



HIDDEN POWER:

SECRETS OF ACQUIRING AND
MAINTAINING CONTROL

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GOALS

1. Differentiate leadership behaviors that enhance, diminish, and retain leadership power.
2. Differentiate between the different uses of power.
3. Recognize politics and its power relationship.

KEYWORDS FOR APPLICATION

1. "Hardwired" Leadership Abilities
2. Artificial Intelligence (AI)
3. Supervisor Superiority
4. Nepotism Wisdom
5. Friendship Hiring
6. Academia Checks and Balances
7. Administrative Honor
8. Information-Sharing Constraints
9. Necessary vs. Unnecessary Conversation
10. Energy/Power Meetings
11. Positive Reputation
12. Shared Resolution to Problems
13. Never Argue Rule
14. Dependable Power
15. Honesty Matters
16. Consultant Use and Control
17. Recognizing Health Challenges
18. Faces of Power
19. Art of Compromise
20. Artful Negotiation
21. Political Gain
22. Job Acquisition
23. Walking and Socialization Meetings

Excellence in leadership requires knowledge and practice of power principles. Power excellence denotes learning how to use that power most effectively. Even though this document is written mainly for leaders in all areas, the content is appropriate for everyone in life or the work setting.

All personnel has a degree of "power." Just getting through an academic and leadership educational regime says something about using power to survive as a leadership student. The educational experience of leadership education is, for the most part, a time when educators teach the energy used

by the leader for the leadership of others. However, education results in personal power and the ability to practice so-as to magnify the leadership role.

Sorcher and Brant (2002) stated that their experience led them to believe that leadership personal abilities are “hardwired” and in place before a person reaches their early or mid-twenties. Leadership Quarterly identified a DNA sequence of individuals who hold a leadership position. A research team at Harvard, NYU, University of California determined that parents pass down leadership genes. Therefore, even though leadership is a skill, it is also a genetic trait. The key to a potential leader’s placement into a powerful leadership position is recognizing the academic success, personal abilities, natural attributes, and willingness of the potential leader to establish effective, powerful relationships. It takes this type of leader to make expected powerful decisions of leadership without regret.

In today’s world, we cannot overlook the creeping in of Artificial Intelligence (AI). We are told that soon we will have all of our questions answered inside a messenger application. We are told we will be able to use AI to assist with “mundane tasks.” Due to the number of complex variables related to human behavior and human decisions, it is questionable whether AI can/will be used. The use of AI might be used in consideration of difficult questions used by current leadership theories. Time will tell.

Most leaders (not all) who ultimately acquire significant positive power have probably learned to be high achievers—that is, he/she pursues a high level of excellence and success in most things. Their education about succeeding (if not academically learned) is through actual successful living experiences. For power’s sake, the means of understanding the ability to be fair, decent, friendly, and democratic is because of their repetitive experience with favorable outcomes as a result of those behaviors. However, research has shown that overconfidence associated with power often results in the leader making poor decisions of many kinds, including poor money decisions that cause the facility/organization financial loss.

To talk about the image of power, per se, we cannot overlook those individuals (historically and currently) in leadership who had/have negative power. That is, they get the job done at any cost. They set a poor example by using extreme authoritarianism and poor judgment and cause strife among all staff members. This document does not address or condone such negative behavior. It is to encourage all leaders to act as positive leaders of other people and to magnify their caring and guiding attributes for all concerned.

Successful leaders do not usually acknowledge the following secrets of their positive power. For the most part, they are subconsciously used by effective leaders—sometimes appearing weirdly manipulative. However, to be more knowledgeable about positive leaders’ actual or intended behavior will increase knowledge about how to be successful and effective using positive power. This information and shared positive power techniques are openly and honestly reviewed in this document. They are the secrets of a hidden power!

There is no order or priority in the following selected power behaviors.

DO TREAT YOUR SUPERVISOR AS SUPERIOR

As leaders, we always want to be (and should be) at our best and do the right thing! It is possible that as a subservient leader (you) in relation to another leader, you have more skills and knowledge. Do as you are hired to do. Always encourage, support, and be on your best behavior when it comes to helping your leader be a source of good. You might be the best and most qualified person that could do your

leader's job—but to maintain your power, do not let it show until the time is right. You might be the next leader that replaces the current leader. Entropy's natural order says: Every leader will fall someday. If you master the skill of support at this time for your current leader, you might eventually outshine and replace your current leader.

DO QUESTION THE WISDOM OF PUTTING TOO MUCH TRUST IN FRIENDS OR RELATIVES

It is natural to want to hire your friends when you find yourself a leader in need. Friends are known (by some) to be "someone you can trust." Perhaps you think you know their skill, and there is a friendship established that causes you, as a leader, to feel comfortable automatically. Why depend on a stranger when you can hire your friend? ---Think again!

Here is the problem—we do not know our friends. They often agree with us when agreeing is not in the best interest of the job and job success. True honesty is often missing, and it covers up the critical thinking to truly solve problems. Often you hear what you want to hear, not what needs to be heard. It can mean he/she realizes that they are a friend because you felt they were a friend, not because they had the education and experience to do the best job. Your friend is rarely the person who can best do the job!

For the best working experience, there needs to be a distance between the people who work together. Always put friendship aside and consider which person is best suited and prepared to do the actual job. Keep friends for friendship and hire only the most competent and skilled people to meet your expected goals. Expected behaviors by a friend are often very hard to measure as part of an evaluation. Friendship boundaries and typical job/role behaviors become confused. Hire your friend instead of hiring the most qualified person, and you will lose power!

Your relatives are your relatives—nothing you can do about that! If you have a good job or a job opening in the organization that you own or where you are hired, they will most likely be seeking a position in the organization and using you, as a leader, as a reference. Now—knowing that you have been used by your relative to give them a good reference, just how easy is it to be objective in your recommendation or a future evaluation?

Nepotism (relatives or friends that act like relatives within the same organization) is a common practice. Many organizations/facilities are built on a family unit—especially a husband and wife. Many of these organizations do very well and are operated by the family. The problem is that there is sometimes a feeling of necessity by owners to provide jobs for the family. Good for the family relationships—maybe. However, it is not so good for the promotion of objectivity and maintaining power as their leader.

Some of the problems that can arise when having family members in the same organization/business are as follows:

1. Family members often feel they deserve special attention and consideration.
2. Family members tend to "stick together," often making it more difficult for management to respond to and promote monetarily non-family members.

(There is always a tendency for family members to measure their income with non-family members. The winning parties that think they should be paid the most, of course, are the family members.)

3. Family members tend to act as one and prevent creative out-of-the-box thinking.
4. When one family member gets a promotion, the other family members pursue and expect the same behavior on the part of the administration.
5. Hiring several family members is like hiring one individual instead of two or more. (When deciding on something, they usually will have the same solution/decision.)
6. When one is "fired," the close family members will often leave with them.

In academia, it is not uncommon to see a married couple teaching within the same department. It has its challenges, but the faculty within the collegiate system has a sense of extreme professionalism. Student evaluations can hold a check on professional spousal behavior and, consequently, the impact of nepotism.

