

Rules, Regulations, Results: What about Relationships?

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I) **THE MODERNIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF OUR WORK**

A) **THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE**

Change:

- ➡ *How children are taught.*
- ➡ *How teachers are prepared.*
- ➡ *How children are identified for special services.*
- ➡ *How we use research for informing instruction and behavior.*
- ➡ *How we identify errors, fault and how we correct them.*

---- *And if I may be so bold ----*

- ➡ *How to get along and build positive, productive relationships.*

B) **CHANGE BY PERFORMANCE**

- 1) **It is not enough to simply mandate a change in an organization and/or practice:**
 - a) “Vision without systems thinking ends up painting lovely pictures of the future with no deep understanding of the forces that must be mastered to move from here to there” (Senge, 1990, p. 12¹).
- 2) **What makes something worth doing?**
 - a) We all do a great many things, some of which we don’t even like to do,
 - i) Because the activity leads to a desired outcome.
 - b) Similarly, we often do things to escape negative consequences...
 - i) That we prefer to avoid.

¹ Senge, P.M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The arts and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.

C) **IN CONTRAST TO BINARY FEEDBACK (RIGHT VS. WRONG).**

- 1) **Most of us gravitate toward things that mean something to us**
 - a) For most of us, that is people.
- 2) **But if people don't anchor meaning for you,**
 - a) Then you seek something else that does.
 - b) Often times that is a particular position, methodology or world view.
- 3) **The best way to influence behavior.**
 - a) Is to influence people's feelings.
- 4) **The heart of change.**
 - a) Is in the emotions.

Large-scale change is accomplished when people are shown a truth that influences their feelings rather than just given an analysis that alters their thinking about an issue.

D) **IN ERROR ANALYSIS AND HUMAN FALLIBILITY**

- 1) **Experts believe that it is the process of a system that requires closer examination for correction...**
 - a) Not the individuals.
- 2) **We need to drive out the fear of retribution**
 - a) Not punish those who do not achieve success.
 - i) But change our view of mistakes.
- 3) **We need to learn to be comfortable talking about our failures.**
 - a) Not as an excuse,
 - i) But as a method to discourage attitudes of self-doubt and denial.

- 4) **Not to determine who we are going to punish or blame**
 - a) But to sort out what we will do differently when a child fails.

Move from judgment to self-reflection.

II) WHAT IS GETTING IN THE WAY?

A) FAULTY COMMUNICATION

- 1) **Most communication is carried out on two levels,**
 - a) The verbal level
 - b) The emotional level.
- 2) **The verbal level,**
 - a) Contains those things which are socially acceptable to say.
- 3) **The emotional level.**
 - a) Provides a means of satisfying emotional needs.
- 4) **When people feel they have not been heard and understood.**
 - a) They can't focus on what you're saying.
 - b) It is not just the words that carry the message.
 - c) It's the emotional context.

B) SCIENCE IS REJECTED AS UNTRUSTWORTHY,

- 1) **What happens is merely unfortunate happenstance.**
 - a) Not connected to the ideology that initiated the policy (Shadish, 1984²).
 - c) "Empirical evidence is neither sought beforehand nor consulted after a policy has been instituted."

² Shadish, W.R. (1984). Policy research: Lessons from the implementation of deinstitutionalization. *American Psychologist*, 39, 735-738.

- 2) **“This insulation from evidence,**
 - a) Virtually guarantees a never-ending supply of policies and practices,
 - b) Fatally independent of reality” (Sowell, p. 241³).
- 3) **Alternative ways of knowing then,**
 - a) Especially those based on an individual’s own experience,
 - i) Are often preferred because it is believed to be the only knowable reality (Sasso, 2001⁴)
- 4) **Without an empirical foundation,**
 - a) Policy issues,
 - i) Become ideological debates that represent,
 - b) What Sowell (1995⁵) termed a “conflict of visions.”
 - i) On one side, “vision of the anointed,”
 - ii) On the other side, “vision of the benighted.”

