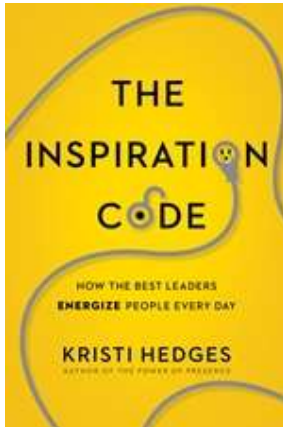


## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***The Inspiration Code: How the Best Leaders Energize People Every Day***

Author: **Kristi Hedges**

Publisher: American Management Association

List Price: \$24.95 Format: Hard cover, 288 pages

Publication Date: 2017 ISBN: 978-0-8144-3789-6

Reviewer: **Yolanda Morgan-Davis**

Review Date: July 2017

---

### Introduction

At our monthly PMI meeting, I was drawn to this book but had some trepidation because I was not sure if a six week commitment was enough time for me to read and review a book. I am so glad that through my busyness I was determined to keep the commitment I made to my chapter representative. It was well worth it. The book was jam packed with information, inspiration, wisdom and practical applications that I could not skip around because each chapter built upon the other. For the methodical, A-personality with a streak of creativity that I am, this book was an absolute joy to read. From chapter one to chapter twelve I felt that Kristi was my personal coach and I loved every minute of it.

After 15-months in a DeVos training initiative my purpose evolved—to transform youth (11-18) to become balanced individuals in competence (what they know) and conscience (who they are) for college and career readiness through socialization skills training. There is not enough emphasis being placed on the social intelligence skills that future leaders need to be successful. I always tell my students that practice makes permanent. If students are introduced to the Inspire Path conversation (be Present, be Personal, be Passionate and be Purposeful) at 11 years old, they have seven years to develop into an inspirational communicator. If they learn this concept as part of their after-school training, they will be better prepared to face the challenges that lay ahead of them in life.

*The Inspiration Code* is allowing my organization to developed leaders into eagles not ducks that Mac Anderson talks about in his book, *You Can't Send a Duck to Eagle School*. I truly believe the notion that leaders are not born but made.

### Overview of Book's Structure

As I concluded this book and the memorable experience I had reading and taking notes, I thank God that He guided me on a journey while reading this book. The passion and purpose I have grew even stronger through my reading; however, what excited me the most about this book was the 'concept-in-action' sections that guided me on how to maintain and practice the learning. It gave you a clearer concept of the information Kristi just discussed in the chapter.

This made all the difference in truly making the learning my own. Now if you think you missed key points in the chapter, Kristi gives you “Takeaways after each chapter. Don’t just scan the takeaway pages in the book to think that you will get the big picture, you will not, Kristi has sprinkled nuggets all through the chapters, with book summaries, scholars’ sayings and practitioners’ research findings that you don’t want to miss.

I have a reading list for all the grade levels in my curriculum; I am adding this book to my senior high reading list. There are three books that had a significant impact on my life; I am making this a fourth one. It was life changing and thought provoking. I have a “who am I” section in my curriculum for my students; after reading this book I feel that I need to enhance that session to include a personal branding statement. I see so many possibilities that my mind is racing and I am off the chart excited.

## Highlights

As leaders, we must create a condition for inspiration in others. The way we do this is to trigger inspiration through conversation. Seek to inspire others because you can. It is here in the introduction where the **Inspire Path model** was introduced.

- Present – the gift of attention, focus on the person in front of you.
- Personal – put yourself into it, be authentic, real and become a good listener
- Passionate – bringing heart and energy, blend logic and emotion
- Purposeful – spotlighting meaning, show the vision you possess inside, be intentional

Because we are basically social people, how we focus our attention reveals what we care about. We need others to be a witness of how we live our lives.

