

What makes a Christian leader different?

Table of Contents:

Section 1- Introduction:

Christian Leadership in an Un-Christian World

Prevailing System of Management

Dr. W. Edwards Deming

System of Profound Knowledge Overview

Section 2- System of Profound Knowledge:

Appreciation for a System

Knowledge of Variation

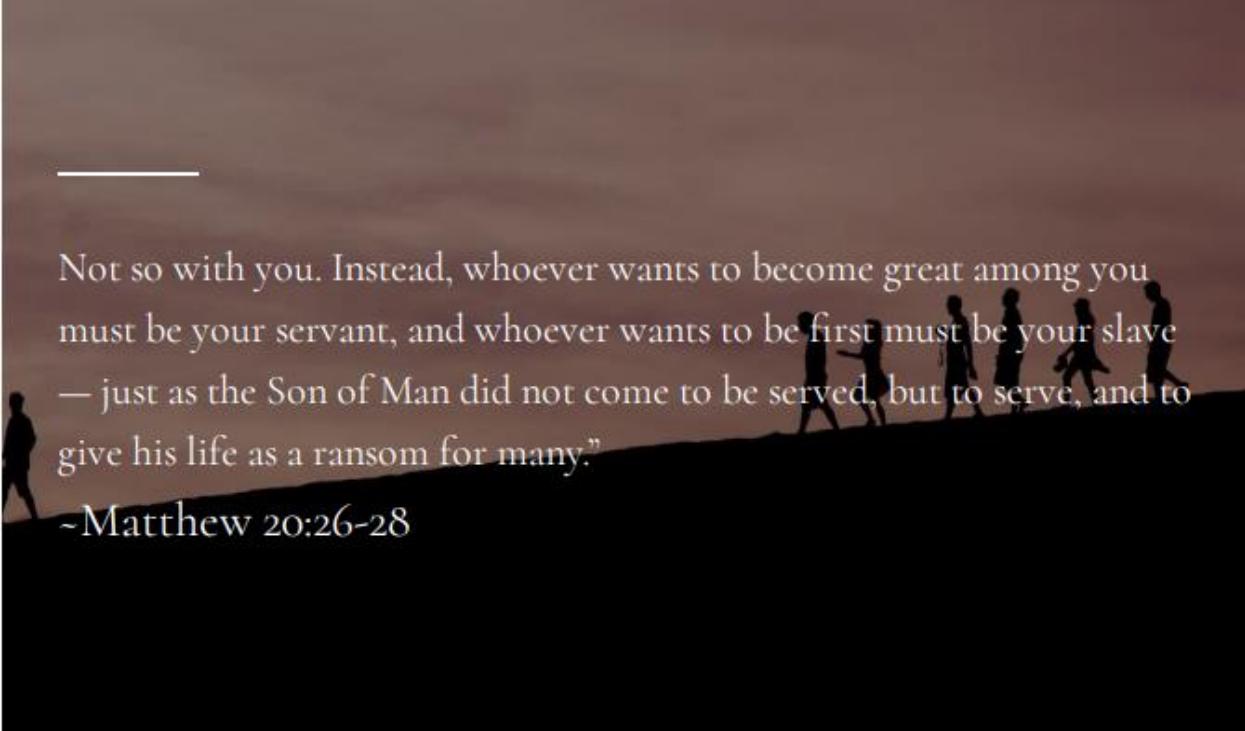
Theory of Knowledge

Psychology

Section 3- Summary:

So, what makes a Christian Leader different?

Section 1- Introduction



Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

~Matthew 20:26-28

Christian Leadership in an Un-Christian World

Prevailing System of Management

Dr. W. Edwards Deming

System of Profound Knowledge Overview

Christian Leadership in an Un-Christian World

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

-Mark 12:28-31

Why are Christian Leaders Different?

Being a Christian leader should make the way you lead dramatically different from the type of leaders produced by current culture. We need to rethink what it truly means to be a leader in a culture where the majority of organizations are structured to oppose Christian understanding of human nature.



Oftentimes, when we talk about how God desires us to lead, we speak to qualities present in many leaders.

They seek to serve-as Jesus did.

They work with integrity and honesty.

They demonstrate love. Love for employees and team members. As well as love for customers and suppliers.

A Christian leader reflects God's call, and the great commandment.

Other qualities of Christian leadership-prayer, mentoring, etc.- should be true for any of us. They are amazing aspects of Christian leadership.

But if they are just a thin veil of Christian leadership values laid over an otherwise faulty system, then their impact will always be limited. Traditional management practices are often opposed to Christian truths and God's word.

There is nothing better for a man to do than to eat and drink and enjoy himself in return for his labors.

- Ecclesiastes 2: 24

We are created to experience joy at work

Whether you are cleaning rooms, designing, or building with your hands, we all experience the thrill of a job well done. Ecclesiastes 3:22 says, "So I saw that there is nothing better for people than to be happy in their work. That is our lot in life...". It is human nature to desire the joy that comes from pride in your work.

In today's culture though, we often find that traditional management practices operate under a presumption of distrust in the individual- with policies and procedures created that are built upon that distrust.

The assumption is that a worker's desire is to do as little as possible.

The result of these policies is not leadership. It is a system of punishments and rewards. Perform well and you are rewarded. Perform poorly and you are penalized.



When people are treated in this way, they begin to act accordingly. Instead of enjoyment and learning, they resort to less than ethical methods to hit their goals, and selfish behavior to gain the rewards.



Christian leaders must create an environment that encourages people to work together and foster collaboration for the common good.

Doing this provides employees with the ability to "love one another as Christ has loved us", as opposed to the selfish tendency to be concerned for ourselves and our own reward.

We are created as one body

The Apostle Paul wrote, "so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." (1 Corinthians 12:25-26 NIV). What is true for the church is true for an organization. When one area of an organization is doing well, that flows over into the rest. Conversely, if one part is struggling, the rest struggles.

Since this is the case, why do leaders tend to make the parts of the organization compete against one another? This technique can be in the form of contests or quotas between teams where the winner is rewarded. This sows an environment of competition, not cooperation.

Christian leaders must recognize that their responsibility is to the system-the single body- and that it operates in a state of harmony. They must not foster an environment of competition, but cooperation and communication throughout the system.



No Judgement

The leadership model we should all strive for is based on the story of the prodigal son's father. He loved his son unconditionally, while seeking the very best for him. In many traditional leadership discussions, you will hear that a leader's main responsibility is to hold people accountable. That a leader should dangle an objective before a team and remind them repeatedly that they had better meet that objective, or consequences will be handed out.



This style of leadership is predominant in today's culture, but it goes against our nature as a people created in God's own image.

Experiencing joy in work cannot be attained if we are not allowed to develop the gifts we were given as we strive towards creating quality work.

Safe to say then, that most people do not do their best when they are being driven by fear or external demands.

When one part of the organization-one part of the body- is suffering and not functioning as it should, a Christian leader trains it, and nurses it back to health.

There is no judgement. Only love.

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another.

-John 13:34

Aligning with God

World Vision is a tool in the hands of God to witness to the good news of the gospel. As leaders, we should strive to remain in alignment with God and his commandments. The blessings that result are the fruits of that alignment with God. They also embrace the reality that God is sovereign and incomprehensible in the minds of men. This is reflected in Isaiah 55:8 which reads- "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." (KJV) This worldview embraces that God has the right to determine the course of events in every aspect of our lives and allow for the beautiful mystery of God that is rooted in his sovereignty and our finiteness.