Positional Thinking

C) OUR BEHAVIOR

- 1) **Resistance results from the way we respond to others.**
 - a) As learned, we expect others to accept our authority.
 - b) We avoid adopting new patterns of behavior.

³ Sowell, T. (1995). *The vision of the anointed: Self-congratulation as a basis for social policy*. New York: Basic Books.

⁴ Sasso, G.M. (2001). The retreat from inquiry and knowledge in special education. *The Journal of Special Education, 34*, 178-193.

⁵ Sowell, T. (1995). *The vision of the anointed: Self-congratulation as a basis for social policy*. New York: Basic Books.

c) We have preconceived notions about what we “should do” or “say”, and,

d) We rarely consider alternative options.

2) **Resistance also results from a need to keep a system stable.**

a) Efforts to change are resisted because such change implies too much deviation from “the way things are”.

b) Resistance is seen as a way to maintain equilibrium to avoid conflict.

III) **WHAT MAKES US DIFFICULT?**

A) **FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN**

1) **Individuals not sure what they are to do.**

a) Creates anxiety.

B) **LACK OF POWER**

1) **When individuals feel powerless,**

a) They resist whatever it is that makes them feel that way.

2) **Reflections of power**, who has it and who doesn't (Black, J. A., and English, F.W., 1991).

a) Power is not a thing or a state; it is a **perception** of relationships.

b) Power **diminishes with use**.

c) Power **erodes and increases exponentially**.

C) **INERTIA**

1) **People don't want to change.**

HABIT

a) Attitudinal.

i) Individual Behavior

ii) Group Behavior.

iii) Organizational Behavior.

D) **LACK OF SELF INTEREST**

- 1) **Not inclined to see group benefit if not personalized.**
 - a) Lack of awareness.
 - b) May pay attention only to those things that support their view.

E) **AVOIDING CONFLICT**

- 1) **Conflict is avoided at all costs.**
 - a) Conflict **causes and creates anxiety,**
 - b) Conflict **causes and creates frustration,**
 - c) Conflict **causes and creates resentment.**

F) **FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE**

- 1) **How we convey information.**
 - a) Manage ambiguities and make sense of the world.
 - b) Build relationships.
- 2) **Communication is more than what is spoken.**
 - a) Identify clues by our presence, posture, gestures, tone and rhythm.
- 3) **Communication distortion.**
 - a) Attributes of the receiver.
 - i) Selective perception.
 - b) Semantic problems.
 - i) Words and phrases so general or abstract they invite varying interpretations.
 - ii) Technical language.

G) **ESCALATION OF COMMITMENT**

- 1) **Typically, the individual is defensive and does not want to hear that they might be wrong.**
 - a) Other people's careers get staked to a course of action even if it is wrong.
 - b) **They think they'll have to defend it or they'll lose their job.**
- 2) **The longer the wait for intervention, the further back you go.**
 - a) The phenomenon of delayed intervention happens most often when there is a **high emotional attachment**.
- 3) **The response tends to focus on anger with little tolerance..**
 - a) Predictable: **A much harder intervention the longer you wait.**

H) **THAT'S JUST THE WAY THEY ARE**

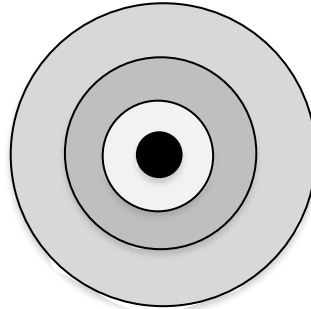
- 1) **Understand past behavior. Why people behave as they do.**
 - a) What motivates them?
 - b) What patterns of behaviors are characteristic of them?
- 2) **Predict future behavior by analyzing past behavior.**
 - a) How are they going to behave?
 - b) Actions versus words.