*How do you show that a conversation is important?*

- Create a distraction free zone – put down your electronic devices (cell phones, tablets and laptops)
- Use the power of pause – take a few minutes before a conversation and sit quietly. Reflect on what you want to get out of the dialogue.
- Hold the space – intentionally preserve “sacred spaces” of undivided attention and no distraction. *Nugget: Many of our best insights happen when another person creates the space for us to truly think.*
- Say that it’s important – state the motivation of the conversation that it matters
- Show receptive body language – show approachability

*Nugget: We have a choice, so choose to give the gift of being present to the conversation you are in.*

With the fast paced world of work we live in, it is common for people to feel overwhelmed, which causes stress. This prolonged stress can be linked to physical and mental problems. So what do we do? *Nugget: There are two motivating forces behind our behavior:*

- *Love produces (generosity, confidence, openness, passion)*

- *Fear produces (insecurity, stress, judgment, jealousy)*

These are just a few; Kristi outlined more in the book. However, the question you must answer is this: what place are you operating from? When you operate from a place of fear you are not inspiring or connecting with people, in fact, you are pushing them away. *Nugget: Viktor Frankl said in his book, Man's Search for Meaning, "Between stimulus and response there is space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.* For significant changes to take place in us, we need to question our underlying assumptions, thoughts and values.

Kristi mentioned six things we need to do to become centered and connected before a conversation. I am only going to mention two.

1. Take short breaks – when your body gives you signals whether it is fatigue, hunger or loss of focus, listen and react to it—take a break so you can be refreshed. Research suggest that our bodies are designed to work in 90 minute increments.
2. Focus on Gratitude – when you sense yourself becoming stressed out, stop and think about what you are grateful for which can shift your focus.
3. If we want to make a positive impact on a youth or even another adult, we must embrace being real and authentic. *Nugget: If you want to move behavior and shape thinking, you need to get personal and stay personal. People are drawn to those who blend competency with vulnerability.* Leaders must learn how to blend strength with struggle, power with vulnerability and strong determination with a learning approach (teachable).

We must understand that how we speak truly communicates our authenticity. What is the sentiment behind our words? In order to make a true connection with others, we must be honest with what we do and do not know. Practice being explicit transparent means that you will never assume that others get where you are coming from, you tell them and remove all doubt.

When you are around passionate people, your energy level rises. This section of the book focuses on passion, for we know that passionate people show conviction. Therefore, we convey passion through our energy level. *Nugget: When people exude positive energy, people borrow from it, internalize it and make it their own.* There are two types of passion:

- Harmonious – lifts people up
- Obsessive – bring stress to people

When we spend the majority of our time on things that bring purpose to our lives, our work is more invigorating. When thinking about purpose there are three types:

1. Big P – Your life's purpose
2. Small P – Now purpose, what we are doing at the time
3. Middle P – Helping others to find meaningful work

*Nuggets: Great leaders do this every day. They continually check in to ensure that what a person does links to what a person wants to be. What purpose comes down to is to help others find meaning in the here and now.*

### **Highlights: What I liked!**

The reason why this book was so wonderful for me is that I am a practical person; I am always looking at how to apply the learning after I receive the information. Kristi's objective was to make inspirational communication more understandable and repeatable. She was on target in meeting this objective throughout the book. Kristi will introduce you to good books that you can make part of your reading repertoire.

### **Who might benefit from the Book?**

Before reading the book you get the sense from the cover that this book is for leaders. However, this book is for anyone who is aspiring to become a leader both now and in the future. For I am a believer that leaders are not born, but they are made. Anyone in leadership today and in the future can benefit from this book. It is like Kristi is your own personal coach as you are reading. She provides you with the how-to tools to apply the learning to your life.

For me, this book can benefit youth as well. After all, they are our future leaders. So why not train them early and give them a good foundational head start. Not only am I going to apply the learning of this book to my life, but I will pass it on to the youth I am training so they can become better, more inspirational communicators.

### **Conclusion**

I was happy for all the nuggets and information I received from Kristi in chapter 12; however, in the conclusion, she gave me the practical things I needed to move forward in being an inspirational communicator. Not only will I practice these things, I will have my students practice them as well, so at a young age they can develop into inspirational communicators who will be change agents in their community, the world as they continue their journey of being life long learners.

