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- Annual performance review: Evidence based perspectives (My Blog on Medium)
- Feedback Fallacy by Marcus Buckingham (All the three factors)
- Actual leaders versus prescriptions (My Blog on Medium)
- When did you lose your innocence {Blog by David Maister (snapshots are available on group, you need to summarize the Blog with the same jargons used by practitioners)}
- Performance Management rating errors/biases
- The more we communicate, the less we communicate (all the headings)
- Lost causes are the only ones worth fighting for (all the headings)
- It's not one or the other, it's both! (all the 3 pages)

Annual Performance Review: Evidence Based Perspectives

- Samuel Culbert, a former professor at Anderson School of management, wrote about the dysfunctionality of annual performance reviews.
- He called them corporate theater, sham, facade, immoral
- Performance reviews are presented as being objective, but they are only pretending. If you get a different boss you are going to be seen differently.
- We live in a world full of self interested people. In order to give a review you have to pretend you have no subjectivity, you are aware of your own needs and have no other motive than to be fair.
- Samuel Culbert, Edward Deming, and other social scientists assert that people like those who are like themselves. It is weird just to pretend that somebody is objective in a subjective world
- Everyone pursues self beneficial and has personal and subjective tastes.
- The way to get a good review is to please your boss. What does the boss want? Bosses are just like employees. They have faults are flawed have difficulties
- We are not treating employees, we are relating people in relation to other people. Evaluations are done on a bell curve which rate employees like 20% excellent, 70% average and so on.
- Do you like being called average? 70-80% get called average and among the average the system doesn't compensate true achievers and over estimates dead wood. This can demotivate employees.
- It is hard to find out who is doing the heavy lifting due to the subjective nature of these reviews
- Edward Deming, a famous statistician who was abandoned by the USA and now works for Toyota in Japan says, "I believe it's immoral to maintain the facade that annual pay and performance reviews lead to corporate improvement, when it's clear they lead to more bogus activities than valid ones. Instead of energizing individuals, they are dispiriting and create cynicism. Instead of stimulating corporate effectiveness, they lead to just-in-case and cover-your-behind activities and reduce the amount of time that could

be put to productive use. Instead of promoting directness, honesty, and candor, they stimulate inauthentic conversations in which people cast self-interested pursuits as essential company activities.”

- Dr Culbert comments that we love to measure and measuring requires some kind of baseline. He says that what's being measured has less to do with what an individual was focusing on in attempting to perform competently and more to do with a checklist of what people assume about what competent people do. This is why pleasing the boss becomes more important than doing a good job.”
- We love quantifying but it doesn't work for everything (competence) and the end results are more unhelpful than helpful
- Edward Deming says, “Running a company on visible figures alone is one of the deadly diseases of management”.
- People do want to be objective but nevertheless valid contributions go unappreciated and criticized. Bogus contributions and spin doctoring of results brought rewards to non-contributory performers.
- Famous American novelist Ernest Hemingway stated that the most essential gift for a good writer is a built in shockproof shit detector. The ability to sport bad and fix what is salvageable. Leaders and teams act the same way, removing crummy or useless rules and whatnot. “If performance review was a drug it wouldn't be approved by US Food and Drug administration because it is so ineffective and has so many vile side effects.”

Why Feedback Fails (Feedback Fallacy)

- Feedback or the belief of necessity of feedback is based on 3 beliefs all of which are wrong
- The first belief I am the source of truth about you
- The second belief learning for you is filling up an empty vessel
- The third belief excellence can be defined in advance in isolation from the person being excellent
- All of these are wrong
- Starting from the third one excellence can't be defined in isolation from the person being excellent
- Take funniness you can't define in isolation from the person being funny.
- If you take different people they all have their different views on what funny is
- What you realize when you look at funny is you can't extricate excellence from the person being excellent. Excellence is interwoven with the person being excellent
- Now the second one. Learning we know is insight and insight is a feeling of knowingness generated from within.
- Learning is like building new buds on an existing branch. Learning is taking existing patterns within you and helping you find some new flash of insight some new bud that helps you add form or structure or focus or slight refinement of an existing pattern that already exists within you
- First belief, I am not the source of truth about you. What do you need from me? Well you don't need to have me tell you where you are failing to match up to some preexisting measure of excellence. I am not the source of truth about you, I am not a source of truth

about what you should do. I am a source of truth for my reaction. I am a very good source of truth for my reaction.

- Your job is to take that reaction and then weave it into some insight that can build upon what you want
- Particularly what you want isn't my reaction, you want my reaction to what worked. When you do something when you perform you want my reaction to discover what worked
- Let's put feedback aside and let's give them what they truly need. Let's give them our instinctive and considered reaction to what works.

