LEAD3030 – Leadership Development

Journal Four – Table of Contents

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| Contract Route | Pass | Number of Words |  |

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If you are pursuing the “Pass” route you are to write about **TWO (2)** items from each section (each from a different unit). If you are pursuing the “Honours” route you are to write about **THREE (3)** items from each section (each from a different unit).

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# A – Federalist #10

There was a little bit of confusion in the definitions of the words democracy vs republic. It’s probably because we English speakers tend to misuse the word ‘democracy’. We tend to call a government ‘democratic’ when what we really mean is ‘republic’.

The definition of democracy that I’m familiar with is one where the people vote on every single decision no matter how small or irrelevant. Should we raise the user fees for some obscure phone line? Vote on it. This is obviously an unmaintainable mess that can’t scale past the city states that the system originated in.

Instead what modern democracy has turned into is what Madison would have called a republic. We elect officials that we generally agree with to make decisions for us. It has the downside of turning a lot of power over to a small number of people. The upside is that the entire population isn’t constantly involved in voting.

# A – Dealing with Resistance to Change

I once read somewhere that smart people are more likely to make decisions based on bad reasoning. It sounds ridiculous at first, but the reason that was given for the claim is that smart people are better at rationalizing bad decisions. In other words: the smarter a person is, the better that person will be at making excuses for going with an emotional choice.

I’ve seen this happen before too. I’ve known some very smart people who consistently made terrible decisions. I’ll give them fake names, Tom and Jerry. Their decision process was often to go with their first instinct then stubbornly rationalize away any reasons that others would disagree with them.

The problem is that once Tom and Jerry had made their decision, no amount of reasoning or persuasion would change their minds. They would pretend to consider what others thought but would actually be looking for reasons to disagree and hold their ground.

It’s no coincidence that Tom and Jerry were very resistant to any change that weren’t involved in. They would let their fears and biases call the shots and then make the excuses to rationalize their emotions.

I don’t work with Tom and Jerry anymore but I’m sure the author of this article would love to try to influence them.

# C – The Allegory of the Cave

Either I’m getting better at reading this sort of abstract conversation stuff or this reading was a lot easier than the first Plato article. I was actually able to understand the point that Plato was trying to make (hurray!). People can be in a state where no amount of descriptions will convince them to change their minds, you have to show them reality instead of describing it. Seeing is believing.

Every internet argument is validation for that. People in an internet argument rarely change their minds. In fact they tend to become more convinced of whatever opinion they held going into the argument. You can’t show someone how things actually work over the internet so all the other person is able to do is to reinforce their own reasoning.

There is a kind of attitude that is present in this writing though, I don’t really have a name for it. It’s the “I have seen this incredible thing but everyone refuses to believe me” style of thinking. If nobody believes what I’m saying, I have to consider that I might be wrong.

Take a belief in conspiracy theories as an example of this. Even if you knock out every argument that a conspiracy theorist has, in the end you will just get grouped in with the rest of the conspirators. The theorists take the position that they have been enlightened and that everyone that disagrees with them is either motivated to do so, or just hasn’t been enlightened sufficiently. Refusing to acknowledge that our senses and reasoning are incredibly flawed inevitably leads to wrong beliefs.

# E – Labels Exercise

For me the best part of this exercise was the look on Monsour’s face when we all just started laughing at him for no reason. He had gotten the “laugh at everything I say” label. He looked so shocked and confused, it was great.

I can imagine how that awful it would be if something like that actually happened without the tags. I got the “constantly say my name” tag and it was a little awkward. The way the conversation was going I was wondering if my tag was “ask me lots of questions”. It certainly seemed that way because normally I prefer to silently observe conversations but I wasn’t being allowed to do that. It was a little weird for me in that sense.

# E – Same Again Wine Company

I feel compelled to defend my opinion that this company’s employment situation is not critical. When I hear the word ‘critical’ I think of something that needs to be fixed immediately. While I agree that changes are necessary I don’t agree that they need to happen immediately.

The way to make those changes immediately is to (for example) fire half the accounting department and replace them with males. This is a bad idea for a number of reasons. First, you are causing a major disruption in a team of people which are productive. Second, you are losing vital knowledge to the operations of the business. Accounting system knowledge, contacts with external suppliers, etc. Third, the remaining disgruntled staff will have to train new employees while doing their current job. Fourth, the remaining employees will look at the new employees with a lot of resentment over their lost friends. Clearly this is a pretty bad situation to put the company in and not a realistic option. Even if you implement this slowly, the problem will still remain.

So let’s look at the reasons you would want to balance out the ratios in a department so quickly. In class there was some concern about potential lawsuits. I Am Not A Lawyer, but I’m not particularly worried about the potential for lawsuits. The reason is I don’t think it’s possible to file a lawsuit because a company’s departments are unbalanced. The reason a person would be able to file a discrimination lawsuit is because they were turned down for a position because of discrimination. It is possible that the voting system could result in a discrimination lawsuit.

It is for that reason that I recommended dropping the voting system that is currently in place. I think it’s fair to say that the voting system as it is can’t keep going and that the hiring policy needs to change. It’s pretty standard practice to hire based on merit. The company can continue to consider personality but keep in mind that personality can be managed to an extent.

By just changing the hiring policy, the required changes will take place as turnover continues to occur naturally. There won’t be any additional strain to train the new employees, or resentment from current employees, or major sudden brain drain and the team will remain productive. You can even monitor the situation as it progresses to make sure that there isn’t any clique type problems forming. To me this is the best case scenario for the company and its employees.