We are leaders in a culture where the majority of organizations are structured to oppose Christian understanding of human nature. These organizational "customs" have become the prevailing management practice.

The goal of this curriculum is to discover what makes us different. What makes a Christian leader in an un-Christian world different.



Reflection Questions: Write your answers in the space provided or record your answers in another place.

Where have you seen traditional management practices get in the way of the great commandment to love one another?

How is/How isn't this commandment reflected in my own leadership /management practices?

Prevailing System of Management

Traditional Practices

At some point in our careers, a majority of us have been on the receiving end of management practices that left us feeling less than joyful. Cultivating an environment of competition and reward-for-rank systems at the expense of cooperation and true motivation. A number of practices can leave the employees feeling the pressure while they try desperately to climb the employee rating ladder in order to show their worth to those at the top.

An example of this type of environment can be found in the 1992 film adaptation of *Glengarry Glen Ross*. And while on the surface, it may come across as dramatic, it illustrates some-unfortunately common-management practices.



A few examples of these traditional workforce management practices can be seen in the image to the left.

1. Employee ranking- did you notice the board in the background?
2. Performance incentives- "First place is a Cadillac El Dorado. Second place, a set of steak knives."
3. Motivation by fear- "Third place, you're fired."

A lot of these practices (although extreme examples) are inspired by the traditional workforce management practices we see in many organizations today. Those practices were influenced by the theories of Behavioral Conditioning.

In this section, we will take a deeper look at **Behavioral Conditioning** as well as the work of B. F. Skinner, whose work has shaped the theories of behaviorism. We will also look at the role the environment plays, and what a better way looks like.

What is Behavioral Conditioning?

The theory is that the reaction to an event by a person (or animal) can be modified based on positive or negative reinforcement in any given environment.

Rewards are introduced to increase preferred behavior while punishments are introduced to decrease undesirable behavior.

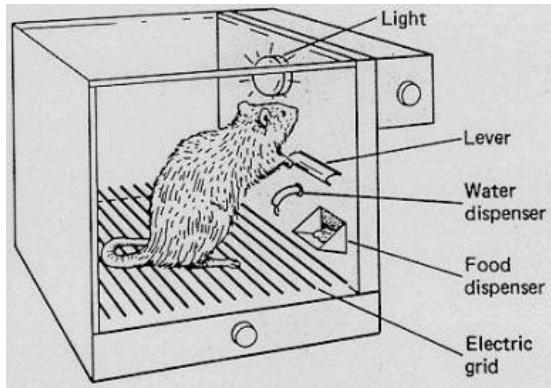
It was a longstanding theory that rewards, and punishments were vital to encouraging preferred "voluntary" behavior. This laid the foundation for the work of B. F. Skinner.



B.F. Skinner's theory posits that man, being an animal, will respond to stimuli in the same manner as rats and pigeons. Given enough time and knowledge of an individual, a person can be conditioned, and his/her choices ultimately controlled.

The Skinner Box

Rats were placed in a box with neutral stimulants (neutral meaning neither positive nor negative reinforcement), and a lever or button that would activate a food dispenser. As the box was explored, they would discover the button or lever, activate it, and receive food.



It was observed that the rats engaged in that behavior multiple times in the anticipation of reward.

At one-point, additional stimuli were introduced, lights or additional interactive elements. If an undesirable behavior occurred, then punishments were introduced. Thus, Behavioral Conditioning was born.

The Role of the Environment

Both Skinner and the Scriptures do recognize that the environment does play a role in a person's behavior. But, while Skinner believes that the environment determines behavior, the scriptures hold that the environment can influence a person's behavior, but not necessarily determine it. An example of this can be found in **Proverbs 1: 1-9**.

This passage implies that the environment can influence a person by predisposing one to choose certain behaviors. However, free will and choice do exist, and God can intervene in human affairs.

Reflection Questions: Write your answers in the space provided or record your answers in another place.

When you think of your work career, can you point to a time when incentive systems (positive & negative reinforcement) were introduced?

What was your experience with that incentive system? Was that a positive experience? Or did that practice leave a bad taste in your mouth?

Behavioral Conditioning at Work

The work of B. F. Skinner has had a profound influence on common workforce management principles used by leadership today. Leaders use these practices as a tool meant to motivate their staff by rewarding behavior that meets their standards, and penalizing those that don't. The tools in and of themselves are not bad. Measuring, reporting, and managing are all vital to the success of an organization. When the tools are left unchecked, and the data they provide used in a negative way, they can have a negative effect on an organization and the individual.

A small selection of those tools can be found below.

Performance Management	Measuring, reporting, and managing progress of an individual, team, division, or organization, solely based on financial gain. Left unchecked it can go down a bad road.
Performance Based Reward Systems	Offering a reward if goals are met. Sometimes referred to as "dangling a carrot".
Employee Matrixing	A tool to subjectively illustrate where employees rank. Has been used for skillsets, merit, sales numbers, etc.

These practices and tools rely on the assumption that your workforce will only perform and grow if the environment and rewards are just right. That is not the case.

God has wired all with an intrinsic desire to do good work, and experience joy while doing it.

This is what I have seen to be good and proper: that one should eat and drink and find enjoyment for all the hard work at which he toils under the sun during the few days of life that the true God has given him, for that is his reward.

~Ecclesiastes 5:18

Changing your Worldview

So how does all this apply to leaders and workforce management? As leaders, we can recognize that God has wired us all with the intrinsic desire to do good work. In some cases, that may mean changing from your current view of the world, to a new one.

In short, we change the current paradigm. We change in how we lead and how we manage people. Doing this will require us to renew our minds and look at our work through a biblical world view lens.



1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

~Romans 12:1-2

A practical use of the biblical worldview in an organization can be seen in the adopted definition of success. Achieving a defined goal for the prosperity of the organization is one component, but Christian leaders ensure their practices and approaches are in alignment with the commandment to love one another.

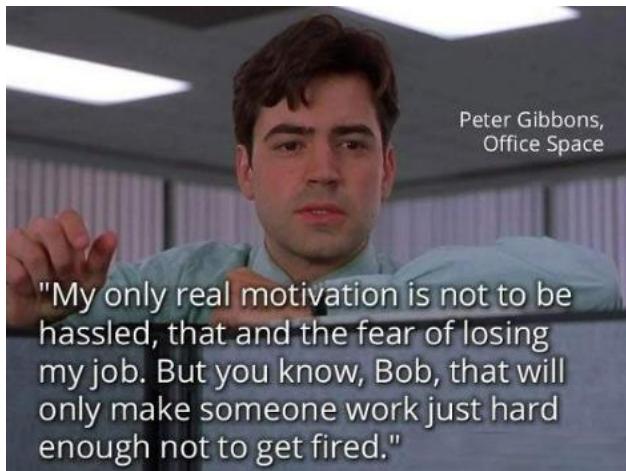
Those who do not have a biblical worldview attribute success as prosperity and financial gain. When tangible blessings and prosperity drive an individual or organization, principles are vulnerable to becoming compromised. Thus, turning prosperity into ill-gotten gains.

Reflection Questions: Write your answers in the space provided or record your answers in another place.

How do you currently employ a biblical worldview in the way you lead your team? Do you see the need to adjust this at all?

Summary

Do we have to create this system of workforce management practices ourselves? Certainly not. The groundwork has already been laid. In the next lesson, we will introduce the work of Dr. W. Edwards Deming, whose work fully integrates the biblical worldview.



