

CUTTINGS...

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Compiled and edited by Geof Cox

My lead article this week is from the new book by one of my significant influencers, Charles Handy. Words of wisdom indeed, as are all of the books he has written. And a couple of other articles that pick up on themes - like Charles's - that are basic to our understanding of how people develop positive and effective working relationships.

Some summer reading at a time for reflection and re-energising ourselves... And, because the Handy article is quite long, you also have a bumper collection of Snippets to further provoke thoughts, reflections and action.

Enjoy...

Geof Cox

The Wisdom of Charles Handy

In his new book, 21 Letters on Life and Its Challenges, Charles Handy, is talking to his four grandchildren. His goal is to help them as they are "contemplating life's rich choices." He is also summarising some of his own key contributions to business thinking and philosophy learned in his 87 years. I have always appreciated - and used - a lot of his observations and thoughts and consider him to be one of the foremost management and business thinkers of his generation. Here are some highlights and excerpts (in italics):

Keep it small

"I came to realise that if people truly mattered, then it was better that they worked, if at all possible, in situations where everyone could know each other. For how can you trust or rely on someone whom you never meet? Humans need human-sized groups to be at their best. Small is better, if not essential, to get the job done properly." Larger groupings tend to reduce people to being a small part of a bigger machine, not able to make a personal contribution.

I recall hearing Handy describe his own experience of this when I was still working as part of a big machine in Exxon. Handy's experience was in Shell first in Singapore, which was a small work family who all knew each other, then in the London headquarters of the Shell group. *"The door of our office had a big brass plate on the outside with the official name of our little department, MKR/35. When we wrote memos, they had to be from MKR/35, not from Gerry or Charles."* There was also a small space in the brass plate for a name card that could easily be replaced.

In this edition

The Wisdom of Charles Handy - excerpts from his new book

Successful Teams According to Google - a report on their 2 year study into what makes a successful team

Feedback is a Gift - some reminders of what makes for successful feedback

Plus details of **Public Courses, Book Sales**, and a collection of **Snippets** - quotations to further provoke your thinking and reflection

Snippets

A collection of thought provokers and quotations...

"It has long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things."

Leonardo da Vinci

"I never hit a shot, not even in practice, without having a very sharp, in-focus picture of it in my head"

Jack Nicklaus

"A problem is a chance for you to do your best"

Duke Ellington

"People ask for criticism, but they only want praise."

W Somerset Maugham

The message was clear - the department and job title had become more important than the person.

Human scale

"Why are villages and platoons better than mass organisations? Because they are human scale: They allow you to be a person, not a cog. Professor Robin Dunbar has studied a wide range of human groups down the ages. His research shows our levels of intimacy go up in multiples of three. We may have just five people whom we know intimately and trust implicitly: our best friends. At the next levels, there are 15 good friends or mates whom we are always delighted to be with, 45 whom we see occasionally, perhaps work with, and 135 that make up our Christmas card or Facebook list of friends. I have found that for me, 45 works best as the maximum size of a work group. And when a manager tells me that the organisation has grown to 100 people, I say, "Be careful. You will now start to introduce specialisations and departments; you will become more bureaucratic, a machine."

"We need large organisations, but can these city-like organisations restructure themselves into collections of villages that are linked together by the new information technology? My guess is that the organisations will have to start doing just that if they want to attract the best and brightest of the new generation."

The federal principle

"Such organisations already exist. Small startups keep things small. But large organizations are also trying. Haier, in China, employs more than 70,000 people, but is largely made up of 2,000 autonomous groups. These groups of seven to 10 people organise their own work, and if they can make improvements or boost their sales, they can keep some of the savings or profit."

The federal principle for organisations, business as well as political, is the way to grow big while keeping small. Federalism is the reverse of centralisation. Its dominating principle is subsidiarity - effectively reverse delegation: power is considered to lie in the small parts of the organisation, which then delegate to the centre only the things that the centre can do better for them all.

"If the organisation does not provide the intimacy of a small group and space to use your individual initiative to make a difference, you should move on, having finished your apprenticeship. Humans are not meant to be machines."