IV) **LEADING THE CHANGE**

A) **HUMANS ARE PROBLEMATIC**

- 1) **We are easily influenced by suggestion.**
 - a) The order in which we see things,
 - b) Our most recent experiences, distractions
 - c) The way in which information is framed...**affects what we think and do.**

- 2) **We are not accomplished at considering multiple factors;**
 - a) We tend to give some variables too much weight and
 - b) Wrongly ignore others.



B) LIVING BY THE BOOK, BUT NOT DYING BY IT

- 1) **The banality of bad decisions, they make good stories**
 - a) “Die by the book” – Irrational decisions that are detrimental.
- 2) **A more mindful way.**
 - a) Setting clear “no excuses” goals for teaching and learning.
- 3) **Attending to the “core” business of what schools are about:**
 - a) Great teachers and teaching.
- 4) **Adopt data and diagnostic systems that identify error patterns as soon as they occur.**
 - a) Respond to them.
 - b) Learn from them.

Continuously, incrementally improve schools that staff and children want to go to.

Make a Mistake
Identify the Mistake
Correct the Mistake

V) **DEEPER AND MORE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE**⁶

A) **OPERATIONALIZE BASIC ASSUMPTIONS**

- 1) **Solutions do not necessarily have anything to do with the problem** for which they are sought.
 - a) One need not determine true cause and effect relationships in human interactions.
- 2) **You cannot change the past,**
 - a) Concentrate on the future.
 - b) Change is constant and inevitable;
 - c) An incremental change can lead to bigger changes.
- 3) **No situation is all negative, not all bad.**
 - a) Solution focused change moves slowly.

TIME

B) **Do Lunch or Be Lunch**

- 1) **Assess the level of agreement in the organization along two critical dimensions:**
 - a) **The extent to which people agree on *what they want*:**

⁶ Guskey, T., Ph.D., (May 2001). It's Time to be Unreasonable: New Views on Improving Professional Development, *Instructional Leader*, Vol. XIV, No. 3.

⁷ Stevenson, Howard H., & Cruikshank, Jeffrey L. (1986), Do lunch or be lunch: The power of predictability in creating your future. *Wall Street Journal*.

- i) The results they seek from their participation in the enterprise.
 - ii) Their values and priorities.
 - iii) Which tradeoffs they are willing to make in order to achieve those results.
- b) **The extent to which people agree on *cause and effect*:**
- i) Which actions will lead to the desired outcome

A Climate of Performance

C) **EVERYONE HAS TWO KINDS OF INTEREST: IN THE SUBSTANCE AND IN THE RELATIONSHIP⁸**

- 1) **Separate the relationship from the substance,**
 - a) Deal with the people problem.
- 2) **Try not to damage the relationship.**
 - a) The relationship tends to become entangled with the problem.
 - a) Arguing over a position puts the relationship and substance in conflict.
- 3) **Respond to perceptions?**
 - a) Understanding the other side is not simply a useful activity that will help you solve your problem.
 - b) Their **thinking** is the problem.
- 4) **Ultimately, conflict lies not in objective reality, but in peoples' heads.**
 - a) Put yourself in their shoes.

⁸ Fisher, R., Ury, W., & Patton, B. (1991). *Getting to yes: Negotiating without giving in*. (2nd ed.). New York: Penguin Books.

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- b) Don't blame them for your problem.
- c) Discuss each other's perceptions.
- d) Look for opportunities to **act inconsistently** with their perceptions.

5) **Prevention works best.**

- a) The best time for handling people problems is before they become people problems.
- b) Build a working relationship up front.

D) **CHANGE THE CONVERSATION TO CHANGE THE CULTURE.**

1) **We need to learn to treat each other with immense reverence and mutual respect**

- a) Only allow words and actions that encourage self-respect and positive professional growth.
- b) Every one of us matters.
- c) No one person is defined by someone else's choices.
- d) No life exists only as a means to someone else's ends.

2) **Create a mutual purpose**

- a) An overriding concern for others and the wider community is essential to ordered living.