The traditional workforce management paradigm takes away an individual's intrinsic motivations, self-esteem, and dignity. In place of these God-given qualities, they have replaced them with fear, self-defense, and a switch-over to performing based on extrinsic motivators.

The main stumbling block of traditional workforce management paradigms is the lack of a biblical worldview. If we only view the team we serve as animals that react to the reinforcements handed down, then we are not setting them (or ourselves) up for success.

Only through utilizing biblical values and principles can we build great teams, lasting relationships, and find joy at work. That is the better way.

Dr. W. Edwards Deming

The Man

Dr. W. Edwards Deming was nothing short of a visionary. His work in continuous improvement led to profound transformational teachings that altered the way we should think about leadership, management, and quality. He was a man who firmly believed that there is joy to be found in learning and joy to be found in work- an environment where everyone will win.

He was committed to his faith, his family, his relationships, and kept his vision of a better world forefront in all he did.

The Prophet of Quality

Dr. W. Edwards Deming was a gifted scholar and teacher for more than 50 years. His works spanned a wide range of subjects- from statistics and systems thinking, to human psychology.

He was a renowned consultant for international businesses, industries as well as governments the world over.

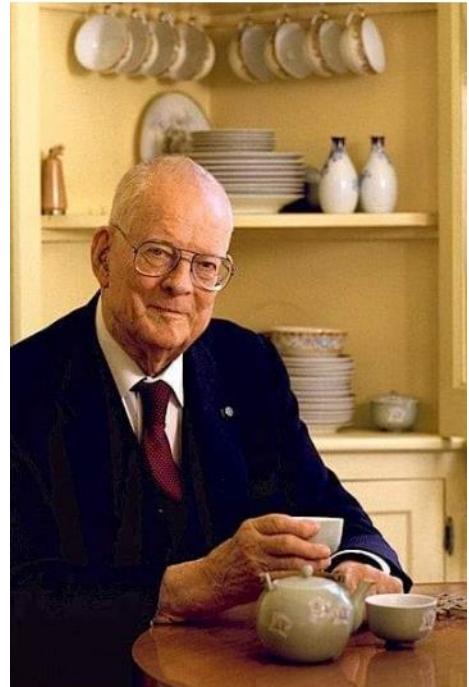
His teachings led to a transformation in management practices. The impact of which has been felt in manufacturing, organizations, and service industries around the world.

After transforming Japan's manufacturing and quality practices, Deming became the "voice of quality". He worked with corporations such as Ford, Xerox, Ricoh, Sony and more- all of them transformed by adopting his management methods.

A Man of Faith

Deming was a strong man of faith. When he wasn't busy transforming industry or leadership, he enjoyed composing music- with a special focus on liturgical hymnals. He wrote numerous pieces, including a rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" by keeping the lyrics but changing the notes. Below is a recording of his composition "Kyrie Elieson". His compositions include:

- Benedicite, Omnia Opera
The Song of the Three Holy Children (1936)
- Benedictus Es, Domine (1938)
- Mess du Jardin de Gethsémani (handwritten, March 1971)
- Look Thou Upon Me (handwritten, undated)
Words from Psalm 25
- Missa Spiritui Sancto (17 March 1989)
Mass to the Holy Ghost



W. Edwards Deming

"Anyone who enjoys his work is a pleasure to work with."

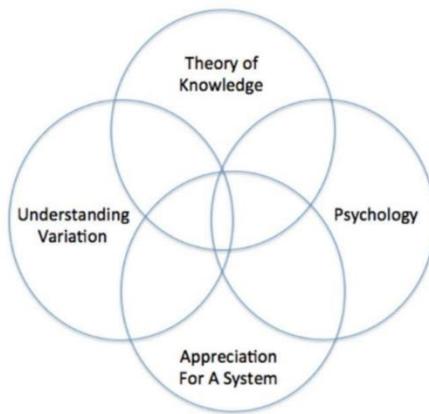
~Dr. W. Edwards Deming

Intrinsic Motivation

Dr. Deming held a biblical worldview, and believed that employees, regardless of industry- had an innate desire to perform well because they wanted to. They were born curious and eager to learn. But the current leadership methods systematically demolished self-esteem and that eagerness to learn.

System of Profound Knowledge

How did Dr. Deming's theories change workforce management from its current state, to one where everyone thrives, and everyone wins? He accomplished this through his System of Profound Knowledge (SoPK). This system is the product of a life-long effort.



Dr. Demings' approach to leadership and workforce management ties together 4 theories in interconnected areas.

- Appreciation for a System
- Knowledge of Variation
- Theory of Knowledge
- Psychology

These will be covered in detail later in the course.

Dr. Demings' take on Leadership

To transform an organization, an understanding of profound knowledge is vital. This transformation is not spontaneous, and in any organization or industry, occurs only under a leader.

But that begs the question. What exactly is a leader?

Ultimately, the job of a leader is to first lead their team or division. But on another level, their job is to promote and accomplish a transformation within an organization.

But true leadership is not a matter of giving orders but giving explanations.

Principles for Management

Dr. Deming outlined 14 key transformational principles for management that set them up to improve the effectiveness of their organization. But these principles on their own do not guarantee successful transformation. They follow as a useful application to Dr. Deming's System of Profound Knowledge.

What follows is a summary of the 14 points. They were implemented in response to the traditional workforce management practices.

The purpose of these 14 points is to explain the elements of transformation that need to take place. It also provides criteria by which we can measure the performance of management.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create constancy of purpose for improving products and services 2. Adopt the new philosophy 3. Cease dependence on inspection to achieve quality 4. End the practice of awarding business on price alone; instead, minimize total cost by working with a single supplier 5. Improve constantly and forever every process for planning, production, and service 6. Institute training on the job 7. Adopt and institute leadership 8. Drive out fear. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Break down barriers between staff areas 10. Eliminate slogans, exhortations, and targets for the workforce 11. Eliminate numerical quotas for the workforce and numerical goals for management 12. Remove barriers that rob people of pride of workmanship, and eliminate the annual rating or merit system 13. Institute a vigorous program of education and self-improvement for everyone 14. Put everybody in the company to work accomplishing the transformation
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Management Barriers

So far, we have covered the background of Dr. Deming, his contributions to organizational excellence as well as his creative contributions to the church. We reviewed-on a high level- his System of Profound Knowledge and his 14 points for management. We would be remised if we skipped over his work identifying the barriers that management face to improving effectiveness and organizational excellence. He titles these as the "7 Deadly Diseases of Management".



1. Lack of constancy of purpose
2. Emphasis on the short term- profits, thinking, fed by fear, etc.
3. Merit Ratings
4. Mobility of management- aka "job hopping"
5. Management using only visible figures- no consideration given to the unknown or the unknowable
6. Excessive benefit costs
7. Excessive cost of liability

Summary

Dr. W. Edwards Deming created an approach to management that was- and continues to be- holistic and transformational. His theories provide that vital "lens" for people and organizations to experience constant improvement, joy, and success in their work.

In the next lessons, we will take a closer look into the inter-connected components of the System of Profound Knowledge and learn how his principles- and a biblical worldview- can help us not only be successful in pursuing our goals, but also help us abide and find joy in our work.

Reflection Questions: Write your answers in the space provided or record your answers in another place.

As a leader, do you motivate your team using intrinsic or extrinsic factors?

Which of these would help you do a better job?

How could you better equip your intrinsically motivated employees to succeed?

How would acknowledging the management barriers and leveraging Dr. Deming's 14 principles for leadership change how you lead your team?

