Hi again everyone,

I missed the beginning of the conversation, but what I did hear is that for the most part, we delete from our mind anything that doesn’t reinforce our existing paradigm. You might make the paradigm more complex to account for the new data, but you are habitually inclined to maintain your perception. You can include doubt in Appreciative Inquiry, so we need to know more about how that works. See attached article about looking at the positive side of what is happening, what is working.

But aren’t you faking it if you are positive all the time? Think about an artist. You come to look at their work and they say “what do you think?” Are they asking for the truth or a just praise, which might not be genuine? Somehow you want to be constructive, reinforcing that they should try and fail and that’s ok, it takes practice.

This also applies to your staff evaluation. You have good intentions to help the person get better, however maybe you get to a point where you want to give up. You know what is needed for them to improve, they know what is needed, but they don’t want to do it. Somehow, though, Roger doesn’t want to give up on the person, he wants to think about them as an individual. Really, why do we have to evaluate people at all? Some managers say it’s their job to judge people, I’m sure they are very effective with that attitude. Others would use the opportunity to tell the person what they are doing right. However, if it is not safe to admit areas where you need to improve, your organization is being driven to mediocrity. Peter Drucker is quoted saying it this way:

On Excellence
“One should waste as little effort as possible on improving areas of low competence. It takes far more energy and work to improve from incompetence to mediocrity than it takes to improve from first-rate performance to excellence. And yet most people—especially most teachers and most organizations—concentrate on making incompetent performers into mediocre ones. Energy, resources, and time should go instead into making a competent person into a star performer.”

Think about that quote, but also spend time contemplating our homework on unreasonable requests. The unreasonableness implies something is incomplete, that you are coping with something. You have an emotional infraction about that. Can you identify where the incompleteness exists for you? Look in places that matter. Look at fundamental areas that you experience as incomplete. Find some incomplete areas and then consider how you are relating to them. Is acceptance your response? What could be done or said that could create a sense of wholeness for you in one of these areas? And what would that make possible?

Roger told the story of a plastic surgeon who said that some of his patients said after their surgery that no, that surgery wasn’t enough. For some people, it could never be enough. Some people are never satisfied, and it isn’t really about the facelift. The plastic surgeon wrote a book because it turned out that more people said it wasn’t enough than said “wow, that’s it, I’m perfect”.

Consider that within our incompleteness we are addicted to our coping mechanisms. We feed them like they are children who need nourishment to grow. More and more coping mechanisms mean more and more energy away from what really is incomplete. However, if you look long enough at it, you might find that what is incomplete actually isn’t. What do you do if you then find you don’t need your coping mechanisms anymore and how disruptive would that be? Homework is not for wimps. Hope your complete or incomplete self makes it to class again on Monday.

Dianne