

Business Unusual

**Values-oriented Leadership in Today's Corporate Culture
by Otto Richter (2014; vielSeitig Magazine)**

There is an ancient Chinese proverb that says “The people follow the example of those above them.” Unfortunately, this truth is well reflected in modern organizational hierarchies in the way excessive greed often sets the tone of how to conduct our business. But, whether we like it or not, seminar trainers are also looked up to for their leadership by example. That is why the new breed of group leaders that are filling the ranks of today's personal and professional trainings need to constantly remain vigilant as to the long-term consequences of what they are conveying. Transferring powerful tools to people without also emphasizing the need for values-oriented, ethical conduct in the application of those tools, indicates a lack of responsibility for any damage their misuse may cause in the future.

It's very easy to point the finger at the big banks, the NSA, corrupt politics or an increasing bureaucracy as the cause of the problems we face in our world. But if you look inside those larger systems, you will see that they are all made up of a lot of little... people. People who, many of whom, just want to keep their jobs and are willing to “turn a blind eye” to the injustice, inequality and plain criminality that goes on right in front of them on a daily basis. It takes a lot of ants to build a colony, each playing their own role.

What is Your Intention?

One may ask how positive sounding abilities developed in a seminar situation like “communication skills”, “personal thought control” or “emotional balance” could ever contribute, in any destructive way whatsoever, to a normal living or working environment. Answer: one's INTENTION. Consider the negative effects that a calm, focused and highly skilled communicator might have if his or her intention was to cover up an accidental chemical spill near the water supply of a major city. And after all, that person would just be doing their job, right?

Group leaders of all types and kinds should not underestimate the power of the tools they impart to their group members, or the very real and high probability that some if not many group members may someday be seduced into using those tools in unsavory ways, under questionable circumstances. Therefore, both trainers and trainees may want to reexamine their underlying intentions, each in their respective role.

Those who see themselves as leaders, or who find themselves in a position of being a leader for whatever the reason might ask themselves: “What is MY intention? How high of a priority is it that, as a result of my leadership, I make a positive difference in the world?”

And those who are on the receiving end of all the great skills and experiences offered in a seminar or training might ask: “How high of a priority is it for me that, as a result of what I gain from participating in the training experience, I am better prepared and able to make positive and constructive contributions to the world I live in?”

The aforementioned questions, I believe, need to be deeply explored long before any trainer's business cards are printed or any trainee's certification hung on the wall. In my eyes, not only my abilities determine my personal value. What I actually do with those abilities and thereby impact my world is equally important.

Do You Have What it Takes?

In today's streamlined, goal-oriented seminar/training scene, it may not seem appropriate to include any kind of ethical overtone in the fear of being perceived as too soft, uncool or even spiritual (as if that were a bad word). Actually, what would be truly inappropriate is if some form of ethics were NOT included. A true leader stands up for what he or she feels is in the best interest of those seeking his or her leadership, despite any trends they may currently entertain.

As a group leader, it is your responsibility to lift the hearts and minds of those you are leading with inspiration, passion and empowerment. At the same time, it is imperative that you instill a holistic awareness of the consequences of their actions and behavior in the context of what you are sharing in the group.

Although human competitiveness can be the thrust behind an enormous amount of creativity and productivity, it is also at the root of a kind of "profit-based tunnel vision". The often short-term thinking of companies, in an effort to bolster and increase the bottom-line, fosters a mentality among employees in which the long-term results of actions taken to pull in that amount of profit are cast out of sight, and out of mind. If we get caught up in this "system" we are easily numbed by the success factor, and unwittingly sacrifice the quality of life of our descendants in exchange for a "quick buck" today.

From I to Us

Take the blinders off! Living "in the moment" does not mean forgetting about tomorrow. Our minds and hearts can be in both places. Sustainability, although perhaps the most overused word of the day, is the issue at hand. Only this time it's about the human species and the planet Earth. With the technology we have—and will have—at our disposal, our only possibility to avoid self-destruction is for each of us, in our own way, to gather up the courage to use whatever we have to create positive change.

The learning potentials for those who attend the various seminars available today, are astounding. Strategies are well outlined, goals well defined and results easily integrated into our work and private life situations. However, it is upon all of us in attendance to make the best of these incredible opportunities, making sure that what we teach and what we learn will—as well as fulfilling immediate developmental requirements—also be put toward the benefit of all humanity and the Earth upon which we live.

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