



Human Optimization

Pod Club Discussion Questions



E69: Inspiring others: How to help people rise

Guest: Prathibha Varkey, M.B.B.S., M.B.A.; President of Mayo Clinic Health System

The three big questions explored in the podcast:

Question 1

What does it mean to inspire others, and why is inspiration so important for performance and human flourishing?

Question 2

Why do we fail to inspire others well, and what happens when we live without inspiration?

Question 3

How can we inspire others practically and effectively, regardless of our role?

Discussion Questions:

1. Dr. Varkey notes that motivation "pushes" behavior through rewards or pressure, while inspiration "pulls" behavior from within. Thinking about your own life, when was the last time you felt genuinely inspired rather than just motivated? What made that situation different?
2. Inspiring others requires understanding what matters to them, rather than imposing our own goals. How well do you understand what drives the people you support? How well do you understand what drives you?
3. Dr. Varkey mentions that people don't burn out just from working hard, but from working hard on things that lack meaning. Have you ever experienced burnout caused by a lack of connection to a "why" rather than high workload? How did you navigate it?
4. When you feel cynical about a situation at work or home, how do you typically respond? How might you use that feeling to figure out what needs to change?
5. Showing up consistently through small interactions builds trust and shared purpose. Who in your life consistently shows up for you in small ways, and what impact has that had on your relationship?
6. Connecting broad goals to individual meaning can be difficult. If you lead a team or family, how do you help others see how their daily, routine tasks connect to a larger vision?
7. Dr. Varkey notes that you can measure inspiration by shifts in team energy—such as increased humor, ownership, and creativity. Looking at the communities or groups you belong to, what does the "energy" currently feel like?

8. Based on this episode, what is one small change you are going to make to help improve in this area? How are you going to keep yourself accountable and measure your success? (Be sure to keep it simple, start small, and make it very clear).