What could these changes lead to in the future?

System of Profound Knowledge Overview

Our Goal

What you saw in the introduction was 2 dichotomies. The prevailing style of management today and a transformative way. The System of Profound Knowledge is a theory, a practice, of transformation.

In this section, we will dive deeper into what the System of Profound Knowledge is, what a system is and the steps to transformation.



Let's start with the word profound. In this context, it means having a deep insight. It has even been referred to as metaknowledge - knowledge about knowledge. A person who has this understands that without theory derived from information, there is no knowledge. Furthermore, they understand the far-reaching effect knowledge can have on organizations.

Then there is knowledge. We touched a bit on this above - and will explore more on this later in the course- but information and knowledge are not the same. Information is taken in, theories derived from that information are what become knowledge.

This System of Profound Knowledge provides a map to transformation in an organization, division, or team from an outside perspective.

This is achieved by implementing the 4 components which are all interconnected. None of these can stand alone and be successful in the transformation of an organization and its leadership.

- **Appreciation for a System-** A system is made up of interconnected components that work together and not against each other.
- **Knowledge about Variation-** What variation is telling us about the system, the process and the people that work in it.
- **Theory of Knowledge-** Understanding how people think and act based on what they believe to be true.
- **Psychology-** Understanding the interactions between people, as well as people and the system which they are a part of.

Dr. Deming posits that, using these theories, we can better understand and transform the current style of management to one of optimization, excellence, and cooperation.

Steps to Transformation

Transformation of the individual is the initial step and is a direct result of understanding the System of Profound Knowledge. Once an individual understands the SoPK, that newly transformed individual can take new meaning from- and apply these new principles-to his relationships, life events, career, and more. Understanding the SoPK will also provide a base for his decision-making process and leadership approach, ultimately leading to transformation of the organization he or she is employed with as a by-product.

Once transformed, he or she will display new behaviors. They will:

Set a better example- in personal and professional relationships.

Exhibit good listening skills but will not compromise.

Be willing to continually teach others.

Help others step away from their current practices/beliefs and move toward a better philosophy without feeling a sense of guilt for the past.



Summary

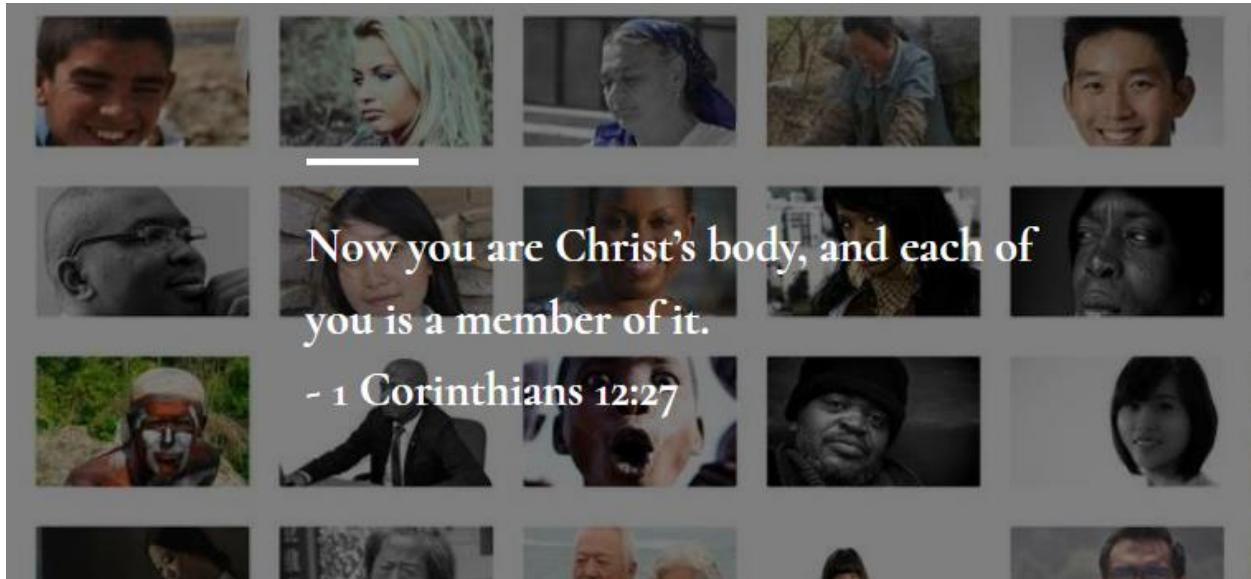
The System of Profound Knowledge is not a management theory that relies on complete mastery of all its parts. It is holistic and provides Christian leaders with a framework for actions and thoughts that will help them stay aligned with God's great commandment.

This system provides us with a different approach to leadership-proven by decades of research- to meet the goals of the organization while transforming the individual and finding joy in the process.

Reflection Questions: Write your answers in the space provided or record your answers in another place.

What do you find intriguing or challenging about the system of profound knowledge?

Section 2- System of Profound Knowledge



Now you are Christ's body, and each of
you is a member of it.
- 1 Corinthians 12:27

Appreciation for a System

Knowledge of Variation

Theory of Knowledge

Psychology

Appreciation for a System

Our Goal

In the previous section we reviewed the System of Profound Knowledge. Here we will explore one component- Appreciation for a System- and how it relates to Dr. Deming's management philosophy, defining the aim of a system and finding joy at work.

What is a System?

In its simplest form, a system is a network of components, interdependent on each other, that work together to achieve a common goal or aim. The obligation of each system component is to contribute its best to the system. Not to focus on its own competitive impulses. With this in mind, it may be that some components will not be maximized in order that the system as a whole might be optimized.

The body of Christ is a system. Made up of many parts, we form one body. As the Apostle Paul observed, even though the body encompasses vast diversity, every member is equally a part, and every member is equally crucial.

Tasks are best accomplished, and goals achieved by organizing and implementing systems. In doing so, we imitate God, who has a passion for order and harmony.

This is seen in 1 Corinthians 12: 12-17 as well as 1 Corinthians 12: 18-27. The greater the interdependence between system components, the greater the need for communication, cooperation, and leadership. Dr. Deming had these principles in mind when he first articulated his System of Profound Knowledge.

Traditional Approach

Currently, many organizations continue to see teams and departments as independent from each other as opposed to being part of an interdependent system. The result of this can be the formation of "silos" within various components of an organization. The infographic below explores the various types of silo mentalities. During this time, think about the following question.

Have I seen or experienced any of these silo mentalities in my work career?



Organizational-Each component of a system is on their own island working in competition instead of cooperation.

Examples of this are:

- Poor cross-departmental communication
- Competing priorities
- Inability to engage in systems thinking

Communication- Information on the organization, division, or team is not equally messaged out. This will lead to an "Us vs. Them" mentality, decreased employee engagement, and foster a lack of trust in information sharing.

Traditional Approach continued

Departmental- This is where a lack of a system aim is seen pretty clearly. When an aim is not clearly communicated across the organization, we see frustration and arguments between departments on topics such as ownership. As well as increased competition instead of increased cooperation.

Operational- Builds into organizational silos, teams and divisions cannot- or will not- interact with one another. This leads to task duplication and re-inventing the wheel, forced errors and cost increases as a result.

“A bad system will beat a good person every time.”

~Dr. W. Edwards Deming

How's your Aim?

A system cannot survive without an aim.

The aim of a system- for any organization- is for everyone to gain. For everyone to win, over the long term. The aim of a system is crucial. Without it, there is no system.

