

### Soft Manager

This article by William Peace provides an excellent example of how being authentic and open to your employees while not becoming defensive helps heal cultures. Listening and being open to the honest emotions of others is a very difficult thing to do without becoming defensive. When employees apologize for getting upset, I thank them for choosing me to talk with. I believe that this is my role to listen, understand, and help partner to work through to a resolution if one is needed. Often, a conversation simply opens the door to further understanding and openness. It has taken me years to be able to respond without becoming defensive and every once in a while I still fall into that trap and I end up the one apologizing and starting over again.

### Sad Facts

This was a very interesting article by Tom Peters. It was enlightening to me in that we all hold some assumptions that may or may not be valid. He put several on the table and provided an alternative view of the assumption. He proposed four facts that many feel are unfortunate for organizational leaders.

#### Sad Fact No.1

Senior managers get only one option. On the up side Tom states that the option usually reflects senior leaders' previously expressed preferences and leaders eventually get enough one-option choices to shape them into a coherent portfolio. This was very interesting to me, as I have always pushed for multiple options even when I did not believe they were necessary. I will take a different approach based on this

insight.

Sad Fact No. 2

Time is fragmented; issues arrive late. Tom provides this alternate view. Each fragment can be used to signal leaders' preferences and set direction and small, last-minute modifications of current options strongly signal what future options should look like. I was glad to hear this as I have always experienced high fragmentation in my executive career. I did not see how it could be otherwise even though many advocated for rigid time management.

Sad Fact No. 3

Bad news is normally hidden. Tom proposes that senior leaders can use their responses to good news to reinforce the organization's values and priorities. This fits into my interest in Appreciative Inquiry with a focus on future thinking rather than backward problem solving thinking.

Sad Fact No. 4

Major choices take months or years to emerge. This is a benefit as over time, consistent choices accumulate into a consensus that requires minimal correction. And with a large number of choices in the hopper, decisions will come frequently enough to spell out leaders' chosen directions. Having recently left the technology industry where everything seemed to be done fast, allowing change to emerge rather than force it is a healthy approach.

Concluding Note

Out of chaos (sloppiness) emerges order. This discussion

was an excellent example of what happens in a living system. So many advocate a rational approach where a chaotic approach is what is authentic and what will help lead to emergence of an organization that is sustainable.

#### The Work of Leadership

Leadership as a learning strategy. The author discusses the adaptive aspect of leadership where a leader is fully engaged with team members through conversation. This is a function that many leaders ignore. What ends up happening is that a leader will formulate a strategy and implement with far too few points of view represented which then leads to a faulty strategy and a failed implementation. Engaging with the team can easily prevent this. This is a conversation-based approach where leaders engage their team members through questions that create authorship and develop significance and provide the leader with rich information and insights that he/she would not have received otherwise. Give a rich perspective, then helping team members own the changing values, change perspectives, and learn new habits is the role of this leader.