

Ongoing Discussion “Thought Piece”

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"Working Together Better through Spiritual Leveling"

Hank Milewski

Spirituality; years of experience have taught me that the word strikes absolute terror into the hearts of executives everywhere. Yet phrases like "team spirit, that's the spirit and/or the Spirit of '76" don't seem to be at all problematic? But add "uality" and for some reason every one seems to think that have just met a preacher, cult member or at least a religious fanatic. Nothing could be further from the truth. I am not, and I repeat NOT referring to a religious connotation for the term.

At this just past 2006 In2:InThinking Network Forum in Los Angeles, one of the table discussion groups was on how many organizational levels might be optimum for large corporations. When asked my opinion, I mentioned that I remember a few years back when specifically General Motors had about 21 organizational levels while Toyota had only 7 at the same time. I also mentioned that I did not think it was nearly as important to talk about numbers of organizational levels, but that we would be far better off trying to achieve just ONE spiritual level. The word again had its' predictable effect and every one wanted to know what I meant. I went on to explain that I have worked with my clients over the years to strive for an "equality of spirit" in all interactions and relationships within the organization. Simply stated, this means that the CEO and the so-called "lowest" person in his company could communicate and interact openly and honestly without fear. They could do so because they were simply not looking either "up or down" at one other. In spite of real differences in position, power, education, compensation,

physical size, race, gender, etc., they agreed to work together from a common spiritual level. Much like the place that our U.S. Constitution says that we are "all created equal."

This is a place of new assumptions to create our theories. When we meet at a spiritually equal level, we agree that every human being has their own unique gifts, talents and potential contribution to make to the organization. Let me give you just one of many examples of the potential results from my experience. One week after a retreat we held for a company in Chicago, Tony, a maintenance man in the company picked up the phone and called Charles, the CEO, and asked if he could come up for just 5 minutes of his time. Charles said sure, and to stop in later that day. Tony came in carrying a small wooden model in his hands that he said he had made in his basement at home. It was for a different type of die holding fixture than the company was using, and Tony said that he believed it would save the company about 80% of the time it took to make the change.

Charles thanked Tony, but asked him why he had taken so much of his own time to build such an impressive model instead of filling out a suggestion form with a simple sketch. Tony, who had worked at the company for 25 years, basically said that he had been hiding the fact that he could not read or write, but that he was good at building things. He had actually made the model several years ago, but did not have a very good relationship with his supervisor, so never submitted it for fear of being scorned or getting in trouble. Bottom line; the company adopted Tony's suggestion immediately and began saving over \$200,000 a year in die change over time.

I believe (my theory) is that if we could move toward spiritual leveling in organizational relationships, our future potential for innovation, profit, productivity and the "better workplace" blows away any thing we have seen yet. I believe that we "don't hardly know 99% about 1% about nothin." (*Dr. Scott Peck*)? It is time we replace our professional and intellectual arrogance with an enlightened humility in how we look at, communicate and interact with each other.

And this discussion is not limited to the workplace. Profound changes could also take place in our educational system (administrators/teachers/students), government (right/middle/left), health care system (administrators/doctors/nurses/patients) and our lives in general. There are many questions that could provide fruitful discussions as to

Why is it the way it is?

Does it REALLY need to change?

CAN it change?

What must we do to move towards the change?

I look forward to hearing your reactions, thoughts and ideas.

Hank

Biography

Hank started a consulting company in 1986, T.R.U.S.T. 3 Associates, Inc. Initially the consulting practice was centered around Quality Management, TQC, TQM based upon Deming's System of Profound Knowledge. He developed and implemented a 3 day off-site retreat program entitled "Improving Spiritual Values in the Workplace" where Senior Management would interact at a personal level with all employees in the organization. He has taught classes in SPC, QFD, Taguchi Methods and Strategic Quality Planning over the years to numerous Fortune 500 companies and provided personal consulting and mentoring to CEOs of YPO (Young Presidents Organization) and their companies.