The aim must be clearly understood by everyone in the system and is a callback to point number 1 of Dr. Demings' 14 Points for Management, Constancy of Purpose.



The aim of a system is an emphasis on an organization's purpose or mission. It is a clarification of an organization's values.

World Vision has a developed set of core values, as well as its mission and vision statements. These are the aim of this organization.

Mission	Vision	Core Values
WORLD VISION is an international partnership of Christians whose mission is to follow our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in working with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice, and bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God.	Our vision for every child, life in all its fullness; Our prayer for every heart, the will to make it so.	We are Christian We are committed to the poor We value people We are stewards We are partners We are Responsive

Establishing Goals that align with the Aim

While things like the Mission, Vision and Values are more enduring in an organization, it is also important to develop Goals that align with these higher-level Aims, but also provide more tangible objectives for the system to strive to achieve.

Examples at World Vision might be the Goals of a Capital Campaign such as ELO, or the goals of a 5-year strategy, or simply annual ministry, fundraising and team health goals. The key is that they provide direction and purpose to those that are part of the system.

Developing the Aim

We said previously that the aim is an emphasis on an organization's purpose or mission and clarifies its values. It is the duty of leadership to determine that aim and bring the team or organization towards accomplishing that aim. To do this effectively, the following must be kept in mind.

An aim must never be defined by a specific activity or method. It must always translate to an improved life for everyone.

It is the obligation of leadership to bring exposure and energy to the determined aim. Regardless of aims' origin, there must be a sense of agreement of the aim.

Once that aim is decided upon, it is the responsibility of leadership to communicate the aim to the employees in such a way that employees can understand the part they play in achieving that aim.

Establishing and communicating an aim does not just establish an organization's purpose and values. It provides a long-term path that the organization will follow. It sets them up to achieve fantastic results, and it can raise the entire mood or morale of a workforce.



"Management requires knowledge about a system, cooperation between components, not competition."

-Dr. W. Edwards Deming

Management of the System

The direction of best efforts of everyone toward achievement of an organization's aim is required to achieve optimal results. The responsibility of a leader is made clear- to achieve the best results for everybody, and everyone wins.

Leaders must have an understanding of the system and its components. They must be able to recognize and manage the interdependence between various system components.

Growth in a system in size, complexity, and influence from external forces must be acknowledged and managed.

Leaders must also be prepared to change the boundaries of the system to adapt and better achieve the aim- even if it means redefining the components within the system.

Leaders are Future Thinking

Systems thinking is focused on the long term. Leaders therefore have a responsibility to govern their own future, and not be blown about by the winds of circumstance.



How can leaders "future think"?

Preparing an organization for the future is incomplete if it does not include lifelong learning and development for employees.

Constant evaluation of the environment is also vital. Evaluation can be technical, social, etc. and can identify an area for innovation or the improvement of a current process. It may even include changing the course of an organization to better meet the needs of those whom they serve.

Leaders who can successfully do this have the ability-to some extent- to govern their own future and predict the results of change.

Summary

How does what we have covered so far tie into a team's ability to be successful and a person's ability to finding joy at work?

The most prevalent occurrence would be the absolute absence of ambiguity. Everyone in a system would understand their job, the significance of their job, and how it fits into the aim of the organization.

In addition, everyone would know who they depend on, and who depends on them. They would continue to be intrinsically motivated to do a good job, and experience joy in the process.

Reflection Questions: Write your answers in the space provided or record your answers in another place.

If silos (organizational, communication, departmental, and operational) were removed, what do you think would occur?

Deming was quoted as saying "A bad system will beat a good person every time" do you feel that's true, and have you seen this in your previous experiences?

Knowledge of Variation

"According to his divine power hath given us unto all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."

~ 2 Peter 1:3

Our Goal

Variation is in all things. This is the nature of the world and is part of God's plan. There is variation in people, services, and products. But when leadership can understand the concept of variation, it enables them to ask the right questions, get the right answers, and take the right course of action.

In this section, we will explore the different types of variation, strategies and how understanding variation can tie into the other components of the System of Profound Knowledge.

Life is Variation

Variation will always exist. As leaders, we must be able to figure out what the variation is telling us about the system, the process and the people that work in it. Leaders aren't surprised by variation; they seek to minimize variation through an understanding of the system they are responsible for.

God created all things, and the variance between us was purposeful, to be used for the betterment of the body.

Variation in Data

Dr. Deming focuses this section on effectively using data to bring about organizational excellence. But it is much more than control charts and data analysis. This Knowledge of Variation can be applied to healthcare, philanthropy, education, and even fundraising.

There are 2 types of variation- common cause and special cause. These are the output of any system- education, healthcare, production, etc.

Common cause variation is a natural result of the system. The results will fall within a pre-determined set of parameters and is predictable within these limits.

Special cause variation is a unique event. It is always unpredictable and will fall outside the limits set by the system.

The ability to correctly distinguish between the two types of variation- including understanding its cause and predicting behaviors and results- is crucial to a leader's ability to remove barriers and stumbling blocks in the system.

The scenario below explores variation in education. More specifically, student testing. We will see how educators react to variation in grades, their actions in response, and the effect it has on the children in the education system.

Scenario: Adapted from "The New Economics" by Dr. W. Edwards Deming. We will follow one classroom as 2 tests are administered with varying results (grades/data). We will also see how reactions to this data affects those who are at the mercy of it. Reflection questions can be found at end of this section.

Mrs. Jacquard sent her 6-year-old daughter Mary to school as she always does. After attending regularly for a few weeks, Mary comes home with a note from her teacher. It contained the troubling news that of the 2 tests she had been given, she had scored well below average on both. The note then went on to allude to potential academic troubles in her future.

Other parents received similar notes. Anxiety and worry for their child's future skyrocket. The parents of the class expressed their concerns to each other. Mrs. Jacquard tried to assure them that comparisons between children did not count for anything, but the worry remained.

More parents received notes. Some praising a little boy who scored above average on both tests. Truly they had a genius in the making. Another note for a little girl who scored well on her first test, then sank below average on her second. Her future could go either way.

Mary found out she had scored below average on both tests. The news had a deeply adverse effect on her. Mentally and emotionally. Her self-esteem took a major hit.

She felt humiliated, inferior.

Mary's parents saw the change in her. She was transferred into a new school that nurtured curiosity and confidence. Thankfully, Mary was able to recover from that unfortunate learning experience.

Scenario Summary: The teacher in this scenario did not have an understanding of variation. Reacting to an outcome as if it came from a special cause, when in reality, it was a common cause result of the system.

But back to Mary's story. If Mary was normally a well-performing student but suffered a traumatic event at home (loss of a family member, divorce, etc.), the sudden change in her grades (as well as mental/emotional state) would not be a result of the system but the result of a special cause.

The responsibility of the leaders is to recognize the difference between common and special cause and take the appropriate steps.

Variation Strategies

There are different approaches to improvement depending on if you have a common cause or a special cause. Earlier we established that a common cause is a normal result of the system and operates within a set limit. A special cause is unpredictable and occurs outside the system limits. After you have identified which category you are working with, utilize the approaches below to solve problems and continuously improve the system.

Common Cause	Special Cause
If the process is in control but still not producing satisfactory results, examine all of the data the system has to offer. Then seek out systemic improvements instead of ones that address a smaller existing or potential problem.	Identify what is special. What is different from what normally takes place? Capture what is/is not beneficial. Learn what the problem was and develop a counter measure to avoid it in the future.