The check and balance regarding faculty spousal power within the same department must be monitored carefully by a department leader/head to ensure that the same quality expectations are for each spouse and the same expectations for all other similar faculty. Evaluation of spousal performance must reflect only the spouse evaluated. It can be a subconscious challenge. As in any different hiring situation, job expectations are a necessity for meeting accrediting requirements. That check of excellence is required for every faculty member, regardless of their friendship or relationship.

As a college/university, there is a significant power within the administration to the extent that leadership's power remains stable and mutually shared with professors known for their expertise and influence within their field of study. The shared power within academia is driven by the need to have students succeed to successful graduation.

Despite this sharing of power and goals by faculty, there is still an observed tendency to hire friends and family to faculty positions rather than fully considering the education, background, and expertise of other non-friend or non-family applicants. Sometimes, a covert decision regarding friends or family is made before doing interviews.

Often, it is required that a certain number of interviews be performed to meet academic expectations and accreditation. Such administrative covert behavior of pre-selecting a friend or relative diminishes leader respect and power. Many astute potential faculty members are aware of this, and immediately the administration loses immense power and respect as an outcome of this happening.

It is an insult to any potential faculty member interviewed to spend their time, money, and resources to attend an interview when a situation where a hiring decision has already been made! The covert preselection of a faculty member that is a friend or relative could result in hiring an inferior or, at least, the less favorable faculty applicant. It curtails the hiring of possible faculty with new ideas and experience. To accomplish a fair review of faculty applicants, then, brings to task administrative honor. (Read the document on NEPOTISM by this author.)

DO BE SELECTIVE WITH SHARING OF LEADERSHIP INFORMATION

The leader's behavior has meaning. However, that does not mean that you, as the leader, need to always inform everybody of the significance of your actions. Your employees have a job to do. It is the purpose of their hiring to accomplish their assignment, not to be aware of and part of the entire leader's problem-solving, intended actions, or reasons for actions. Providing employees with too much unnecessary leadership information keeps them from concentrating on their role within the facility/organization.

It is natural for a person to want to talk about their feelings and plans for others' approval. Often, the need for a leader to share unnecessary information is to want attention and be liked by others. The leader learns that listening is a good skill, but sharing job intentions and actions with employees must be done prudently, if at all. Often, telling others just a small, carefully selected portion of what you think they want to hear or should hear is reassuring enough to meet the need.

If the leader shares too much, it becomes almost impossible for others to respect their leader. This sense of control and separateness from others is important to gain and maintain a leader's power. By not sharing unnecessarily, the leader keeps the upper hand. A conversation about your true feelings and your true intentions are not the problem or concern of other individuals under a leader's direction.

Therefore, please share some selected and unrelated leadership information because that does not give away your leadership intentions. After all, you might want to change your leadership plans and your preferences without accounting for your change to others. The appearance of indecision will result in a lack of respect, trust, and power by others if the leader expounds on his/her intentions and then changes his/her mind.

DO SAY ONLY WHAT IS NECESSARY

We all love to talk, especially when WE think we have something to say. Unfortunately, sometimes the more a person says, the more he/she appears to be rambling, insecure, and somewhat less of a leader. The tongue is a beast—it can be difficult to master. To not consciously control the tongue will allow it to go wild. And—heaven forbid—once the words are out, they are out, and you cannot take them back! Your tongue is your treasure chest to success or doom. Your words will determine your power.

A powerful person is impressive in the fact that he/she does more listening than talking. True power comes from listening and processing the actions and words of others. This integration tells you what you need to do to acquire more power. Believe it or not, the less you say unnecessarily, the less likely you are to say something that will identify you as foolish.

There is a time to talk and share—and there is a time to remain quiet! When a person cannot control his/her talking/words, it is that he/she cannot control him/herself. Association with a verbal drama king/queen as they verbally act out a situation is most annoying. Learn to *respond* verbally rather than *react* verbally. The person who cannot control his/her words is not worthy of respect or power.

DO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR POWER MEETINGS

As a leader, you will always be having a meeting for one purpose or the other. The meaning of “meeting” should mean that only the staff involved and needing to address the agenda should be invited to the meeting.

The purpose of a meeting is to create energy. If the meeting drains energy, then you, as the leader, have not planned and carried out an effective meeting. If your planning is poor, what a waste of time and, consequently, the organization’s money!

You would have to look long and hard to find a person that truly loves to go to a meeting. One of the awful feelings is to attend a meeting and feel it was a waste of time. It is time to curtail those feelings by all attendees and get on with a productive and well-planned meeting.

Meeting expectations should be stated in each person’s job description so the leader can hold the staff accountable for the following:

1. Attending required meetings and being on time.
2. Actively participating in each meeting.
3. Seeking help if they need to be absent from their required position and emergency duties during a meeting.
4. Knowing the agenda before arriving and bringing a copy of the agenda to the meeting.
5. Being mentally prepared with a contribution to each agenda item at the time of the meeting.

The powerful leader prepares for each meeting by doing and considering the following:

1. Knowing what will be “different” by the end of your planned meeting.
2. Sharing information about the date, time, and agenda at least two days before the meeting.
3. Writing the agenda items so that each item activity is measurable and reaches a goal.
(To *discuss* something is not measurable enough because the *discussion is a process*. To *determine* something is measurable and is a goal.)
(When writing powerful agenda items, remember the meeting minutes should absolutely meet the stated agenda items. To wander away from the agenda is not acceptable. Other agenda items could require another meeting with other appropriate attendees. Determine a time for the discussion of each agenda item, if needed.)
4. Inviting only the nursing staff to the meeting will accomplish the meeting goals.
5. Having a private and pleasant place where the meeting is held.
(Sometimes, a usual spot can be replaced for a different acceptable location. Do not have meetings in public places where anyone else can hear what is said. NO PUBLIC LUNCH ROOM MEETINGS!)
6. Using a stopwatch instead of the wall clock.
(A “speed meeting” allows/requires each person to take 2-3 minutes to present their expected presentation on each agenda item. A method of passing a baton to the one speaking curtails interruption from others.)

7. Following up with a three-minute time for questions or answers.
8. Sending out minutes of the meeting soon only to the people who attended the meeting.
9. Asking attendees in advance to have input regarding selected agenda items, if appropriate. (Sometimes the freshest views come from outside the organization from consumers.)
10. Have “open chairs” for the visitation of consumers/community members/tax-payers. (DO GUARD YOUR REPUTATION – (YOUR SUCCESS DEPENDS ON IT!))

No organization actually wants to hire (or keep employed) a leader with a bad reputation. Personal power is GONE. Employees will have no respect. Therefore, realize that reputation provides the very cornerstone of power.

A good reputation will usually get what you want, but let it go by the wayside, and you are attacked in numerous ways. We all have choices to make in life and the opportunity to go in one direction or the other. These choices can be potential attacks on a positive reputation. Public opinion will “hang” you as a leader if you have or acquire a bad reputation from bad choices. A good reputation has a magical property that can triple your leadership power. Treasure it and hoard it. Like many diamonds and rubies, guard it with your life. Beware—other people will try to steal your gems (reputation); therefore, bringing your reputation into question. It is critical to your power and success. There is no exception to this rule!

What Can You Do to Support or Create a Positive Reputation?

