

Finding the Spark: Unlocking growth potential on your team

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Hi, I'm Kelly

- Sr. Engineering Manager @ Zapier
- 10+ years in leadership
- 2x founder
- Trained therapist



Not everyone is chasing a promotion.

But everyone needs growth.

Two Types of High Performers

Rock Star

- Steady growth
- Depth & expertise
- Provides stability

Rock stars seek challenges that keep them motivated and engaged

Superstar

- Rapid growth
- Stretch & visibility
- Drives change

Superstars seek challenges that take them outside of their comfort zone and build net new skills

The Medium Performer

Medium Performer

- Meets expectations
- Plateau risk
- May rely on high performers

**Medium performers move forward
only if they choose to — growth is
in their hands**

Two Types of Low Performers

Low Performer, Growth Potential

- Misaligned role or external barriers
- Needs coaching & support
- Can move upward with guidance

**With the right support, low performers
with potential can grow into strong
contributors**

Low Performer, No Growth

- Poor quality work
- No signs of improvement
- Holding the team back

**Low performers with no
improvement path ultimately need to
transition off the team**

Consider both **technical** and **non-technical**
growth opportunities

You can't always give promotions...

But you can always give growth.

The Four Levers of Motivation

Purpose

- Connect work to bigger mission
- Show customer impact

Progress

- Celebrate wins
- Make milestones visible

Mastery

- New skills & challenges
- Autonomy to deliver

Flexibility

- Control over time & work style
- Protect focus time

Motivating Rock Stars

Purpose → Connect their expertise to team impact

Progress → Recognize consistency, not just big wins

Mastery → Deepen skills in their lane

Flexibility → Protect stability they value

Motivating Superstars

Purpose → Tie work to ambitious goals

Progress → Fast feedback, visible milestones

Mastery → Stretch projects, new skills

Flexibility → Autonomy to run with ideas

Motivating Medium Performers

Purpose → Clarify expectations, show why work matters

Progress → Celebrate small wins to build confidence

Mastery → Bite-sized opportunities to grow skills

Flexibility → Give ownership to spark accountability

Motivating Low Performers with Growth Potential

Purpose → Check alignment: role, culture, external factors

Progress → Set clear milestones, structured feedback

Mastery → Targeted coaching on specific gaps

Flexibility → Adjust workload while they rebuild

**Even when the ladder is blocked,
you can still clear the path forward.**

Thanks for joining me!

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