Systemic improvements are incredibly productive. By only fixing the special cause, you probably haven't done much-if anything- to improve future results.

Adopting this new way of thinking about variation is the most powerful mentality you can take from this lesson.

Ties to Psychology

All components of the System of Profound Knowledge are interconnected. As we dive deeper into Dr. Deming's teachings, we can begin to see the connections between the 4. We saw in Mary's story above how the effects of grading variation had on her psychological well-being. That is not a mistake. There is an intentional correlation between Psychology and Knowledge of Variation.

Dr. Deming posits that over 90% of issues stem from common cause-not special. Unfortunately (as it relates to Psychology), our default mentality is to assume that if there was something that didn't go to plan that there must be a special reason for it – and we jump directly to special cause thinking.

We tend to look for what was bad and unfortunately- also look for someone to blame.

Instead of learning that your system has a weakness to be addressed, we try to connect things to a person. Deming also posits that the effect that people have on an outcome is only 6%. That's right. The system determines the outcome. And variation is inherent to any system.



Summary

As leaders, we tend to believe there is much less variation than what actually exists. Without a firm Knowledge of Variation, we can react rashly to system variation and assume that events are special instead of just a normal occurrence in the system.

Without a Knowledge of Variation, employee anxiety runs high, and leaders can too easily look at people as the problem vs. looking for ways to improve the system that they are responsible for.

Reflection Questions: Write your answers in the space provided or record your answers in another place.

Have you seen or experienced how a manager, educator, etc. has reacted incorrectly to variation in data?

How would thinking about variation in a new way change how you lead your team?

What systems existing in your world at work that would be worth improving?

What type of variation (common or special cause) might exist in them that you should be mindful of?

Theory of Knowledge

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...

-Psalm 111:10

Our Goal

How do we know that what we think we know is really true? How can we avoid future mistakes we are in danger of making in our current way of thinking? What do we need to do or change to improve the learning process? These questions-and more- are what make the Theory of Knowledge one of the components of the System of Profound Knowledge.

But how does this relate to leadership?



The core of the Theory of Knowledge is understanding how people think and act based on what an individual believes they know to be true.

Some management beliefs are so deeply engrained in our minds that we have developed a positive confirmation bias for otherwise traditional management practices such as:

- Pay for performance
- Employee matrixing
- Behavioral Conditioning (positive/negative reinforcements)
- Mistaking common cause variation for special cause (and reacting incorrectly)

Dismantling those beliefs is the key to improving your decision-making process as a leader. As we begin to address those beliefs head on, we will be able to take a step back and ask thoughtful, intentional questions of ourselves such as, "What other management beliefs do I internally hold onto that are simply not useful, or cause harm to those whom I lead?". First, we must explore management in relation to the Theory of Knowledge.

During this lesson we will review a number of different principles that-when integrated with the Theory of Knowledge- can help us as leaders avoid pitfalls based on our current way of thinking or what we believe to be true at that moment. Those principles are:

- Management is Prediction
- Information is not Knowledge
- Experimentation and Learning
- Knowledge of Variation
- Psychology

There is no substitute for knowledge.

~ Dr. W. Edwards Deming

Management is Prediction

The Theory of Knowledge helps us understand that management- regardless of form- is prediction. Financial forecasts and staffing needs are all predictions. Even something as simple as, "I need to go to the store." is subject to prediction. Going to the store relies on the prediction that your car will start- and stay running and the store will be open when you get there. Using data to make business decisions that directly affect the future of the organization is a form of prediction as well.

But, of course, not all predictions will work out as expected.

How a leader responds to this is the key. In this circumstance, a leader should re-evaluate their prediction based on the outcome observed. They ask, "What happened and why?". The desired outcome of this cycle of reflection is ultimately knowledge – knowledge that can be used to adjust the process and inform future predictions.

Information is not Knowledge

Information is not the same as having knowledge.

I know you have seen that statement now 3-4 times, but it bears repeating.

We live in a high -speed world. Everything is instant- or nearly instant. We can go to Google at any time and get instant access to pages upon pages of information. But that is all it is. Information without an idea how to leverage it- a theory- is useless.

The application of information exposes any inadequacies in a theory. It can highlight the need to revise your theories or even come to a new theory altogether. Without a theory information has no meaning. Experience has no meaning. Without a theory, there are no questions to ask, and there is no learning. But how do we test a theory? Through experimentation and learning.

Experimentation and Learning

It is always a best practice to gather evidence to support your theories- regardless of the field you are in. But when was the last time you put your management beliefs through testing? In the best-case scenario, you want to rely on strong evidence- as a result of testing- that support your theories.

The first step is to make a prediction.

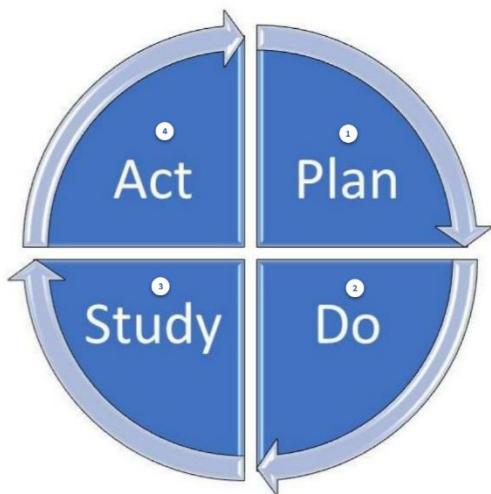
Prediction helps people learn as they are made to think ahead to future outcomes.

Doing this will also prompt us to intentionally examine the system and any existing management beliefs we hold in our minds.

Dr. Deming has incorporated his principles for the Theory of Knowledge into a model that managers can use to gather evidence, insight, and understanding.



The PDSA Cycle is a proven, systematic approach for not only learning, but the improvement of a system, process, or theory. This integrated learning and improvement model is made up of 4 steps- Plan, Do, Study, Act- and they can be repeated over and over as part of continual learning and improvement.



- **Plan:** This step involves identifying a goal or a purpose, formulating a theory, defining what success looks like, and putting a plan of action together.
- **Do:** Implement the plan components from step 1.
- **Study:** Outcomes and results are monitored and evaluated. What were the successes? What were the areas for improvement?
- **Act:** Act on the results. Either abandon the change, adopt the change, or run through the cycle again under different conditions to determine if the result changes. Different conditions could mean a change in environmental factors, materials, or personnel involved.

By using the PDSA cycle (and comparing them to your predictions), you may make some surprising discoveries. For example, maybe you are very effective at predicting the results of organizational change- or maybe you aren't. Maybe you are overly optimistic, or overly pessimistic.

Having some degree of self-insight is crucial if you are to improve your decision-making process, as well as finding joy at work.

Tying it Together

All 4 pillars of the System of Profound Knowledge are interconnected. The Theory of Knowledge is no different. This next section will highlight just a few of the relationships from Knowledge of variation and Psychology.

Knowledge of Variation

In the previous section, we learned that variation is everywhere. God's perfect plan designed it that way. A manager's ability to distinguish between the different types of variation as well as understanding its causes and reacting appropriately, is crucial to removing barriers and stumbling blocks in the system.

Every manager- every person- has pre-existing biases (or beliefs) that can cause us to react in a certain way- whether positively or negatively. This is oftentimes referred to as confirmation bias.



