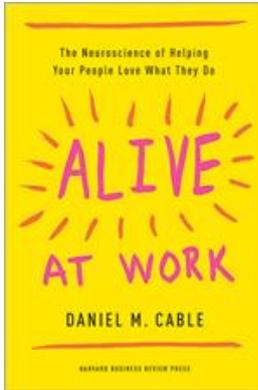


## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Alive at Work: The Neuroscience of Helping Your People Love What They Do***

Author: **Dr Daniel M. Cable**

Publisher: Harvard Business Review Press

List Price: \$30.00                      Format: Hard Cover, 203 pages

Publication Date: 2018                      ISBN: 978-1-63369-425-5

Reviewer: Oghenemena Okobiah

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### Introduction

To start and grow a company is not an easy task, to sustain continued growth is a more difficult task. The same can be said with hiring and managing workforce. Hiring and integrating a motivated employee into a team is a task, sustaining the level of excitement and ingenuity for that employee is an intricate task. In today's world where competition is high and running a lean workforce requires more work done with less resources, keeping the energy levels of your workforce is a key to improving and maintaining productivity and performance for sustainable growth.

Dr. Daniel Cable, the author, carefully takes on an insightful journey into the world of employee disengagement, understanding how it happens and a roadmap to creating sustainable passion and creativity in today's workforce.

### Overview of Book's Structure

Alive at work seeks to help the reader understand the essential nature of employee engagement and systems to help employees "*bring their best selves to work*" through to the finish line.

The book is structured in four main parts: *Part I: The Seeking System*:- Understanding the current state of things and how to make them better; *Part II: Self Expression*:- Promoting self-expression and encouraging employees to bring their best to work; *Part III: Experimentation*:- Exploring systems to improve engagement and creativity; *Part IV: Purpose*:- Helping employees experience the value of their work.

Each chapter is well written with real world examples that illustrate the concepts and its applications.

## Highlights

Dr Daniel Cable introduces the concept that learning, and exploration are basic human concepts inherently designed to evoke the better part of the “us” human species. These seeking systems, play a fundamental role in our human aspirations. In Dr Daniel’s words, “when the seeking systems are not active, human aspirations remain frozen in an endless winter of discontent”.

The *Seeking system* vs the *Reward system*;- The seeking system propels and drives innovation and creativity, rather than rewarding it. The inspiration to do a lot of things based on hope and aspiration are defined by looking forward through learning and exploration.

Learning goals are more effective at improving performance in a changing and creative environment as they encourage us to use our curiosity to discover novel strategies while drawing our attention away from the end result.

Helping employees find purpose and value of their work by engagement with clients and markets to have a more intimate and personal experience in the value of their contribution.

## Highlights: What I liked!

The introduction of the dopamine effect; a guide to providing sustained excitement and creativity for the employee.

The simple and intrinsic relationship between fear and seeking systems when compared to the accelerator brake system. The proposal to allow creativity drive and propel change, should be tapered to avoid the extremes.

Leaders learning to listen to employees by engaging in activities that foster environments for employees to propose new processes and viewpoints to providing better solutions and improving customer relationships.

## Who might benefit from the Book?

New managers seeking to boost employee performances, who seek sustained improvements in performance and quality of life for the employees.

Managers as well as team leads in new and growing companies could find invaluable ideas on how to steer their teams forward.

HR Managers and top-level executives looking to cultural change in corporations might find road maps to executing change.

## Conclusion

Leadership and managing teams goes beyond the objectives and goals of the team. At the heart of team dynamics, employee engagement and performance is the value and contribution to the team goals more than rewards and promotions. At some level in an employee's career journey, the influence of money and rewards plateau and value proposition drives purpose.

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For more about this book, go to: <https://store.hbr.org/product/alive-at-work-the-neuroscience-of-helping-your-people-love-what-they-do/10184>

*Editor's note: This book review was the result of a partnership between the publisher, PM World and the [PMI Dallas Chapter](#). Authors and publishers provide the books to PM World; books are delivered to the PMI Dallas Chapter, where they are offered free to PMI members to review; book reviews are published in the PM World Journal and PM World Library. PMI Dallas Chapter members can keep the books as well as claim PDUs for PMP recertification when their reviews are published.*

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## About the Reviewer



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