

SMALL BUSINESS

Leadership transparency: Change through observation

"We alter every object in the world simply by paying attention to it."

— Fred Alan Wolf, quantum physicist



IN THE LEAD

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Prior articles have explored the importance of leadership transparency to creating and maintaining trust and faith, and why they are so critical to the healthy functioning of organizations, society and the economy. We have outlined what creates leadership transparency, what damages it and how to create a "scorecard."

Now we examine leadership transparency from a higher level of application using universal principles. This will help you understand the power and scope that can be brought to any situation simply by focusing awareness and attention. To do this we need to understand the power of the "observer effect" and the assumption shattering insights from quantum physics.

In the early years of "Scientific Management," it was discovered that when researchers "observed" a specific group of people around a set of parameters that output improved and productivity went up. This was surprising and came to be known as the observer effect, namely, when something was being attended to, when people felt attention focused on their efforts, improvement "spontaneously" occurred.

When something was measured, what was being measured showed improvement, if only while attention was being

focused upon it. Quantum physicists have taken this further, stating that the "simple" act of observing something changes it. The act of observing takes a "wave of possibility" and locks it into a specific form whether it is a particle of energy or an outcome that was previously one of many possible outcomes prior to observation.

Yes, quantum physicists can sound like raving mystics — and, their observations have become "law."

What does this have to do with leadership transparency? Actually, it has everything to do with it. Take the observer effect and applied research of quantum physics and you end up with a blueprint for becoming a powerful change agent within your organization, family or any other setting.

If you realize that you change the parameters and impact outcomes of what is around you (people, events, workflow, relationship dynamics, etc.) simply by "attending" to them — by observing them, then you have realized an inherent power existing within all of us.

As a leader, it is your set of tasks to provide some sense of direction, tap inspiration or motivation, align people and

behaviors and, finally, produce change. If you bring a high level of "conscious awareness" to what you focus on, you realize that you have initiated a change process in something or someone the moment you begin to focus your attention on it, or him, or her.

That is the first important realization: "I change things and situations simply by 'looking' at them — and the more intensely I observe, the more impact I have."

The second realization is that "how" you focus your attention and the quality of the consciousness you bring to the situation will multiply the impact of your attention and focus upon that situation, relationship or person. In other words, you can increase the positive impact of producing new outcomes and making needed change by the quality and depth of openness and awareness you bring to bear.

If you bring a state of judgment or pre-processed thinking or unexamined assumptions or negative emotional state or old programs — then you impact what you are observing in a "frozen" and "closed-ended" way. This sub-optimizes what could have occurred and leads

to a state of non-transparency.

In other words, the quality of the consciousness we bring, the degree of openness and willingness to see things in a new way (our degree of opacity or transparency), determines how open and transparent others are willing to be with us.

After all, what are we modeling as leaders if not a state of transparency or a state of opacity?

The key questions now become: How open are you to seeing things in a new way? How rigid or locked-in are you to your assumptions and old paradigms? How open and welcoming are you to counter-views and different perspectives? How do you receive criticism and feedback? What is the quality of observation and attention you bring to the people and situations around you?

These, more than anything else, determine the degree of leadership transparency you invite, create and allow in your presence. Are you ready to be transparent enough to create higher performance through greater trust and faith?

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