and friends. But according to

Mark and Bonita's research, very few of us have taken the steps to learn what the important people in our lives actually value. It's painfully ironic to expect to be valued by these MVPs if we don't know what *they* value first! In this book, you'll learn more about how to do that.

Does your team ever underperform or have you lost your mojo to do the work? If so, you're not alone. Gallup found that 67% of people hate their job or feel disengaged. Curious to know why, the authors asked participants in their national survey what percentage of time they invested in their goals and how much did they spend doing meaningful things. The results were downright disturbing: Most people do not see any connection between their daily and long-term goals and what's meaningful to them! It's no surprise that mission statements are ignored, New Year's resolutions languish, and our diets are doomed from the start. We have no hope of achieving our goals, if we don't connect our passions with the objectives in front of us.

The good news is that Mark and Bonita clarify what you can do about it. Your level of engagement and enjoyment are directly related to whether or not you feel your goals are meaningful. And your value to all the MVPs in your life is directly proportionate to what you seek to know about their values and how hard you work to help them achieve it. You will succeed (and be admired) by making sure you support your MVPs in achieving success and admiration for what matters.

In fact, this is an important distinction: You are happiest and most motivated when the admiration you seek is for *something that matters*. What's inspiring about many gifted leaders is that they've suffered long periods in which they were not valued or admired; great people are often misunderstood, even resented or ridiculed. Eventually they persist only because they worked for something meaningful, and that's what helped them reach their greater potential.

What this means for you is that, when you're trying to motivate others to help you, you have to be very clear about what you value and recruit people for your team who love what you're doing, and who are willing to develop the skills to

do it so well that they become excellent. If you don't, that same team could be among the two thirds of the population who find work pointless.

If you aspire to become more valued in your work and you'd like to get ahead in your job, Mark and Bonita have a great prescription for you. They'll give you some powerful ways to stop the complaining about why you don't feel appreciated or understood by your MVPs. In this book you will get the tools you need to determine what your MVPs actually value—to stand in their shoes—and keep supporting them until you help them get the message.

When you find a way to give your MVPs the support to achieve their goals in a meaningful way, then they'll reward and admire you. That's the key to success in reaching the top of any "most admired" list, at the office or at home. But more important, that's the secret to finding meaning and happiness in your life and work.

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Chapter 1

Are You Valued?

Our commuter jet was rolling out on the runway on Southwest flight number 49 just before dawn when there was a brief flash of lightning and a heavy downpour. The flight attendant began the same old safety talk that nearly all the passengers could by now repeat from memory. But none of us could imagine what would happen next. Half the cabin was reading and the other half was already fast asleep at that hour. As we neared takeoff, the flight attendant was becoming increasingly annoyed at our total lack of interest in her lecture on how to fasten seatbelts. She suddenly shouted into the microphone.

“Listen up!” she demanded, swinging the seatbelt in the air. “You think you’re experts on this sort of thing, but if this plane falls out of the sky during this storm, I guarantee you’re not going to be napping, reading your Kindle, or chatting with your pals.” We couldn’t quite believe what we were hearing. “If we get into trouble up there, you’re going to be thinking about how you might have had a tiny chance at survival if you had listened to me! Then you’ll think about your loved ones and see your life pass before your eyes as we fall out of the sky.”

I dropped my iPad, which was supposed to be turned off by now anyway. Every last person in the cabin was now riveted, giving her our rapt attention, and wishing we had missed this flight.

“Okay, here’s what’s going to happen,” she continued breathlessly. “If there is a sudden crisis and a change in cabin pressure, these oxygen masks will pop out of the ceiling.” She whipped the canary yellow device from her pocket and hung it over my head like a noose. “Don’t just sit there waiting to be saved. This is your big chance! Take action! Grab the mask. Put it on yourself first, then put it on your child. And if you have more than one child,” she said smiling, “you might want to consider which one has the *most potential!*”

Becoming Essential

The cabin burst into laughter, everyone relieved by the punch line. But the flight attendant's dark humor stuck with me for the rest of the bumpy ride. It occurred to me that emergencies are not the only times we are forced to make hard decisions. The punch line of her morbid joke was also a brutal metaphor for the tough choices leaders make when resources are scarce and competition is fierce.