3) **Society...our educational system**

- a) Can only survive, prosper and fulfill its purpose...
- b) If it is well ordered by strengths of character.

VII) **RELATIONSHIPS : HOW TO BE WELL AND FEEL WELL AT THE SAME TIME.**

A) **WHEN SOMEONE COMES TO YOU FOR ADVICE, FIND OUT WHAT THEY WANT AND GIVE IT TO THEM**

1) **Delusion and a natural history of nonsense**

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- a) Who is responsible for the conclusions we have reached?
 - b) Who is Responsible for the errors we may have committed or embraced?
- 2) **The legions of ignorance, cover and camouflage**
- a) Become a secret code of nonsense.
- 3) **Those of us who have the good fortune**
- a) To be educated.
 - b) Are not always aware how small a minority we actually are.
- 4) **Stop to think, for instance**
- a) How few people read anything
 - b) How few people think rationally
 - c) How very restrictive knowledge is even today and
- 5) **Most importantly how rare skepticism is...**
- a) The lifeline of science and research-based practice.
- 6) **Sometimes we need to give people what they need**
- a) Not what they want.
 - b) Empirical Evidence...Really??

IPSE DIXIT

B) IF I WASN'T HAPPY, I'D BE MORE MISERABLE THAN I AM

- 1) **We are taught as children**
 - a) To be kind, self-sacrificing and helpful,
 - b) Never to be greedy or aggressive...
- 2) **Then we must live**

- a) In a ruthlessly competitive world.
- 3) **We are taught**
 - a) To be honest in preparation for a life
 - i) In which honesty is often penalized and,
 - ii) Dishonesty, in many different forms, is often rewarded.
- 4) **We are readily assured of success**
 - a) If we only “apply ourselves”
 - b) When, by the very nature of things,
 - i) Most of us must be disappointed.
- 5) **Chance often carries as much weight as merit**
 - a) We must think and rethink what we expect from the work that we do.
- 6) **We must recognize that a reward**
 - a) May not be acknowledged in a system that doesn’t always acknowledge honesty, integrity and personal respect.
- C) **RATTLESNAKES DO SOMETIMES LIVE IN THE BURROWS OF PRAIRIE DOGS**
 - 1) **This association, like all other forms of symbiosis**
 - a) Is hardly the contractual agreement
 - b) That popular fancy likes to think it is.
 - 2) **The snake is an intruder**
 - a) And, one assumes, an unwelcome one
 - b) There is nothing the rodent can do about it
 - i) But keep out of the snake’s way.

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- c) If it is not bitten,
 - i) it owes it to its own agility,
 - ii) Not to the tenant's gratitude^o.

3) **To avoid conflict,**

- a) Prepare for conflict
- b) Trust others by their actions not their words

D) IF YOU WANT TO GET RID OF SOMEBODY, JUST TELL THEM SOMETHING FOR THEIR OWN GOOD

1) **The void created by the failure to communicate**

- a) Is filled with poison, drivel, and misrepresentation.

2) **The more crucial the conversation,**

- a) The less likely we are to handle it well.

3) **How we think about problem situations**

- a) And what we do to prepare for them is ever so important.
 - i) How do I express delicate feedback?
 - ii) How do I speak persuasively, not abrasively?
 - iii) What can I do to get people to talk when they are uncomfortable or seem incapable of expressing their concerns?

4) **One of the best ways to persuade others is to really listen**

- a) Expressing interest in the other person's views.
- b) Respectfully acknowledging the emotions others appear to be feeling.

^o See Raymond L. Ditmars: *Reptiles of the World* (New York: Sturgis & Walton, 1910.), p. 306. And see Alan Brown: "Animals Don't Like Music," in *The Etude*, February 1943, pp. 79, 126, 128. Tommy Dorsey's experiment is described in this article. And see George J. Romanes: *Animal Intelligence* (London: K. Paul, Trench & Co.; 2nd ed., 1882), p. 265.

c) Be careful what you say

i) **Friends come and go but enemies accumulate.**

E) **BAD DECISIONS MAKE GOOD STORIES**

1) **Work on you first – Get yourself right**

a) Focus on What You Really Want

b) What does my behavior tell me about what my motives are?"

c) How would I behave if this were what I really wanted?"

