

Henricks, HowardTeaching to Change Lives

9. The Law of Encouragement

Hendricks argues that a learner's MQ—Motivation Quotient—matters more than IQ. Teaching works best when students are properly motivated, and the teacher's real job is to trigger motivation that comes from within. He warns against fake motivators and lays out how to structure training so people become self-starters.

Key takeaways

- Teaching is most effective when the learner is properly motivated—application, not ability, is usually what's missing.
- Improper motivation (bribes, guilt, over-promising, deceit) can produce good behavior with bad results; the boy who memorized 600 verses still stole from the offering.
- Extrinsic motivation exists only to trigger intrinsic motivation—your job is to work on the outside to spark something inside.
- Awareness of a felt need motivates: expose students to real-life experiences that show them how much they don't know.

- Good training runs four stages—telling, showing, doing under control, then doing in the real world; you learn to swim by swimming.
- Give people responsibility with accountability, make the teaching personal, and build creatively on their interests instead of just prohibiting.
- Motivated teachers become change agents—the key question is whether you yourself are excited.

Passages worth keeping

“God never asks you to do anything for him until he fully informs you of what he has done for you.”

The core of intrinsic, gospel-rooted motivation.

“I'd rather have my students lose in here and win out there than to win in here and lose out there.”

Training must aim at real-world competence, not classroom performance.

How it connects

The chapter's model mirrors the gospel itself: God spends eleven chapters of Romans on His mercy before asking for a response, showing that lasting motivation grows from grace received, not guilt imposed.

Scripture referenced

- **Romans 12:1** -- "Therefore, by the mercies of God"—motivation flows from what God has already done.
- **Ephesians 5:25** -- "Love your wife as Christ loved the church"—how following Christ surfaces real needs.