You are not a human resource

Too many organisations still look at people as a resource that can be managed: In exchange for the promise of financial security and guaranteed work, we sell our time to complete strangers with permission for them to use that time for their own purposes, those purposes being partly, or even mainly in some cases, to enrich their investors. *Of course, most organisations do not see it that way. They see it as a consensual arrangement from which both sides gain. Some lean over backward to make their place of work more user-friendly, with fringe benefits ranging from free food, healthcare, and childcare, to meditation*

"The human mind treats a new idea the way the body treats a strange protein: it rejects it."

P D Medawar

"You can only be truly accomplished at something you love. Don't make money the goal. Instead pursue the things you love doing and do them so well that people can't take their eyes off you. All the other tangible rewards will come as a result."

Maya Angelou

"Live your beliefs and you can turn the world around."

Henry David Thoreau

"If necessity is the mother of invention; then maybe opportunity is the father."

Andy White

"I want to sing like the birds sing, not worrying about who hears or what they think."

Rumi

"The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves."

Stephen Spielberg

"We are not what we know but what we are willing to learn."

Mary Catherine Bateson

"He that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils, for time is the greatest innovator."

Francis Bacon

"One day, in retrospect, the years of struggle will strike you as the most beautiful."

Sigmund Freud

"Hire character. Train skill."

Peter Schutz

"If we want everything to remain as it is, it will be necessary for everything to change."

classes, sports facilities, and community volunteer opportunities — all a well-intentioned attempt to provide a whole-of-life environment. You will still have given the organization the right to use your time as they see fit. The effective use of that time is what is then called “management.””

“Think about this: Any organization whose key assets are talented or skilled people — universities, theatres, law firms, churches — don’t use the word manager to describe the people in charge. They call them deans, senior partners, bishops, directors, or team leaders. [In those organizations,] the title of manager is only used for those who are in charge of things, not people, that is, the physical or inanimate parts of the organization: the transport, the information systems, the building. Instinctively these organizations recognise that people don’t like to be “managed,” and they avoid the word wherever possible. The word implies that you are a resource, something that is controlled by others, a thing to be used and deployed as others see fit.”

Words do matter

“Organisations do need to be organised. The flow of work needs to be compartmentalised and people need to know what they are required to do, by when, and to what standard; but that is managing the work, not the individuals. The difference is crucial. If I know what I am meant to be doing and I believe it to be either useful or necessary, I will do it without someone looking over my shoulder.”

This is leadership: creating the conditions for good work, choosing the right people and setting them standards of achievement that they can understand, and rewarding them when they meet them. *“You may say that I am just playing with words — but words describe the world, even the local world of the organisation. I now believe that work needs to be organised, that things should be managed, but that people can only be encouraged, inspired, and led.”*

“Words matter. They change behaviour. They shape our thinking because of the implicit messages they send; then our thoughts shape our actions. Call someone a human resource and it is only one step further to assume that he or she can be treated like other things, be oiled and fuelled, perhaps, but also controlled and even dispensed with when surplus to requirements.”

“I truly believe that managing people, instead of leading them, is wrong and has resulted in too many dysfunctional and unhappy workplaces. People are more than a human resource.”

USEFUL LINKS

[Click here](#) to read the full article from Michael Schneider in inc.com

New Directions offers consultancy on teams development and team working. For more information [Click here](#).

Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa”

Exuberance is beauty.”

William Blake

“Peace is not an absence of war. It is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence, justice.”

Baruch Spinoza

“In the moments before a word is spoken, anything is possible.”

Barbara Brown Taylor

“Rules are for people who aren’t willing to invent their own.”

Chuck Yeager

“What counts is not only what leaders do and how they do it, but the inner place from which they operate.”

Otto Scharmer

“Don't worry about people stealing your ideas. If your ideas are any good you'll have to ram them down people's throats.”

Howard Aiken

“There are certain aspects of consciousness that are out of bounds to science.”

Paul Brock

“The best ideas are common property.”

Seneca

“The job of leadership today is not just to make money. It's to make meaning.”

John Seely Brown

“In politics an absurdity is not a handicap.”