2) **Make It Safe to get yourself right**

a) *Create a Purpose.*

b) *Focus on Mutual Respect.*

3) **Apologize when appropriate.**

a) Start with what you *don't* mean.

b) Then explain what you *do* mean.

4) **Pick a relationship. Pick a conversation.**

a) Let others know that you're trying to do better,

b) Don't expect perfection; aim for progress.

c) And when you succeed,

i) Look at it dimensionally.

ii) Everything is better with time.

F) **USE AND ENJOY HUMOR**

1) **Humor creates feelings of likeability.**

a) **Like me...**there is a chance

b) You'll like what I have to say.

- 2) **Humor projects confidence.**
 - a) Humor projects an invulnerability.
- 3) **Humor protects feelings.**
 - a) Spare embarrassment, guilt, fear or other negative emotions triggered by a tense situation.
- 4) **Humor permits participants to save face.**
 - a) Humor offers a way of backing down and disengaging from an otherwise downward spiraling conflict cycle.
- 5) **Humor redirects emotions and the behavior.**
 - a) Humor offers a bridge or transition to new more constructive feelings and behavior.
- 6) **Humor is more likely to be seen as an important personality trait.**
 - a) Professionals who are “naturally” funny often use it without thinking.
- 7) **Humor can be both a trait and an intervention.**
 - a) With reflection, perhaps they can use this strength for more strategic purposes.
 - b) For those with a less well-developed sense of humor, it may be possible to “teach” the use of humor as an intervention to further educational and treatment goals.

G) **BET ON ENGAGEMENT OVER MANDATE AND PERSUASION**

- 1) **Encourage Difficult Public Exchanges.**
 - a) **Trust is built** by dealing with the difficult issues early and publicly.
 - b) **Create room for doubt** and cynicism right in the beginning.
- 2) **Put Real Choice on the Table.**
 - a) **Commitment** comes from having choice.

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- b) **Resist the temptation** to package the whole solution early in the name of speed.
- a) **There are always** several right answers to every question.
- 3) **Address conflict.**
 - a) **Mine moments of tension** for insight.
- 4) **Defenses and resistance.**
 - a) **A sign that you have touched something important and valuable.**
 - b) Simply coming out in a difficult form.

Resistance Masks Competence

VIII) **THE END...FINAL THINKING POINTS**

A) **PARENT SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF A POSITIVE, PERSONALIZED SCHOOL**

I'm not going to kiss you, although you may need kissing.

- 1) **Everyone needs the freedom,**
 - a) To find support and motivation, from inspiring co-workers...**in a safe place.**
 - i) Where they won't be dealt with indiscriminately.
 - ii) Where expectations are clearly stated.
 - iii) Where the consequences for violating social rules are clear.
- 2) **Respect and trust and the positive behaviors it inspires.**
 - a) Are essential to a positive work environment.

B) **WE NEED TO LEARN TO BE COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT OUR FAILURES**

- 1) **Not as an excuse,**
 - a) But as a method to discourage attitudes of self doubt and denial.
- 2) **Not to determine who we are going to punish or blame**
 - a) But to encourage staff to sort out what they would do differently.

Move from judgment to self-reflection.

- 3) **You have made and are going to make errors that could be avoidable,**
 - a) Go after the process
 - b) **Not the people.**

C) **DRIVE OUT THE FEAR OF RETRIBUTION**

- 1) **Not punish those who do not achieve success,**
 - a) But to change our view of mistakes,
- 2) **Sort out what we can do differently and**
 - a) Reinforce the belief that... **“doing nothing is not an acceptable answer.”**
- 3) **Focus on interests**
 - a) Not positions

Principled Thinking: BIG R