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### ***Random Managerial Thoughts on Fear, Innovation and 9-11***

- Watching a 60 minutes interview with former NFL player, Bill Romanowski, the other Sunday, I was struck that Romanowski suggested that he played the ferocious way he did because of fear- fear of losing his job as an NFL player.

This got me to thinking about managing out of fear (either self generated or via outside factors). How does that debilitating force affect the way managers operate? Following are two types who practice fear based management (you may know them):

The Do Nothing Manager- In my experience; this has been the most common managerial style. I actually knew a manager who said “Don’t do -- -- Unless You Have To! The Do Nothing Manager does just that- nothing or just the amount he needs to get by. He ignores or responds late to entreaties from his employees and is indifferent to requests for assistance. When decisions have to be made, they’re simply ignored until the situation disappears. (If you ignore something long enough, it drifts away).

The Bullying Manager- Not as common as the Do Nothing, the Bullying Manager is so intent on masking his/her feelings of inadequacy and fear of potential job loss that he makes life miserable for employees.

Some of the signs (overt or covert) could be:

- Deliberately leaving someone out of team gatherings
- Playing favorites
- Talking negatively about team members to others
- Criticizing team members within earshot of others
- Ignoring accomplishments of non-favorites
- Inconsistent treatment of employees.

The Do Nothing Manager is mainly characterized by little or no activity- the Bullying Manager is recognized by poor people skills (Heaven help the employees who experience both fear based managerial types in the same boss!)

In an atmosphere of fear risks are avoided, therefore little innovative thinking gets produced. The organization kind of just floats along in limbo void of inspiration or notable achievement. The sucking sound you hear in the office is the motivation drain from the employees, who unfortunately are left to wallow in the quagmire of nothingness and fear.

Ten ways to recognize a fear free work place:

- Good people transfer to better positions
- Morale is healthy
- Management is responsive
- Everyone gets listened to

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- Competence not favoritism is the guiding force of the area.
  - Defensive stances are not taken, accountability is
  - Constant self evaluation is occurring
  - Decisions are made promptly
  - The area consistently performs at a high level
  - Criticism is allowed
- What is true innovation? Who does it, how do we know it when we see it and how can we get some? Innovation requires a certain environment. Following are three ways to create that environment:
    - Work. Only 35% of Mozart's work has ever been heard. We view only a fraction of Picasso's 20,000 pieces of art. Very few of Einstein's 240 papers have been referenced by scholars and Thomas Edison filed 1,039 patents. The more ideas allowed to generate and the more work that's produced, the more likely it is that innovations will occur.
    - Encourage diversity. Innovations thrive in diverse surroundings. The more different the people, experiences and fields represented, the better the chance of creating new ground. For example, a team consisting of mathematicians, classicists, chess grand masters, scientists and linguists broke the code of the formidable German coding system, the Enigma. This helped reverse a string of devastating German naval

successes against the Allied forces in World War II.

- Hold on tightly and let go lightly. It's very few, if any ideas that don't need to be adjusted during implementation. Consider keeping the mind open to that eventuality.

In the, - I wouldn't have believed it if I didn't see it on CLTV- file.

- The 5<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of 9-11, had me thinking about Lisa Jefferson. Ms. Jefferson was the customer service supervisor at Verizon Airfone in Oakbrook who took the Todd Beamer call. In my opinion, her compassionate, empathetic manner during that 13 minute fateful phone call is an inspiration to managers everywhere.

Ms. Jefferson was laid off in 2005 after 20 years with the company.

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