Hi Class,

We had a really interesting conversation in class on Friday. If you’re missing any classes, you should consider talking to one of us to get a sense of what it is we are trying to accomplish. My updates are only my version of events, and are subject to interpretation using my collection of models, which is different than your collection. That’s what we learned on Friday.

First we all tried to practice being attentive. If you close your eyes and concentrate on your fingers, can you distinguish all of them individually? Now how about your toes? If you can distinguish each toe, that’s amazing, if you can’t, that’s normal. This kind of exercise would naturally bring up discussion of people with amputated limbs still being able to “feel” what is no longer there, so that’s what we did.

The exercise is a way for us to practice the quality of our attention, which is somehow synonymous with being a good leader. Roger pointed out that we all have only a fixed amount of attention normally, and Trevor cautions us that if we really were totally aware of our surroundings, we would be more or less dysfunctional. Here’s one way to think about it. Imagine you never ever brushed your teeth. Ughh. I know, but think it anyways. Now, suppose you brush your teeth one morning. What happens next? Well, all day your attention would focus automatically on your mouth and how smooth your teeth are. You would be quite distracted from your normal routine. That taken to an extreme illustrates how too much attention can keep you from functioning, and I suspect Trevor has already tried this.

Next, Sean pointed out that a person should have to control each toe and not just have attention on the toe. This lead Roger to describe an experiment by a cultural biologist named Emberto that shows people can’t distinguish between what is real and a hallucination. I had a hallucination once; it was scary real, so I concur. All this is good to know, but doesn’t strictly help us with understanding leadership.

So the conversation moved to the question of leadership and effectiveness. Pete said ‘of course as a leader you want to be effective’ and Roger suggested that may not be true for everyone. Does power equate to effectiveness? That brings us back to last week’s Kantor model of power, affect and meaning. Roger asked us to note our reaction to the following three statements:

That person is a powerful leader
That person is a sensitive leader
That person is an insightful leader

Whichever of these gets the most positive and least positive reaction from you determines the percentages of power, affect, and meaning in your leadership model. My percentages of each were very clear after this exercise. Roger pointed out that Pete and the rest of us all have an active model that we employ that we wouldn’t be talked out of. The only way to change our model is to have a significant awareness that what you have is only a model that you employ and then be able to make a value based assumption about what is happening. This could lead to a paradigm shift in your relationship to others and then, you’re on your way to a new model, and perhaps greatness. Call me when you get there!

So next we were reminded that everything is a model, including F=ma. Then we had to entertain the question that in a plurality of models, are all models of equal value? Evidently they are not but my low value models are different than yours. What a surprise.

Thus, we try to get back to leadership models in specific instead of models in general, because I really am disturbed about F=ma. Specifically, consider that we don’t know other peoples leadership model. How can we find out? We have to observe it in others. Some people have a transparent model, others have an opaque model. Our HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT is to discover someone else’s leadership model. To do this, you must first define your own model. You need clarity in your definition for yourself, so observing yourself is part of our assignment. Roger did not specify if we needed to observe ourselves in the mirror or by video or by closing our eyes and visualizing. Next, you go off and observe the model in someone else, and it doesn’t have to be someone you already perceive as a leader (think homeless person). We have to describe their leadership model either by direct observation or by conversation. However, manipulation is not allowed, so you have to tell the person what you’re doing.

This idea led Trevor to question the ethics of observation in general. Roger wanted us to think if it was unethical just to look at another person. He related his story about not looking at people for two weeks who didn’t actively seek his attention. He said it was difficult, but very valuable. He suggested that the other fun experiment like this is for a HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT to discover someone else’s leadership model. To do this, you must first define your own model. You need clarity in your definition for yourself, so observing yourself is part of our assignment. Roger did not specify if we needed to observe ourselves in the mirror or by video or by closing our eyes and visualizing. Next, you go off and observe the model in someone else, and it doesn’t have to be someone you already perceive as a leader (think homeless person). We have to describe their leadership model either by direct observation or by conversation. However, manipulation is not allowed, so you have to tell the person what you’re doing.

Hey, that’s Luanne!

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