1. Determine outstanding qualities that are required in your leadership role. (Is it firmness? Is it honesty? Is it knowing the answer? Whatever it is, there are many positive reputation-making behaviors related to the qualities you have identified.)
2. Make a list of the personal behaviors relative to each positive reputation behavior you have identified.
3. Set up a plan. Once you have your list in place and consistently carry it out, your positive reputation will follow—make it a good one!

Let us suppose that you have already damaged your reputation. You are known for some pretty damaging behavior. With a new plan and associating yourself with people who have a good reputation, you might be able to improve your reputation.

Be a strong and positive example in the lives of all you see and let your reputation move you forward toward more power. You will gain respect by having a good reputation.

Tell me with whom you walk—and I will tell you who you are! (Spanish Proverb)

DO ASSIGN OTHERS TO DO THE WORK---DARE TO EMBRACE THE CHALLENGE

You have probably thought you must do all of the administrative work! No way! Your job is to manage others while they do the work. You only have so much energy for 24 hours per day.

True, there are some things you just *must do* as a leader. Let those be few and selective. Consider if selected work can be shared. Spend your time managing and teaching others while they do the work. Stay back, stay calm, and let others experience first-hand the problem-solving experience and associated frustration. If you cannot do this, you will be exhausted and will impoverish yourself during the process—and you will not get very far. Know what people have to offer in intelligence and creativity to help you solve your leadership problems.

Many leaders have said, “I have to do it myself, or it is not done right.” Swallow your pride and find the right people to do the things you do not have time to do, and even maybe you cannot do. Get them to solve your problems! With your good direction, they can get it right. Take the ideas and creativity of those doing the work and make it your own by adding your ideas and making modifications. They (employees) will provide you the ideas for your success and power. It becomes your contribution. You might give credit to those who provided help. But remember, their contribution is to help you make a final decision on how to do what needs to be done. The final product (and responsibility) regarding the outcome belongs to the leader. Leaders are usually (and should be) the ones that have had the most successful experience in leadership.

In her book *Novice to Expert*, Benner reminds us that expert leaders develop their skills and leadership understanding over time and through multiple experiences (even through other people’s input). Leaders might not initially know leadership theory, but their increased knowledge and skills are enhanced through the leadership behaviors that eventually teach them methods of power and right from wrong. Power, then, comes from multiple and ongoing leadership experiences and learning from the experiences of others.

Scheduling, for most leaders, can be a headache. It does not need to be a headache. After watching numerous leaders work and ponder over schedules for lengthy periods, it is obvious that there had to be a better way! There is no intention to tell you how to do self-scheduling; it is just to give you some ideas for your consideration as a leader. Let us consider some possibilities, remembering that the final approval of a schedule and the process of scheduling eventually belongs to the leader.

Let us consider the sharing of power. Learn to work the system and requirements for staffing so that you, as a leader, are the winner and, therefore, you retain power. No matter how you decide to schedule employees, there will always be some problems.

It will usually help, however, if you follow self-scheduling rules related to:

1. The capabilities of your staff to assist with scheduling
2. The fears you, as the leader, have about getting the scheduling done right and on time
3. The number of staff members you have under your direction, their personal scheduling needs, and Their flexibility
4. Your philosophy of the need for leadership control and power

5. Your ability to tolerate teaching how to effectively self-schedule
6. The “correct way”
7. The time self-scheduling opportunities are available to staff
8. The time available for self-scheduling before leader review and approval
9. The length of a shift.

The philosophy of sharing power says that others are capable, to a certain point, of making decisions, being considerate of others, and meeting their own scheduling needs. If they have never participated in such a happening (self-scheduling), then they need to learn how and what your expectations are as a leader. Remember (again)—even though they participate in the self-scheduling process, the final approval belongs to the leader. Perhaps by participating and sharing this power with others, employees will learn to appreciate how difficult it can be to get it just right.

To share such a power says that you have trust in others. We have said that it is important that staff trust the leader—so, how about the leader trusting the employees? Give them credit for being capable and self-directed. Give them opportunities for personal growth and responsibility. After all,—a leader or hiring committee only hires talented people—right?

As an example, the control means that employees are taught to insert his/her name within the self-scheduling category representing the shift he/she intends to work at some point in time. It becomes a contract by the employee and becomes acceptable upon the leader’s approval. The timeframe for self-scheduling is up to the leader. When the self-schedule is “done” according to the leader’s self-scheduling expectation, there might need to be changes, deletions, or additions made by the leader. All employees should expect that the final decision is equitable and necessary.

The leader must frequently teach how it works for the self-scheduling process to work. It is a shared responsibility to meet the needs of all concerned. Once this process is in place, employees will know what to do as an outcome of the leader’s requirements. It is also wise to put this expectation in the job descriptions. If it is in the job descriptions, employees are evaluated as to their willingness and ability to participate.

Let it be clear to all that this scheduling process requires a leader who is caring about his/her staff and their scheduling needs. After all, true leadership’s philosophy is all about—caring for and about others while they meet obligations and goals. It takes an excellent leader to respect that employees have families and other lives beyond their jobs. Thus, times will occur when there will need to be accommodations for employees regarding their schedule.

It is probably wise to have full-time employees working from 32 to 40 hours a week. That flexibility in hours allows for their personal needs. It is perhaps wise to have capable part-time per diem staff that can fill in when you find (after self-scheduling time is up) that you need extra staff to meet needs.

As a leader, your power comes from your ability and willingness to have others involved in appropriate leadership responsibilities and react to your requests. Someone will be asking you about what and why you are doing it this/that way. If you choose to share your leadership power, always predetermine your good leadership reasoning for doing what you are doing to answer the questions intelligently. If you can be a leader and do this, you will leave a feeling of effective democratic leadership. You will receive the

respect you deserve. You might even provide an example for other leaders in the facility/organization. Now—that is true power!

DO PRACTICE REASONABLE EMPLOYEE SCHEDULING

Let's consider some hourly schedules! If a facility/organization is requiring staff to work 12 hours a day at varying times of the day or night, changes the areas of work, makes excessive intellectual demands, etc., consider the following:

1. How productive can an employee be with long hours (usually over 8 hours)?
2. How safe is an employee during extended hours of work (usually over 8 hours overnight)?
3. If the facility/organization involves health care expectations, how well is the concept of "wellness" being immolated to the staff/patients receiving and taught health care?
4. Whose needs are being considered when long hours (especially all night) are required? (Health Care Provider or facility/corporation?)
5. Is staffing SOOO hard to acquire that long hours are needed for facility/organizational survival?
6. Who is "driving" the need to work all night and expect excellence in function for part of the day? Is it a desire or need to try to function all night and sleep during the day?
7. What is happening to the healthcare's normal/natural body rhythms when long hours and usual sleep hours are interrupted by lengthy and demanding responsibilities of health care to others?
8. How can you encourage self-scheduling to meet staffing needs yet will enable (as much as possible) normal body rhythms for ideal performance and restful hours for recuperation?
9. What is health care magic in "regular hours" for specific employees?
10. How can you encourage scheduling hours and times that allow staff to sleep during their required and needed rest times?