Napoleon Bonaparte

“If you really want to do something, you will find a way. If you don’t you will find an excuse.”

Jim Rohn

Why Salespeople Struggle to Lead

Google have just spent two years studying 180 teams in order to find out why some teams excelled while others fell behind. Before this study, Google believed that building the best teams meant compiling the best people. Realising that this may not be the answer, as many of their teams compiled in this way did not perform, they set out to find the perfect mixture of skills, backgrounds, and traits to engineer super-teams.

During the two years of the project, they studied 180 Google teams, conducted 200-plus interviews, and analysed over 250 different team attributes. However, as with most people-related activities they did not discover a dream-team generating algorithm. What they did find were some "group norms" - traditions, behavioural standards, and unwritten rules that govern how teams function, and, significantly some team behaviours that magnified the collective intelligence of the group.

The five key characteristics they identified are:

1. Dependability.

Team members can be relied on to get things done on time and meet expectations.

2. Structure and clarity.

High-performing teams have clear goals, and have well-defined roles within the group.

3. Meaning.

The work of the team has personal significance to each member.

4. Impact.

The group believes their work is purposeful and positively impacts the greater good.

5. Psychological Safety.

This one stood out from the rest: an environment in which everyone is safe to take risks, voice their opinions, and ask judgment-free questions. A culture where managers provide air cover and create safe zones so employees can let down their guard.

At first sight, a similar set of traits that Patrick Lencioni identifies as the "Five Dysfunctions", especially the last point which Lencioni identifies as 'Trust'. Like Lencioni, who points out that trust is the fundamental building block for teams to build their development, Google found that teams with psychologically safe environments had employees who were less likely to leave, more likely to harness the power of diversity, and ultimately, were more successful.

USEFUL LINKS

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Feedback is a Gift

Hernani Alves reminds us of some of the basics of feedback in a recent article in Project Management. As well as attracting me with the title of his article: "Feedback is a Gift" - a description I was first introduced to some 30+ years ago by my colleague and mentor, Walt Hopkins - Alves confirmed three things that leaders do to give and receive feedback successfully.

They seek it: Leaders seek their own feedback and actively look to improve their skills before moving on to others are not just improving themselves but modelling successful behaviour. And they treat it as a gift - not arguing or defending themselves but accepting the feedback as a means to improve.

Catch people doing things right: Not all feedback can be positive, but it's vital to highlight get the balance right - Barbara Frederickson suggests a ratio of at least 3:1 positive to negative in order to develop a growth mindset and a positive working relationship. And 'fixing' problems does not generate success - just a lack of problem. To generate success "catch" people doing things right, celebrate those wins and magnify the positives.

Make it purposeful: No one wants to hear feedback for feedback's sake. The process should be intentional with the ultimate goal of seeing improvement, which also has an impact on a longer term purpose - whether that is delivering a better outcome for the project or improving individual useful skills.

USEFUL LINKS

[Click here](#) to see the article from PM Insider, ProjectManagement.com

New Directions offers courses on feedback and coaching. For more information [Click here](#).

Public Courses in SE Asia

Cuttings

New Directions runs a small number of public training programmes in association with petroEDGE in Kuala Lumpur. Click on the course date to access further details.

Human Competency & Capability Development 15-18 October

A 4 day course in human resource development strategy for the oil and gas sector.

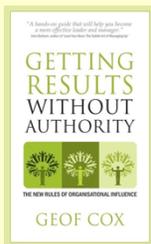
Moving from Engineer to Manager 21-23 October

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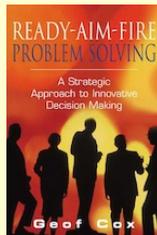
Rapid and Inclusive Strategy Development 24-25 October

A 2 day workshop exploring whole system approaches to developing strategy that yield success and build commitment in a radically shortened timeframe.

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Cuttings is a bi-monthly collection of ideas and comments published elsewhere which have attracted my attention over the past couple of months. It is designed for readers who are interested in individual, organisation and management development and is free.

It has been published continuously for more than 20 years by *New Directions*, an international network of consultants and trainers who work together to learn, research, design and provide consulting and training in individual, management, and organisation development.

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