Your boss is constantly evaluating whom he values most—who will get the oxygen and opportunities. Companies are making sacrifices every day. Leaders can no longer afford to support a project just because the people working on it have great intentions. It has to demonstrate extraordinary value, rapid progress, and high return on effort or ROI. Your customers are making the same trade-offs about what to buy and what to ignore based on what *they* value—not necessarily what *you* love about your product or services—and they'll give you less time than ever to impress them.

You may deserve to be valued, respected, and admired for what you do, but your customers, your boss, and everyone else you know has a growing list of obligations and distractions competing for their time and attention. How do you break through the noise?

The answer is to better understand what drives value for your best customers, your boss, and your loved ones. These are your *Most Valuable People or MVPs*—those who make the biggest, most meaningful impact on your work and life. If you want to become essential, you must both make sure you're delivering value to your MVPs and that they *recognize* that value.

When your boss decides whom or what deserves her attention, she is choosing among dozens of worthy candidates, and she is basing her choice on your *perceived* value to her. You won't be essential to her until you can demonstrate a deeper understanding of how she defines success, and how you're helping her achieve her immediate needs and future goals.

Finding Value for Ourselves

Our passion for this concept of being valued began for both of us while we were kids in school, a time when we feared we had no potential. Both of us struggled with the symptoms of dyslexia—learning issues that impacted our sense of self-worth. And our parents already had their hands full. Both families, on too many occasions to count, wondered where their next meal or next mortgage payment would come from. At the time, none of us felt valued for our potential contribution.

Then we both dealt with personal tragedies that changed our lives forever. Bonita’s older brother, David—a brilliant young man who was already contributing to the world of science—died of cancer at age 21. Mark’s brother, Bob Jr., despite his doctor’s best efforts, didn’t get the oxygen he needed at birth. The brain damage was permanent. Both families saw their faith shaken and their resources stretched to the limit by those difficult circumstances. For as long as we can remember, we have been incredulous that two such valuable lives ended before our brothers could even begin to realize their potential.

These events inspired what would become our mission in life: To help people and their organizations realize their greatest potential *value*. To discover what makes people valuable, respected, and admired, we have conducted global and national surveys, and engaged with hundreds of the world’s most successful people face-to-face, from Nelson Mandela and Richard Branson, to Steve Jobs and the Dalai Lama. We met with the presidents of nations, Nobel laureates, Olympians, Academy Award winners, more than 20 billionaires, and community servants without financial resources who are having great impact far from the public spotlight.

Through this work, we’ve seen major trends emerge and have developed tools for people to make success more sustainable, including a “game” they can play to uncover their deeper values and unlock various possibilities and opportunities that will help you create a strategy for your future success.

In this book, we will share many of the lessons we’ve learned from our research and from our experiences playing the game with high achievers. One of the most important things we’ve discovered is that the best upside opportunities come

along when you partner with and invest in talented people and organizations that ©
2012 are undervalued. As executive coaches who are also venture capitalists, we bet
our heart, soul, and life savings on helping winners whose potential isn't fully valued
in the market and who deserve greater respect from those who matter most.

We believe that you deserve to be valued and admired for what matters. And
in this book, we'll show you how to do that. In the first two sections, we'll provide a
roadmap to both clarifying what you value most and understanding what your MVPs
value. This will help you create a powerful bridge between what they need from you
and what you can sustainably offer. Then we'll provide six fundamental strategies—
using the word A.D.M.I.R.E. as the acronym—each of which offer tools to help you
cut through the clutter and double your value to the people who matter most.

Let's get started!