Companies are (in some geographical areas) requiring non-healthy work hours. Ask yourself this—HOW CAN HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS/ CONDONE THE KNOWN UNHEALTHY SCHEDULING PRACTICES JUST FOR MONETARY GAIN OR EASE OF SCHEDULING? BE SMART—PRACTICE THE HEALTHCARE PRINCIPLES (EVEN IN SCHEDULING) THAT ARE TAUGHT TO PATIENTS/SIGNIFICANT OTHERS.

TO BE A WINNER BY YOUR POSITIVE ACTIONS—NEVER ARGUE

You cannot win by arguing. Power comes through your ability to control this action. Demonstrate your ability to be tolerant enough to listen. Consider the long-term effects of your behavior and choose not to argue. You cannot determine how another person will take an argument. The interpretation of what is presented in an argument is processed differently by each person. It is according to their perception and knowledge of the problem. Words are easy to come by, and some words are perceived as ridiculous to some people.

When you act appropriately and positively, rather than argue, there can be no misinterpretation of your meaning. The truth is, for the most part, in this situation, a person is to be seen and not heard.

Take into consideration the world's symbols, such as viewing the United States' flag or monuments to great people and situations. The understanding is there. Not a word needs to be said to see such a selected symbol as something good and commemorative. Your actions should always be positively consistent, and when someone sees you, they should recognize the good for what you stand. When someone visits or interacts with you, they can expect a listening ear, a supportive action, or a recommendation that indicates leadership experience. To act in such a way, people will see you as the person with the power to enhance their understanding of their argument. You will be their "rock." You will be their symbol of greatness.

The truth remains: Pick your battles. Some things are not worth your energy. Chances are, it really will not matter if people agree with you in the long run. Save your energy for a worthwhile battle and walk away silently, otherwise. Many of these people who consistently argue are unlucky or unhappy. Don't respond to another person's misery. Misery is catching!

How does a person get into such a recurring argumentative cycle and become known for such behavior? They are usually souls of misfortune. They typically are consistently unhappy. Sometimes, their trouble and arguing are destructive for themselves and others. A true leader's role is to rise above the unfortunate associates that we might encounter and associate only with greatness. Stand alone, if you must, with courage and dignity. Feel the power of listening as your selected action. Listening carefully (instead of participating in an argument) will tell you secrets about others and their true selves.

DO BE DEPENDABLE

One of the greatest compliments a person could ever get as a leader or give to another leader is recognizing personal dependability. That means there is a great deal of trust in your ability and willingness to get a job done. You become the person a leader depends on to accomplish a specific task.

There is a skill that shows your power is untouchable. This power is evident when you have the talent to do a job someone else cannot do. It may indicate that your leader does not know how to accomplish the task given to you. It also might say that not having you perform this incredible behavior would cause someone difficulty. Since power revolves around relationships, being dependable in others' eyes and reliable as a leader to produce requested results puts you in a powerful position. When you are responsible (especially with special skills), your power is untouchable.

You do not need the many gifts of "The Masters" to set you apart. Just be the leader who shines to the point that no one else can do your assignment—whatever that assignment might be. You are not indispensable, you realize. However, knowing the ways, means, and secrets of special knowledge and abilities, you are somewhat untouchable.

Do not expect your cohorts to love you for your dependability. They might be jealous! They might be fearful that your talents and reliability will outshine them. There is a saying: “It is better to be feared than loved.” Be strong. Be available. Perhaps it is better to have another person depend on you out of their fear of losing you and your talent. Always find ways to have people rely on you for your excellent contributions and work. Shall we say that this is job security? I think so—but it also says job security through your acquired power.

DO BE GENEROUS AND HONEST

Honesty certainly IS the best policy! Just one honest decision/action will go a long way to make your leadership role a success. People seem to remember an honest act, especially when it is one of the first acts recognized by others. Also, the reciprocal process of doing a generous act requires, usually, a mutual response by the other person. The Chinese claim that it is important to give before you take. Giving through charitable behaviors, in our society, is the forerunner of getting a job done through a reciprocal response. There is no need to provide a “gift.” Giving comes in many forms, such as a generous act of kindness, a special favor at a needed time, or a gift of time when listening to another person. Whatever it takes, within leadership reason, is your role as an expected generous and honest leader.

It is important to remember that every act of generosity and honesty (or lack thereof) plays on others’ emotions. Practice and perform these measures with caution. Others will forever distrust a leader that is not genuine in his/her leadership approach. Therefore, use selective kindness, generosity, and honesty in sincere and heartfelt ways. To see beyond yourself will reframe your view of the world. If the act of kindness is considered deceitful, trust will suffer from that time on. Do otherwise and use your generosity and honesty appropriately, and your power will soar.

The powerful Law of Attraction says: Change what you give, and you will always, without exception, change what you receive!

DO BE WISE ABOUT USING A CONSULTANT

A consultant (by definition) is a person who is proven to have the required skills of support and information that will assist a facility/organization in meeting the mission statement and obtain its objectives and goals—sometimes for a specific project. It can be a lucrative business for a consultant and an expensive endeavor for the recipient. It can be a disaster in as much as an outside consultant (living and relating to other geographical areas) often does not understand the human and geographical culture that make up success for a situation. It is important to assess that what is heard and recommended by a consultant will work for the leader, situation, and the mission and goals of the project. The leader has the responsibility to determine the appropriateness of the consultant’s support and information. There is a leadership incompetence message if the leader allows such unleashed and uncontrolled consultant involvement in implementing a project.

Regardless of a leader's positive feelings toward a consultant, the consultant is human (like the rest of us) and will do what works for them at any point in time. The leader is not interested in *what works for the consultant*. The leader is paying for *what might work for the leader or project*. A competent leader has a clear contract of expectations in mind before a consultant is hired for any specific job. This contract helps to keep the direction of requirements clear. Be careful that if more consultations are needed to provide other support or information, the statement/contract is updated. Remember— the leader (or the company) is paying “good money” for these consultation services. Watch the application of the agreement carefully. Entropy is always your enemy—things always change. When change occurs, the project's direction could change, and the consultant might start to do other behaviors that are not a part of the contract.

In retrospect, as you review your consultant behavior use, a wise person wants to try and think positively about consultant behaviors. However, an unfortunate (or maybe fortunate) epiphany might occur through the hindsight of a specific experience. That is an awakening of personal “smarts” and a lingering awareness either by the consultant or the leader. Always try to learn from leadership experiences.

Considerations in establishing a positive consultant experience are: (In no order of importance—it is all important!)

1. A positive leader's role is to lead and give direction as an outcome of accurate consultant information.
2. The *only* role of a positive consultant is to consult, advise, and give recommendations.
3. Consultants usually do best when they are geographically connected (living currently or in the past) with the area's conditions, culture, and dynamics.
4. A leader and a consultant have enough ego strength to understand and respond to humanistic needs rather than seeking political gain.
5. A leader knows and practices negotiation skills to promote the positive and supportive aspects of his/her role as a leader.
6. A leader should confirm an understanding of the intended consultant role by questioning the consultant regarding his/her/their knowledge of a consultant's role.
7. The consultant should have in mind an expected amount of pay before offering to be of help. (Being helpful and nice without payment ends up being the reward and is often regretted!)
8. Project goals, plans, and expected outcomes are most successfully determined and approved before the project's commencement and reaffirmed periodically.
9. A contract between the leader and the consultant(s) should be developed, signed, and dated by both the leader and the consultant(s).
10. Often, the best choice is to determine current employees who, either individually or as a group, could consult wisely and effectively—rather than hiring an outside consultant.