Managing with this kind of bias means we can- sometimes unintentionally- hold onto evidence that supports our current beliefs. Whether that evidence is data, or principles taught to us in the past. In doing so, we also tend to ignore evidence that challenges those beliefs. To adjust our management beliefs from what we believe to be true to what is actually true we need to have some self-insight. If you suspect you are falling for confirmation biases, take a moment and ask yourself:

- Is this new evidence actually convincing? Or do I like it because it supports something I already believe to be true?
- Do I only dislike this evidence because it is challenging my current beliefs?

Psychology

Psychology plays a large role in the Theory of Knowledge. Like it or not, our emotions, biases, likes and dislikes, all have a profound effect on how we react when new evidence, ideas or knowledge is presented to us. The way we receive and evaluate an idea is not based on objective facts alone- no matter how much we try to say it is. Consider the following example.

While in a meeting, a colleague-whom you do not have the best relationship with- presents an idea to you for a new project. You dismiss it and tell them, "Oh, I don't know if that project is worth the time.". Life goes on. 2 weeks later, you are out to lunch with another colleague- whom you respect and admire- they pitch the same project idea to you. But your reaction is much different. It is received with enthusiasm.

Our unconscious beliefs and biases can also be seen in traditional performance management practices. Namely, performance appraisals. When a manager completes an appraisal for someone on their team that they have a good relationship with and like, they are more likely to show appreciation for the hard work they have done- and as a result- receive a higher mark on their appraisal.

Summary

Grasping the theory of knowledge within the context of Dr. Deming's teachings enable us as leaders to learn effectively and continuously to improve the processes and the systems that we work with.

The high speed, instant access world we live in does not provide us with knowledge. It provides us with information only. And information is not the same as knowledge.

Part of leadership in any organization is accurate prediction. Rational prediction requires that you first have a theory, and that you build your knowledge through continuous experimentation and learning, keeping in mind the potential psychological biases that you may be using even without thinking about it.

Reflection Questions: Write your answers in the space provided or record your answers in another place.

Can you think of examples where you could use more Knowledge to effectively lead your team?

Psychology

A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?

~Ecclesiastes 2:24-25

Our Goal

Psychology is the fourth pillar of the System of Profound Knowledge. Our goal for this lesson is to help us understand people, the interaction between people and circumstances, interaction between a manager and the people on their team, and the interaction between people and any management or education system.

First, we must understand what the term "Psychology" means when we are talking about Dr. Deming's management system as it will not be the same as what is covered in a classroom 101 level course. This pillar of the System of Profound Knowledge integrates a deep appreciation for:



The influence that management policies have on people.
This can include unreachable targets or stretch goals, and a culture of blaming individuals.

The God-given desire people have to **take pride in their work.**

How people are **resistant to change.**

Biases and Behavior drivers.

Human Variation

Without a doubt, people are the most valuable key to the long-term success of an organization.

But people are different from each other. Managers must not only be aware of these differences but leverage them effectively for the optimization of everyone's ability. People learn different ways- reading, listening, watching, etc.- at different speeds.

The people on your team, in your organization are not just cogs in a giant machine. Each person brings their own extraordinary talents and abilities with them.

Dr. Deming posits that to maximize what each individual person brings to an organization; they must have pride and joy in their work.

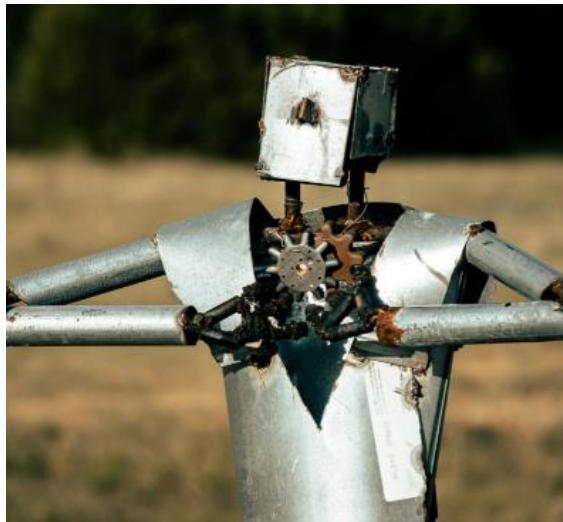
They must have that open freedom to use their minds to think outside the box. They must have the tools and resources needed for them to be effective, but above all, a system that allows for them to engage in their own continual improvement.

People are entitled to joy at work

~Dr. W. Edwards Deming

Motivation

Let's take a closer look at the different motivations used in traditional management practices and in Dr. Deming's management system. There are intrinsic motivators, extrinsic motivators and then a phenomenon called over-justification. First, we must understand the difference between these 3 terms.



Intrinsic Motivation: The motivation to perform your work arises from within the individual because it is naturally satisfying.

Extrinsic Motivation: Performing your work in order to earn external rewards such as bonuses, prizes, etc.

Over-Justification: Providing a monetary or prize reward for completing their work or an achievement that they did for pure pleasure and self-satisfaction.

Motivation by Fear

Some traditional workforce management practices rely on systems that reward high performers but instill fear in those lower in the ranking system. Fear makes employees look for safety, and in doing so, it drives short term thinking. They perform just well enough so they can avoid being fired or reprimanded.

Fear is not a motivator that should be leveraged. Employees motivated by fear won't take risks and as a result there is no innovation in the organization.

There are no creative solutions to problems and no interest in cooperation between people, departments and divisions.

There is no interest in improvement-either on a personal or organizational level.

What's more, fear drives people to do whatever they feel they have to in order to feel that temporary sense of security. And more likely to entertain and even act on less than ethical actions.

Crushed out...

When Dr. Deming spoke on intrinsic motivation, he stated that the positive attributes that man is born with are "crushed out" by the forces of destruction along the top. But what or who is 'the top'? It depends on the environment. These naturally positive attributes can be pushed down or shattered by family environment, school environment, or their work environment.

Family Environment	Work Environment	School Environment
A poor family environment, where a person cannot fulfill their need for love, self-esteem and relationships can absolutely shatter a person's dignity, self-esteem and as a result, their intrinsic motivations. This can happen at a very early age and will often times affect them well into adulthood.	Joy in work, learning, innovation all takes a backseat to achieving high marks in appraisals when extrinsic motivators (bonuses, incentives, etc.) are the sole focus at work. Worse yet, individual and team morale can also suffer if an extrinsically motivated culture goes unchecked.	The natural passion for learning can be crushed under the weight of achieving good grades. High grades, gold-stars, "student of the month" are all forms of ranking and takes away a child's yearning for learning. Not one single person can enjoy the learning process if they are constantly worried about receiving a poor grade. No one can enjoy work and learning if they are ranked against other people.

The manager's job is to remove the barriers that prevent the people from finding joy at work. Creating an environment, that empowers people to take pride in what they do. This, as a result, can also optimize individual and system performance.

Overjustification

Some extrinsic reward systems in place today actually fall under the category of overjustification. But what is it? Simply put, it is the act of giving a monetary reward or prize to a person for an act or achievement that they did for their own pleasure and self-satisfaction.

You may be asking yourself, "But that doesn't sound so bad."

Take a moment to read an excerpt taken from Dr. Deming's book "The New Economics" where he relates an example of this phenomenon from Dr. Joyce Orsini.

A little boy took it into his head-for reasons unknown- to wash dishes after supper every evening. His mother was pleased with such a fine boy. One evening, to show her appreciation, she handed him a quarter.

He never washed a single dish again.

Her payment to him changed-on some level- their relationship. It hurt his dignity. He had washed the dishes for the sheer pleasure of doing something for his mother.

