

# ONE-ON-ONE

WITH NICK NANTON

*featuring*

**Chester Elton and Adrian Gostick**



*Chester Elton has been called the “apostle of appreciation” by the Globe and Mail, Canada’s largest newspaper, and “creative and refreshing” by The New York Times. He is also the co-author of several successful leadership books and is an in-demand speaker the world over.*

*Adrian Gostick is a global thought leader on work place strategy and the author of several successful books including Engagement. The Carrot Principle has been a regular New York Times bestseller and 24 Carrot Manager has been called a “Must read” for modern-day managers by Larry King of CNN. His latest book The Orange Revolution was number one on Wall Street Journal’s bestseller’s list and there’s much more to read on him.*

**Nick:** Hey everybody, Nick Nanton here, and I am going to introduce you to Chester Elton and Adrian Gostick, the authors of *The Carrot Principle* and *The Orange Revolution*. These guys are the real deal, and they do some really cool stuff relating to how to motivate those around you. Welcome Chester and Adrian.

**Chester:** Thanks for having us. Adrian and I talk all the time about figuring out, “What’s your noble cause?” What is it that will get people excited to come to work and give you their best every day? How do you get people heart’s involved?

**Adrian:** When you think about great managers, chances are they gave you a vision of something better than where you were, whether it was with your own career or whether it was what you could accomplish together. In the *Orange Revolution* one of the examples we use is George Washington standing on the banks of the Delaware. His army was about to go home. Then he gave them the glorious cause and the speech on that bank and every man relisted to fight off the British. That’s what great leaders do; they

emerge during the most difficult times.

**Nick:** I absolutely agree. It is ultimately when we feel like we’re working toward a greater cause that we actually get long-term motivation.

**Chester:** One of the great managers we studied is Scott O’Neal, who runs Madison Square Garden Sports. One thing he does with all new employees is to sit down with them and ask, “Where do you want to be in five years? Where do you want to be in 10 years? Tell me your dreams.” So someone might say, “I want to run an NBA franchise.” Then he might say, “Great, I know all the guys at the NBA. I know how to get you there. These are the skills you need to develop. You know where it starts? It starts by giving me your very best today.”

And that’s a great way to keep that going and keep people coming in the door every day, not just for the paycheck but for the bigger version.

**Adrian:** One of the other things we found in our research is that the great managers set very clear goals for their people. So at some point whether it’s monthly or weekly you bring them and say,

“Okay this is what we wanted to accomplish. How are we doing?” Those are very simple ideas, but that’s how great leaders lead.

**Nick:** Let’s talk for a moment about types of recognition because, obviously, if my employee hits their goal every week, motivation like taking them to lunch once a week probably becomes stale. So, how do I keep it fresh?

**Chester:** That’s a great question. We ask managers, “How do you know what’s important to your employees?” And the simple answer is -- ask them. We make a mistake all the time as managers; we assume that they’d like to go to lunch; everybody likes to go to lunch. So literally just sitting down or having those simple conversations... “Look we’re committed to be world class here, and when you deliver those world-class results we want to celebrate. What celebration would be meaningful?”

Because if you get it wrong, all the good intentions in the world go right out the window. It’s like sending a fifth of whiskey to a devout Baptist family, it just doesn’t work. Neither does a honey-baked ham to a conservative Jewish family.

**Adrian:** The other thing a lot of managers will say, “Okay look, if I recognize for this behavior they’re going to expect me to recognize the same behavior next week.” And that’s not accurate. Recognition is like taking the stairs. Yes, you recognized hitting 50 widgets one week. That’s great because the next week you say, “Hey, the goal is 52.” And you can move and progress.

**Nick:** Okay, got it. You went through a 10-year study just to write *The Carrot Principle*. Can you give us some cliff notes of what you learned? Obviously, everybody needs to go out and buy the book. But can you give maybe some of the most interesting things or the most unexpected things you’ve found out of really digging into that study?

**Chester:** One is that we found a general praise of people had no impact. Sometimes we think we’re being the big motivator by saying, “Great job, great job, great job, you rock, your rock.” In reality, after a while it becomes almost annoying. Specificity is really important.

**Adrian:** Another thing we found is that the surprising link between organizations that recognize excellence -- there really is a financial benefit. In fact organizations that were effective were three times more profitable than those that don’t get this. So the bottom line for us as managers is that all employees are looking to feel

appreciated. It’s common sense that we will work harder for somebody who appreciates our work. And yet very few managers get this.

**Nick:** Awesome. The other thing I want to ask you guys about is the awesome job branding you’ve done for yourselves. When you guys speak you also hand out those little stuffed carrots, the first thing I thought was, “I better get two of these because I have two children at home.” Now there are meltdowns if we forget Garret the Carrot when we go somewhere. It’s just brilliant that it is way deeper emotionally for me than it ever would’ve been on a business level.

**Chester:** Right. Here’s the thing, and what we do is we talk to people about the power of recognition. We prove it out. I’m always amazed when we have the CEO of the company coming unglued from his seat to answer the true or false question so that he can get this little \$0.50 carrot. It works.

But the point you’re making is one that Adrian and I always like to finish with and it’s the fact that this is a principle that works in the work place, and we’ve got all the data and the research to prove it. But boy, don’t forget to use it at home. Don’t forget to be appreciative of your spouse and your kids and your teachers and coaches. As Mary Kay used to say, everybody’s got a big sign on their forehead that says, “Recognize me. Appreciate me. Value me.” And when you do that all those good things happen.

**Nick:** Awesome. Let’s close here. I really appreciate you guys talking to me. I’m sure there are people who want to learn more. Tell us the best place to go learn more.

**Chester:** Go to our websites at AdrianGostick.com or ChesterElton.com. The books are *The Carrot Principle* or *The Orange Revolution*. But what we’d love you to do today is just go try this. Do a couple of things. Write some handwritten thank you notes to somebody who’s really done something important for you. Say thank you in a public setting in a specific way to one of your employees or somebody who means a lot to you. Just give this a try.

**Nick:** That’s great advice. I can’t wait to see you guys again. Thanks so much for sharing all this great stuff. Take care. ★

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