The true leader knows the consultant's behaviors not to erode human relations needed long after the consultant is gone. The best approach to ensuring all aspects of the leader's project stays on track is not allowing a consultant to make requests of the project members. If *only* assigned project members or the project leader (instead of the consultant) personally request others to perform certain tasks as a part of

the project, it helps to make sure that the leader retains the power—not the consultant. Then, errors in assignments are less likely to happen. After all, the final reward for success in a project should always be with the leader and never a consultant. (See similar and supportive review under CRITICAL THINKING by this author.)

DO CARE ABOUT EMPLOYEE’S HEALTH: RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING

There are secrets to hiring employees regarding health issues:

1. Initially, hire employees with unknown or controlled mental and physical health problems. It includes the compassionate hiring of post-traumatic stress disorders.
2. Treat mental health concerns with the same attention and respect that you would a physically disabling employee problem.
3. Encourage new employees to be honest and open about health problems and reporting signs and symptoms of health care exacerbations.
4. Try to determine the amount of personal health awareness of the potential employee.
5. Determine together what the leader and potential employee can do together to maximize the effectiveness of job performance.
6. Allow a reasonable time away from the job assignment to meet health needs.

To be knowledgeable and empathetic about health problems requires professional leadership strength. It is only the “true” leader who takes the time to understand each employee’s personal qualities and difficulties. The bottom line is not always money! Remember the adage—what goes around comes around. In this case, if a leader puts forth the effort to care for the employees that he/she hires personally, they (the employees) will most likely take care of the leader in return. A proven fact!

If you cannot see it, cannot name it, cannot feel comfortable working with it, you cannot change it. Learn to feel comfortable with identifying and working with aberrant behaviors in the workplace. It is often more economical to manage aberrant behaviors than to hire and train new staff!

Therefore, be smart about behaviors that deter business success and attempt to improve those behaviors for the job-sake and help others become their best. Try to determine what triggered the action and why his/her defenses failed. Then, try to determine interventions that will help restore the employee to do their job.

The following are general concepts for identifying and managing the most common mental health concerns in the work setting:

Depression--

Graeme Cowan, author of *Back from the Brink: True Stories and Practical Help for Overcoming Depression and Bipolar Disorder* (New Harbinger Publications, 2014), identifies today’s workforce as dismal. It causes the workforce to struggle with reduced capacity.

Cowan suggests employers consider the following:

1. Providing proactive mental health resources, mental health policies, and a wellness program.
2. Recognizing the signs of depression.
3. Teaching co-workers and managers to ask, "Are you OK" when appropriate.
4. Assuring employees are happy doing their type of everyday work.
5. Providing a means of exercise—such as time for a walk. It increases one's mood and ability to think for hours.

Recognizing the problem: From a behavioral context, these employees will show/experience feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness. Their life experiences have told them they could not influence for good. Motivation and determination may appear lacking. The person may be angry, and this anger is not usually visible, as it is turned inward on the self. There is little interest in things and people around them due to the inward turning of their anger. Cognitive abilities are impaired, and there is difficulty in making decisions. Such repression of anger causes physical symptoms such as headaches, backaches, and diarrhea. Ambivalence about relating to others may exist. Feelings of inappropriate guilt are often reiterated over and over to anyone that will listen. The cause is ingrained in the employee, and trying to change it cannot be *controlled* by a leader. The behavior usually recurs. Suicidal thoughts are common.

Post-traumatic disorder (PTSD) is a mental condition triggered by terrifying and uncontrollable thoughts. It interferes with functioning in work situations and work relationships. Memories and flashbacks can cause a lack of interest in work expectations and an inability to remember job roles. Oft times, an employee is noticeably irritable and aggressive without a known cause. There is an awareness of depression in the employee's behavior. PTSD is more likely to occur if there is a family history of mental disorders.

Recognition of PTSD in employees is necessary to help the employee maintain competence in work expectations. Once the symptoms become recognized, it is wise to let the employee take a break from his/her work. Having the employee take a break, go for a walk, remind him/her to take medication, encourage counseling, and listening are helpful as a leader.

Some helpful leadership behaviors for the depressed employee is to provide a safe work environment. Another good leadership behavior for the depressed employee is to determine what triggered the overt action so that defenses are put in place to ensure that it does not occur again or minimized. Verbally reinforce good work outcomes. Often there is secondary gain such as additional attention from others or shirking responsibilities. His/her immediate supervisor should be strong, supportive, helpful, and noncritical. The employee should feel valued and should legitimately fill a need in the dynamics of the job. With depression, the danger is a suicide gesture. Keeping stress and anxiety low helps to lessen suicidal thoughts. If appropriate, encourage professional help!

Suspicious, Hostile, and Aggressive Behavior--

Suspicious behaviors involve hypersensitivity, alertness, and some distortion of reality. Selective attention is used to gather information to meet schemes as a distortion of reality. They often see the problem as another person's problem and demand change in the other person.

Hostility is a feeling of antagonism accompanied by a wish to hurt or humiliate others. Anger is different because it does not have a want to harm. With anger, there is an underlying sense of power to compensate for an underlying feeling of anxiety.

Aggression is a behavior that expresses anger or its related emotions. The aggressive person perceives the world as distrustful and is continually disappointed because others do not meet his/her needs. There is a tendency to be paranoid and hostile. Generally, there is poor impulse control.

The most helpful leadership behavior for the suspicious, hostile, and aggressive employee is *prevention*. An ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure. If the employee has a loss of personal control, it damages their self-esteem and interpersonal relationships in the work setting. An immediate supervisor is assigned to monitor the employee's behavior at all times. When there is a recognized episode of concern, the supervisor needs to set limits without being punitive. It helps to set limits of behavior immediately upon the first recognition of a potential problem. Recognizing the root of the problem quickly and curtailing the problem helps the employee stay under control. The tone of voice of the immediate supervisor should be slow, light, and matter-of-fact. Humor is often misinterpreted. If appropriate, encourage professional help!

Passive-Aggressive Behavior--

These employees view their world through a pessimistic perceptual filter in which they perceive the world for faults, flaws, injustices, and mistakes in almost every situation. They have a negative mindset about the future. They have criticisms of themselves and others. There are impulsive and fleeting thoughts of indecisiveness. Irritable moodiness and dissatisfaction are evidenced through a dichotomy of enthusiasm and pessimism, hope and hopelessness, compliance and noncompliance, love and hate, respect and envy, independence and dependence, and action and inaction. This ambivalence leads to irritable moodiness, discontent, dissatisfaction, complaining, and contrariness. Authority figures are resented. Jealousy, hostility, and aggressive strivings occur to a significant degree. There will be procrastination, delaying and dawdling, inefficiency, obstructionism, and omission errors in the workplace. These behaviors vent anger yet appearing to be friendly and submissive. Underlying anger is covertly intended not to be observed as aggressive, but it shows aggression through manipulation. Procrastination is apparent to complete certain expected activities.