Excerpt Summary

What we can take away from the story of the young boy- and countless others- is that a reward in the form of money or prize for performing a job that was done for sheer pleasure can actually be demotivated when it is over justified.

Does this mean we are to never acknowledge the great things that people accomplish? Certainly not.



Appreciation? Absolutely.

What then can you -as a manager- do to recognize the contributions and achievements of those on your team? It can be as simple as a show of appreciation. A note, a verbal acknowledgement, a pat on the back, all of these show to employees that their knowledge and efforts are recognized and appreciated.

This, oftentimes, will go much farther in a person finding joy at work than a monetary reward.

Summary

People are complex. We are born with beautiful positive attributes designed to help us grow and thrive in the world God created. We strive to do a good job, not for a monetary reward, but because we all want to experience joy in the work that we do.

Traditional management practices, as well as varying personal environments may have dampened these attributes- curiosity, dignity, self-esteem, passion for learning, intrinsic motivations.

As leaders, your responsibility is to cultivate an environment where these attributes are nurtured, and everyone's talents are leveraged for the benefit of all. This must be prioritized alongside other leadership objectives.

Reflection Questions: Write your answers in the space provided or record your answers in another place.

Can you remember a point in time where you see your natural positive attributes were being crushed out?

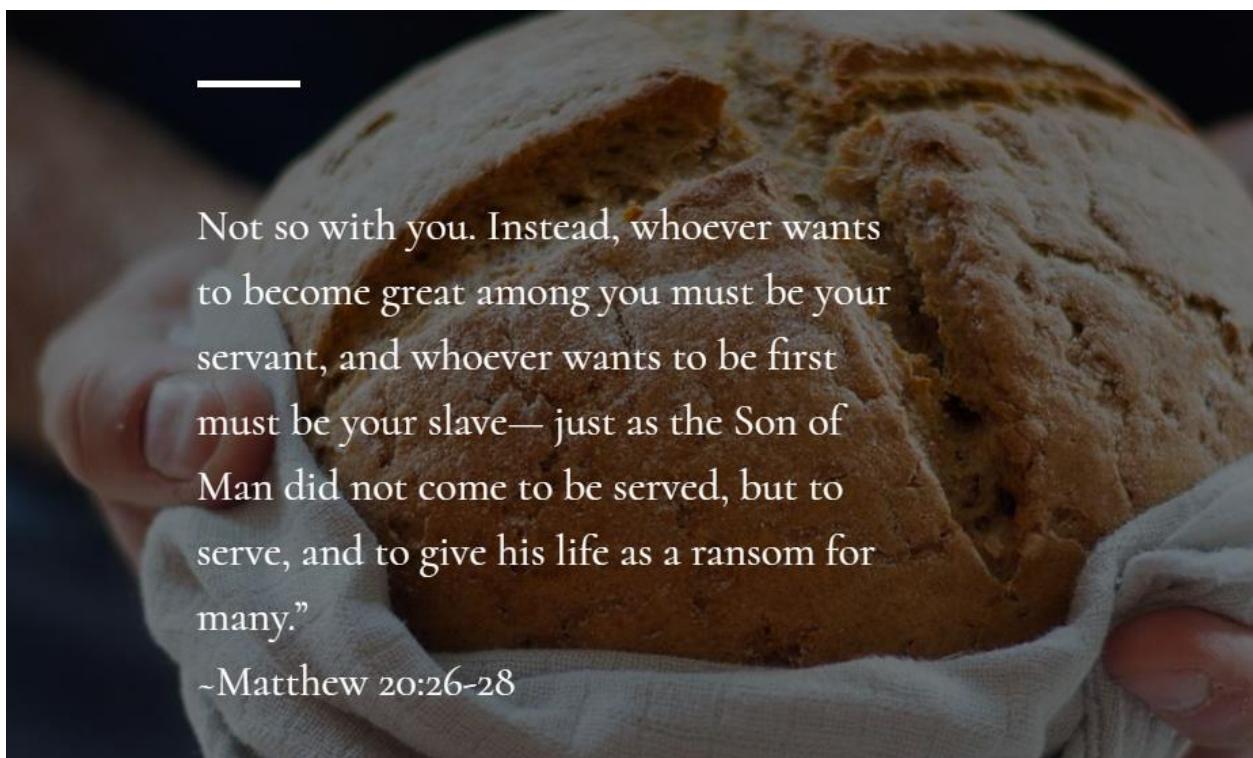
Can you also remember a point in time where a manager gave you the freedom for your natural positive attributes to flourish?

Can you think of a time in your career when a reward was over justified?

Were you the giver or the receiver?

What was the result?

Section 3- Summary



Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

~Matthew 20:26-28

So, what makes a Christian Leader different?

So, What Makes a Christian Leader Different?

He hath made everything beautiful in his time: also, he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end."

~ Ecclesiastes 3:11

So, why are Christian leaders different?

We posed this question at the beginning of the course itself. After reviewing the System of Profound Knowledge and taking time to reflect on the lessons, Christian leaders should lead in a way that is dramatically different. A leader will demonstrate love. They seek to serve others as Jesus did. They joyfully fulfill their work with integrity and honesty. And they create an environment where every individual can nurture their gifts and bring something unique to the organization where they work.

God Calls Us to Love

We glorify God when we love one another. Christian leaders have the responsibility to demonstrate God's love towards one another through their actions and behaviors. They also have the responsibility to create a workplace where all employees can embrace their belovedness in God. A leader understands that they have the responsibility to demonstrate the mercy, peace, and love of Christ Jesus to the people he or she leads.

A fundamental change of the traditional leadership paradigm needs to take place. A shift in our way of thinking that takes us from the traditional type of management practices, to one that reflects God's great commandment- to love one another.

Attributes of a Christian Leader

A Christian leader is a peacemaker. They help their employees walk out their belovedness in God. And recognize their value, their gifts, and their talents.

They love people for who they are. They demonstrate the great commandment to love God and to love thy neighbor.

And they demonstrate the never-ending mercies of Christ in those times when employees need to be picked up and dusted off.

They create an environment of freedom. Freedom from fear and freedom from judgement. They break down the barriers that tell people that their value is derived from what skills they have, what they can do, or how relevant they are to the organization.

They recognize and understand the negative effects that come from the fear of judgement.

A Christian leader understands that we are all made in the image of our creator, with each person gifted unique talents, skills, and abilities.

As a result, they recognize the interdependent nature of God's creation and the interdependent nature of the body of Christ. And they work with each member of the body to use their own unique gifts for the glory of God.

They create an environment where each person feels empowered to use their gifts for the glory of God and more importantly, to love our neighbor as ourselves.



Summary

World Vision is a tool in the hands of God to witness to the good news of the gospel. And each team and staff member have been given unique gifts that should be nurtured.

As Christian leaders, we should demonstrate and help our teams understand their belovedness in God.

Christian leadership is also much more than a veneer of faith on top of traditional management techniques. Christian leadership is a holistic approach to loving people, recognizing their gifts, and creating a system that allows individuals to thrive. Dr. Deming understood the nature of people and of sound management many decades ago and he codified these principles in his System of Profound Knowledge for future leaders to follow.

At World Vision, we have the unique opportunity to overtly blend our Christian beliefs with these leadership principles. And when we do, we will bring glory to the God that created and gifted us, bring joy to the individuals under our care and bring purpose and hope to the donors and families we are called to serve.

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

~Mark 12:28-31