*Nuggets:*

- 1. Happiness comes from the quality of our relationships.*
- 2. When conducting a meeting, know the emotion you want to put into the room before you begin.*
- 3. Put intention behind our communication.*
- 4. Go into networking gathering not looking for anything, go in trying to give.*
- 5. People remember not what you said, but how you made them feel.*
- 6. Difficult conversations become less stressful if instead of pushing for our idea or resolution, we attempt to expand the perspectives of all involved—starting with ourselves.*

I have taught students that to really know that you have learned the information, you must first use it and then you need to pass it on to others. I was inspired by this book and I feel a sense of obligation as well as responsibility to pay it forward. Thank you, Kristi.

For more about this book, go to:

<http://www.amacombooks.org/book.cfm?isbn=9780814437896>

*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. Chapter members are generally mid-career professionals, the audience for most project management books. If you are an author or publisher of a project management-related book, and would like the book reviewed through this program, please contact [editor@peworldjournal.net](mailto:editor@peworldjournal.net).*

---

## About the Reviewer



### **Yolanda Morgan-Davis**

North Texas, USA



### **Life Purpose**

Ms. Davis helps to create opportunities that will transform how students look and approach school and life, resulting in life-long learners and change agents in the community. As a trainer, Ms. Davis feels that there is a bridge between information and transformation. In an academic setting through teaching, information is conveyed to students. In a training session, students build upon their academic knowledge and are opened to transforming possibilities of what they can do and become. This is where Ms. Davis greatest contribution comes in, when she can presents students with opportunities that connects with the fulfillment of their dream.

### **Profesional Profile**

The level of education of its citizens defines the economic strength of a country. Ms. Davis is committed to empowering young people to achieve superior performance with motivational messaging tools, inventive personal development resources and academic city tours to compete in a global society. In 2000, The International NET XChange Group, a consulting, mentoring and college preparatory organization for youth between the ages of 11-18 was incorporated by Ms. Davis. The organization addresses areas of social development to maximize personal growth and academic potential.

### *NET XChange Accomplishments*

- Coordinated the “Chicago Career Shadowing” tour with nine corporations, colleges and universities for youth between the ages of 15-18
- “Pathway to Freedom Traveling Exhibit” focusing on the Trail of Tears, Underground Railroad and the Civil Rights Movement — an exhibit for youth created by youth, parents and chaperones
- Designed “Train2Serve” – Career readiness training for youth
- Designed “Scholastic Marathon Training-Get Ready, Get Set Let’s Go – College-prep training for youth
- Coordinated social skills training seminars for youth development
- Established NETXC book club with youth facilitators — promoting reading, writing and vocabulary

While working to build a youth organization, I have held several successful positions in an effort to fulfill my career goals. My skills encompass the ability to manage projects from planning to completion, software and hardware installation, network conversion, multiple systems support (mainframes, client servers, PCs, laptops and mobile devices).

### *Career Accomplishments*

- *Texas A & M Commerce, MBA; Texas Woman’s University, BS; PMP Certified*
- Shekinah Radiance Academy – Community Liaison
- Allstate Insurance – IT Project Manager
- Halliburton Company – Network Professional
- Texas Instruments – IT System Administrator and Trainer

### **Educational, Certification and Professional Training**

Texas A& M Commerce, Commerce, TX – MBA: Instructional Design Training

*Business Management*

Texas Woman’s University, Denton, TX – BS: True Colors Certification

*Business Administration*

Project Management Professional

DiSC Certification

Foundation in Professional Ethics Training

DeVos Urban Youth Leadership Training

### **Beyond the Open Door— To Servant Leadership**

A servant leader requires a deep humility as well as a willingness to pour yourself into the good of others. You get greatness out of people by expecting it from them. In the words of Karen Pittman, “We must be able to undergird a sustained effort to bring all young people into the civil, social and economic arenas of their communities as lifelong learners, workers and change agents.” Ms. Davis encourages young people to become purpose-driven and balanced individuals in competence and conscience.

She can be contacted at [netxc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:netxc@sbcglobal.net)