The most helpful leadership behavior for the passive-aggressive employee is the awareness of missed routine expectations of the job. A watchful eye to see that all job expectations are performed without missing steps or processes is important. Commenting on the absence of the expected behavior without drawing judgment might encourage more employee awareness that they are being watched and evaluated accordingly. If appropriate, encourage professional help!

Obsessive-Compulsive Behavior—

Employees with a tendency to be *obsessive-compulsive* (not just compulsive) will perform the same act persistently and repetitively without it necessarily leading to a rewarding end. It is irrational thinking and behavior that leads nowhere. There is an inability to do assigned work. It is usually an outcome of excessive stress. In situations removed from the work setting, we see it in over-eating, shopping, gambling, and

hoarding, as examples. The anxiety accompanying this disorder disrupts the ability for job description compliance. They most often lack the flexibility required to be good problem-solvers. Variation in work assignments increases substantially the stress/anxiety felt by the employee.

To be *compulsive* (not obsessive-compulsive) in work is somewhat less destructive than obsessive-compulsive behavior. Compulsive behavior is when an employee finds pleasure in things being “just so.” A mild compulsion for perfection in the workplace helps things get done. The obvious existence of this disorder curtails the flexibility to complete the job description requirements successfully. Problem-solving is usually possible as long as it does not require “out-of-the-box” thinking. Stress/anxiety can be a problem unless controlled by an effective leader.

The most helpful leadership behavior is to minimize stress/anxiety in the workplace. With the compulsive employee, giving repetitive recurring jobs helps to keep stress/anxiety under control. Recognizing the onset of stress/anxiety might help control the outbursts of untoward behaviors that add to the problem. If appropriate, encourage professional help!

Manipulation--

When an employee is dealing with the issue of control, manipulation becomes the most likely behavior. Manipulation is the process of influencing another to meet or comply with one’s own needs and wishes, regardless of another person’s needs and wishes. The goals of two people conflict. One of the individuals tries to have the other person believe an untrue story or believe/meet his/her dependency needs.

The most helpful leadership behavior is recognition of this behavior. A firm directive from the leader will help curb continued negative behavior. If an employee recognizes success in using manipulation, the behavior tends to continue and may even escalate under certain conditions. Be as clear as possible about each other’s goals; that is, verbalize conflicts rather than operating from “hidden agendas.” If appropriate, encourage professional help!

Rationalization--

Sigmund Freud considers this behavior to be the most likely used substitution for acceptable behavior. The employee will justify his/her behavior or conceals his/her disappointments. For example, suppose an employee applies for advancement in work assignments and is refused. In that case, there might be a rationalization by the employee that the person making the decision did not fully understand his/her (employee) strengths or that he/she (employee) did not want the job. Real feelings are used to protect against failure or disappointment and to help soothe the feelings of failure or disappointment.

The most helpful leadership behavior is to listen and recognize the rationalization. Try to discern in your mind as a leader why the employee would justify the behavior and would exhibit itself in such a manner. When talking with the employee, state the employee’s behavior witnessed or restate what was heard. Do not repeat the words you have heard as a question---only a simple statement of what you heard. Then stop and listen! It will allow the employee to expound verbally regarding the feelings that underlie the behavior. Do not draw judgment on the behavior. Continue listening and then repeat the keywords you

hear without judging. Usually, this will encourage the employee to express further reasons for his/her rationalization. If appropriate, encourage professional help!

Poor Behavior--

The job description becomes a tool for helping the employee become more aware and more acceptable in behavior. Regardless of the identified problem(s) as an outcome of the above mental challenges, the job description is the most forceful way to require improved behavior. Set deadlines for work and behavioral accomplishment. Set expectations for positive relationships. Whatever the problem, this evaluation tool (job description) is the leader's friend for positive change. Use it as frequently as needed for either positive reinforcement, change, or intended job termination if the employee cannot comply.

The above stated mental concerns are probably the most common in the work setting. It is not the intention of this document to diagnose a problem; however, it helps leaders be more aware of behaviors that harm progress and production. After all, you pay a person to do a job. Don't hesitate to clarify what that job expectation is for the employee to receive monetary compensation and for the leader to be successful in his/her assignment. If appropriate, encourage professional help!

DO CONSIDER WALKING AND SOCIALIZATION MEETINGS

Many business owners have found that (like Aristotle) walking tends to increase creativity and imagination. Daniel Schwartz, a Stanford Graduate School of Education professor, co-authored a study entitled, *Give Your Ideas Some Legs* (2014), which claims that creative thinking increases 60% when walking. He claims that walking and thinking are more generative and brainstorming than sitting indoors. What an exciting way to encourage employees to get up and get moving!!

Steven Johnson, a prolific author, in his book entitled, *Wonderland: How Play Made the Modern World*," reminds us about the positive use of socialization as a viable way to encourage sharing, problem-solving, and creative thinking. Through many years, the use of coffee hours, taverns, chess, and many other socialization experiences have been the grounds for positive future changes.

DO USE CAREFULLY THE MANY FACES OF POWER

Power is the capacity to influence the behavior of others. It can be many behaviors and used in many ways. It is the basis of control over others to get the job done. It can be very negative; however, it can be the main positive reason for success with finesse and understanding.

Power comes from several sources and for several purposes. They all have names. Just pick your poison—so they say!

1. Expert Power: Use of power because of special skill and knowledge
2. Legitimate Power: Use of power because of your job (organizational position)
3. Referent Power: Use of power because of your attraction (charisma)
4. Coercive Power: Use of power to control punishment

5. Dependency Power: Use of power when one person depends on another person
(Higher the dependency, higher the power of the person being depended upon)
(Higher the scarcity of a resource, higher the power of the resource)
6. Expert Power: Use of power because of special skills and knowledge

Tactics to increase leadership power:

1. Rational Persuasion: Persuading toward positive outcomes
2. Pressure: Demands, threats, intimidation
3. Coalition: Group support to support efforts
4. Inspiration: Encouragement through emotion
5. Exchange: Trading favors
6. Ingratiation Behavior: Favors and positive mood before requesting
7. Consultation: Incorporating others
8. Upward Support: Implied leader support

Use all the tactics you want; however, nothing supports genuine concern for employees like leadership power. Be honest. Have integrity! Be known for your trustworthiness!

Questions that measure the ethics of power:

1. Moral Rights: Is the power used appropriately and only used when no one's rights or freedoms are sacrificed? (ANSWER SHOULD BE YES)
2. Utilitarian: Does the use of power provide the greatest good for the greatest number of people? (ANSWER SHOULD BE YES)
3. Social Justice: Does equal treatment occur? (ANSWER SHOULD BE YES)

Political gain is an exercise in seeking power in public or a facility/organization. When a leader participates in politics as a normal manipulative process, intrigue, or personal gain, the process is negative. The recognition of political behaviors through the use of power is in the eye of the beholder. However, to a person or employee witnessing this behavior, there is often a feeling of leader or facility/organizational importance that is more important than employees' concern. Unless others understand the reason for political activity, it usually replaces concerns for power's positive ethics.

Evidence of a powerless environment:

The chaotic circumstance with no direction or accountability represents the lack of positive power by a leader. Like a child needing nurturing and guidance, employees need to feel supported by the leader's positive energy. The facility/organization's orchestration of events takes a *leader of the band*.

Responsibility of a board regarding power assessment of leaders:

A reminder to a hiring board: There are too many times when someone is hired into a leadership position without considering their views and history regarding their use of power. Be a board that prides itself in making good employment choices with the awareness of an employee's ability to use positive power.

The ramifications of abusive power by a leader are painful to all who contact such a person. Once hired—the damage is well on its way to being done.

DO RECOGNIZE THE POSITIVE POWER OF “THE REFINING FIRE”

“Bad things happen to good people” and “What doesn't kill you makes you stronger”—so the sayings go! Yes, bad and unfortunate things happen to all of us. Life is not always fair! People do terrible things to others, and accidents happen. So, what does a person do with all of this pain?

We find the power to survive-- that is what we do! And if we don't survive, the outcome is *death*. Death is not an option—so we have no choice but to remember, learn, and react (hopefully in a positive way) to the wrongs of life the best way we can. Some of us never recover, we think, and the “beat goes on.” The question is always there—“Why me?” and “What did I do to deserve this?” The outcome is a forever nursing (in some way) of the hidden scar that truly never completely heals.

Let us suppose that every time we experience bad things, we change. We have a choice to become “better” or “bitter” because of our bad experiences. Survival means that we have learned to accept life and the things we cannot change. There should be a more contrite spirit and some appreciation of what we will not allow to be changed within us. Remember, we control ourselves, but we do not control others or our environment and the pain they/it might inflict on us. Like metal forged by a fire, we must harden our resolve but never forget the need to be human. The “refining fire” says that we “have been there and done that” and, therefore, we are stronger and more powerful than before. Remember, the finest steel has to go through the hottest fire! We help others through such similar trauma. It is often the openness to others and our willingness to lead others through this painful fire by sharing some relevant aspects of our painful experiences that can give others the hope that their life can go on.

Do not judge others for their feelings or experiences as a result of their “Refining Fire.” Powering through your own negative experiences and helping others, as a true leader, will provide a more positive acceptance of those happenings that we cannot change.

Examples

1. Sue's husband died last year, and she says that she is with someone else now. “It is not the same, and somehow I know it will never be the same,” she said.
2. Tim had a son die in a car accident. The pain was almost unbearable. Tim's positive memories linger on, and painfully Tim's life goes on.
3. Sharon's husband went off with another woman, and she cried for three months.
4. “I am now numb, but life goes on!
5. Frank went to war and never returned.

DO USE THE ART OF COMPROMISE

The definition of compromise is an arrangement for deciding a dispute on what appears to be equitable items or demands between two parties.

Think about the process that is happening during a compromise:

1. Who are the parties making compromises?
2. What are the compromises of each party?
3. What will be the eventual outcome of the compromises?
4. Is/was an arbitrator needed?
5. What amount of equitability occurred?
6. How much ground (compromise) did each party give up?
7. Was litigation avoided?
8. Is walking away without making a compromise the best choice?

Once you believe that you are compromising for someone else, remember that *everyone* in the process compromises—not only one person over another because the total original picture has changed! When a plan or monetary amount is agreed upon, you can sometimes add or reduce the value to make the compromises more comfortable. If it is not a “good” verbally shared compromise,” consider the possibility of walking away. It may not be worth the loss or the headache. However, in the meantime, be creative in your negotiations.

DO USE THE ART OF NEGOTIATION

The definition of negotiation is a mutual discussion about the terms of an agreement. It involves words, body language, common sense, and your forgetfulness regarding your own ego needs!

Think about the process that should occur during a successful negotiation. It is a symphony of behavior and conversation:

1. Set forward on your chair with elbows, perhaps, on the table.
2. Focus on the *goal (long term)* of the negotiation, not an *objective (short-term)*. Defer short term gratification for effective and productive long-term goals.
3. Keep the conversation on track by talking about *facts*—emphasize your product (meaning you or something else you are selling).
4. Feel free to emphasize your product’s value (or you) and the positive difference that this product (or you) can make.
5. Be careful to be assertive, not aggressive (assertive behavior is done with positive assurance—aggression is done with an offensive action that infringes negatively on others’ rights.)
6. Defer the look of acting/being “smart” to the alternative of being “wise.”
7. If you have a question or problem that needs solving as a part of the negotiation, present that problem to the *other* party and ask them for their solution.

8. Use the word “we” instead of “I” during the verbal process.
9. Look the other person in the eyes as you speak.

Selling anything (maybe you or your services) during a negotiating process requires an understanding from the consumer’s perspective. In the advertising or sharing of information of any kind, be sure to think carefully and share information about:

1. The use of the product (You?)
2. The words of enticement that will sell the product (You?)
3. The avenues of acquisition
4. Specifics about the product (You?)
5. Use of photos, if appropriate
6. Any information that will ensure that there will be no reason for returning the item--or terminating your employment
7. How to conveniently return an item, if needed—or renegotiate the process
8. How will you reimburse the buyer for a returned product?
9. What condition of the product will be allowed if the item is returned?
10. How will you be reimbursed for a returned item—cash, check, credit card, and services-is the same as the type of payment received?

DO CURB EFFORTS OF POLITICAL GAIN

“Political Gain” occurs when politics becomes foremost in employees’ minds and behaviors— especially leaders. The self is usually deceitfully promoted over the concern for other individuals. There is a lack of sensitivity to others and existing conditions. The result is usually anger, exploitation, mistrust, and lack of respect among employees. Future support from this person becomes questioned.

DO USE THE ART OF JOB ACQUISITION

There are some secrets to increase your chance to get the job you want and make you feel confident as a million dollars!

So, let us review the important “things” that employers measure and observe during an interview:

1. Dress so that you look your best! Maybe invest in some good-looking leather shoes so you can put your best foot forward.
2. Wear simple but elegant accessories—A female could wear a beautiful scarf or elegant earrings. A male could wear a handsome leather belt or attractive cuff links.
3. Carry a leather handbag or briefcase.
4. If a suit is required for the job, select at least two suits used as mix and match sets.

5. Good fitting clothes are a must! Sleeves, hems, and new buttons are easily changed.
6. Leave your job opportunities flexible—new options of growth are always a possibility.
7. When writing a resume, consider making it a little non-specific if you need to tailor your interview to a new exciting opportunity.
8. Your address on the resume probably is irrelevant. Your correct phone number is very important.
9. In most cases, limit your resume to one page.
10. Make one statement on the resume that focuses on your expertise will help the facility/organization realize your talents.
11. Keep written references with you when you go to a job interview.
12. Consider having a Twitter link, website, or LinkedIn social media presence. Be careful that your social media contacts do not contain negative comments or evidence about past negative behaviors. Your private life should remain private.
13. Know the company. Acquire current information on-line.
14. Start your conversation with the statement indicating you have read, researched, or in some way, acquired current information about the company.
15. Let the interviewer ask the major beginning questions. Take natural opportunities to ask appropriate questions.
16. Be open to social meetings with people connected to companies that might provide employment opportunities.

DO USE PROBLEM-SOLVING TECHNIQUES

I don't know about you—but problems seem to be a natural way of life for this observer as I try to overcome what at times appear insurmountable difficulties! I find an interruption of the flow of energy that keeps me from getting a job done, or they/it keeps me from reaching a goal of sanity!

In the facility/organization, problems come leaps and bounds. They seem to feed off of each other by having one trouble just causing more problems. There is a sense of “craziness” about the entire situation that causes frustration to the point that frustration becomes a problem. Due to that stated “craziness” feeling and possibly physiological responses, humankind wrestles with these abilities at different levels according to our individual psychological/mental abilities. In all of the sciences--computer, engineering, cognitive psychology, etc.-- the ability to rationalize life experiences and technology confounds the human mind.

The use of creative thinking is sometimes the only way to try to master this monster. It requires mental calmness as a person uses logic to perceive life's happenings correctly. It often requires the mind to say, “Now just calm down—this too will end.” The questions, then, are how in the #\$%#@# do I make it end—and soon?

There is an interesting phenomenon that occurs when you are “hit” with numerous problems. The truth, usually, is that the many problems you identify are not “many.” There is usually one major problem. And—if that one problem can be identified successfully, the rest diminish in their aggravation to your soul. Making a personal list of your problems and then looking at them in this manner will help you identify

which one(s) is/are causing all of the other problems to exist. Alright—so it sounds silly. But, put on your critical thinking cap and try it—you might be surprised!

Problem-solving is a combination of the many critical thinking combinations. Those types of thinking include abstract thinking, concrete thinking, dualistic thinking, conceptual thinking, and holistic thinking. These approaches to critical thinking are represented in the following problem-solving strategies. (Read the document on Critical Thinking by this author.)

The following problem-solving strategies are often used in a facility/organizational setting:

1. Abstraction: Using the problem-solving skill in an abstract way or a model before the actual use in the facility/organization.
2. Similarly: Using an action that solves a similar problem.
3. Research: Exploring ideas that have worked on similar problems.
4. Reducing: Reducing or changing a problem into another problem that can be resolved.
5. Resolution Failure: Proving that the problem cannot be solved. Once that point has been reached, it becomes the point of working on a solution.
6. Morphological Analysis: Looking at the entire system by assessing all output and interactions.
7. Means-End Analysis: Taking small actions successfully to meet a goal.
8. Lateral Approach: Approaching solutions creatively and indirectly.
9. Hypothesis Testing: Making an assumption and trying to prove or disprove the belief.
10. Divide and Conquer: Taking small portions of a big problem and then resolving the smaller amounts.
11. Brainstorming: Suggesting a large number of solutions and developing them into a plan for an optimum solution.

There are times in a facility/organization when there seem to be many problems identified by a group of employees. It is always difficult to know just where to start. Keep in mind the previous comment that if you identify the key problem(s), the rest of the problems are often resolved.

In a large room of employees or other individuals with similar goals, the entire group must start naming the problems they have determined that keep the facility/organization from meeting the stated goal(s). Write these “problems” on the blackboard in no order—keep writing as the group calls them out to you as the leader. You could fill up the entire board—who cares? Everyone participates and contributes. No one leaves the room without feeling they have not been heard.

Once the employees have identified “the problems,” ask them to vote for the highest (whatever number you select—usually 4 to 6 stated problems). Erase from the blackboard the lowest scoring problems. Continue voting on the problems left on the blackboard until just a selected few remain. These remaining problems are the problems that need to be worked on in some way by the group. Once these few problems are resolved, you would probably fix the problems that were previously erased. Try it— the group will like it. They will leave feeling that they were heard and a part of the resolution.

DO CALL A PERSON BY THEIR NAME

“Who” is not what a person is known by---a person has a name! *What* a person is known by is their behavior! A person’s behavior is always important—but, the behavior (good or bad) is usually attached to a name. Just try some personal research and remember to call a person by their name. Watch the response carefully— especially if you remember their name over a space of time. The attention of that person is granted to you as they hear their name. A smile usually appears on their face. Then, gently remind them of YOUR name—they typically appreciate that when they cannot remember your name!

To remember a name, do the recommended activity of relating their name to something else in your life. Some of us require more effort than others to remember another person’s name. Once you see how important it is to others when you DO REMEMBER, this becomes one of the main secrets of your success. This person will also remember you next time (if they did not know already through their secret of name-remembering.)

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. You are applying for a new job. What should you do to help prepare yourself for your interview?
2. How do you act/ behave during an interview to “sell yourself” to the interviewers?
3. What kind of personal power do you plan to present during a job interview?
4. An employee is always complaining about the amount of work he/she has to do compared to another employee’s amount of work. What kind of behavior would you identify this to be? What can you do as a leader to help, possibly, to resolve this problem?
5. Your office manager has a health problem. What should you do?
6. You, as the leader, are overwhelmed with responsibilities. What can you do to help resolve this problem?
7. An employee wants to argue with you. What should be your plan for dealing with such behavior?

LAST THOUGHTS

***NEVER DELAY A DECISION THAT MUST BE MADE NOW!**

ALWAYS DELAY A NEGOTIATION DECISION IF YOU *NEED MORE TIME* TO RECONSIDER NEGOTIATION *OUTCOMES.

***ALWAYS DELAY NEGOTIATION DECISIONS IF YOU DO NOT HAVE *ALL THE INFORMATION* YOU NEED TO BE SURE ABOUT YOUR DECISION.**

***FIND THE INTUITIVE MOMENT WHICH TELLS YOU THAT *SOME PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH NEGOTIATION RESOLVE THEMSELVES IN MAGICAL WAYS* JUST BY GIVING A LITTLE MORE TIME TO THE SITUATION. (Read the document on intuition by this author.)**

***KEEPING A LIST OF NEGOTIATION PROCESS REMINDERS ON YOUR DESK MIGHT HELP REMIND YOU OF SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION SKILLS!**

***NEGOTIATION IS NOT ABOUT MAKING A FRIEND. LIKE PRESIDENT TRUMAN SAID, "IF YOU WANT A FRIEND, GET A DOG."**

***"IF YOU DO WHAT YOU'VE ALWAYS DONE, YOU'LL GET WHAT YOU'VE ALWAYS GOTTEN." (TONY ROBINS)**

***"I AM EASILY SATISFIED WITH THE VERY BEST." (WINSTON CHURCHILL)**

***POWER IS WHEN YOU REALIZE THAT POWER IS SYNONYMOUS WITH EDUCATION.**

***YOUR NET WORTH IS THE GOOD YOU DO WITH WHAT YOU HAVE.**

***THERE IS OPPOSITION IN ALL THINGS. THAT MEANS TO KNOW "GOOD" YOU MUST KNOW "BAD."**

***IF YOU SPEND THE TIME AND RESOURCES TO DO A RESEARCH, CONSIDER THE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES BEFORE DOING THE STUDY. IT IS A WASTE OF TIME AND EFFORT IF YOU CANNOT ACCEPT AND CARRYOUT THE FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCHED OUTCOMES!**

RECOMMENDED READING

Entropy, by this author

Nepotism, by this author

Communication—Novice Vs. Professional, by this author

Negotiation, Winning by Mutual Agreement, by this author

Taylor, Carolyn: Nurse Power, 2017, Outskirts Press

Byrne, R.: The Secret of Power, 2010, Atria Books.

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