Actual Leaders VS Prescriptions

- Several Leaders who have a lot of power don't do what actual leaders should do as manifested in leadership literature.
- Carly Fiorina former CEO of Hewlett-Packard has been described as someone with "a silver tongue and an iron will"
- Rebekah Brooks former editor at UK based News International. Was famous for her clear eyed ruthlessness and unceasing and skillful networking with the rich and powerful in establishment
- Lyndon Johnson, the youngest senate majority leader in history of the United states and considered the most productive US president abused and berated his aides throughout his long career. He called people while he was on the toilet to give them dictation and instructions. He possessed an "animal sense of weakness in other men"
- Henry Kissinger, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning former secretary of state and national security advisor, wiretapped his direct reports. He was also very demeaning and cruel to his people
- Roger Ailes head of fox news. According to one source, Ailes is a tyrant; he says "I only understand friendship or scorched earth" The culture of Fox news is very intimidating. People are always looking over their shoulders.
- Edgar Hoover ruled the FBI with an iron hand. Hoover engaged in illegal wiretapping and surveillance, blackmailed his bosses in the department of justice, and got rid of subordinates who challenged his power
- In Apple employees enjoy the banter at any moment of being "Steved" means berated and eventually fired.
- Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon is also famous for his outbursts of temper and his put-downs of employees.
- Paul Allen, who co founded Microsoft along with Bill Gates, wrote that working with Gates was like "being in hell"
- Tina Brown, a leading figure in the world of magazine publishing, inspired fear among those who might criticize her.
- Jack Welch, CEO from General Electric introduced "Rank & Yank" system in which 10% employees in performance measures were terminated from the organization
- This is how people use power dynamics and don't fit on what leadership entails or substantiates. Such understanding is the fundamental prerequisite for altering the dynamics that produced these people, whether you like them or not.

- Lots of work environments filled with bad bosses and honestly this won't change anything unless we confront the facts about what actually is going on and why.

David Maister How did you lose your innocence

- David Maister was doing a lot of client work in many countries
- His message was of the economic benefits of optimism, professionalism and high standards, but it is met often with a dejected, beaten down cynicism.
- Many times he was told things like it would be nice to have your ideals to believe that managers with the highest integrity get the best work done and the highest profits out of the group they manage.
- It would be nice to believe that the way to get the best out of employees is to try - at least try to understand them as human beings, and get better, if necessary at meeting their human needs. But can you really get promoted to manager if you care about your people
- I keep meeting people who have given up their ability to believe in the power of standards and ideals
- Examples:
 - A consultant who worked in one of the most famous brand names in consulting said, "I was a simple boy who grew up in the country. When I came to the city, they taught me that to get on in business you have to lie. You exaggerate and misrepresent in proposals in order to win the work, you claim to have done things you have not done. That is the way the game is played, you are taught."
 - A 30 year old middle level supervisor at a European wide training program said "The firm pretends that it wants to inspire us, but the truth is we do boring work, and so do the seniors. We can't imagine there are people who do work they are still excited about. That is a luxury we cannot dream about. They just want us to work harder and the people who report to us to work harder."
 - A partner in a tax firm said, we know many ways to save our clients money, but that just would mean we would bill them less and take home less pay, so we don't work at getting efficient. That would be the right thing to do and may even get us a good reputation in the long run, but no-one would seriously suggest changing to that way."
 - A senior national level director said, "Ok talking about all this quality an employee motivation stuff, David but we just want to make money of it What's wrong with that"
- So here's my question to you: How did we end up here? Clearly something was missing from my education and upbringing - the world forgot to "beat out of me" my ideals, but seem to have done a good job of beating them out of most other people.
- I'm really interested: What happened to you that made you lose your innocence about how business was run?
 - Lars Plougmann said: Those obsessed with making a quick buck tend to turn to sub-honest approaches. Professionalism, high standards and doing-the-right-thing pays off in the long run. Not everybody has the patience to reap the rewards.

- Stephen Downes said: My observation is that in organizations the primary requirement for advancement in leadership is obedience and compliance. The results of your work are pretty much irrelevant; what matters is your loyalty to the person who is in a position to promote you.
- Pat McGee said: After I got crosswise with my boss I had gone back to being a worker bee. My supervisor told me one day that he had heard complaints from three different people about me, one from his boss. He said, and I quote, "They say you're being too much an advocate for the customer."

Performance Evaluation

- Performance evaluation has been heavily criticized and the criticisms have prompted managers to stop performance evaluation altogether. Some of the criticisms are:
- **Individual Threat:** low performers and people who dislike work dislike being evaluated. The evaluation process lowers their self esteem and they feel worse about themselves. The irony of evaluation is that poor performers most in need of feedback are most threatened and therefore most resistant to accepting feedback.
- **Threat to supervisors:** Some supervisors do not like to evaluate their subordinates and feel threatened by having to explain their evaluations. Supervisors argue that this places them in a difficult position by forcing them to be judge, coach, and friend at the same time.
- **Defining Performance:** performance is difficult to define. Especially for jobs that do not produce a physical product. Managers lead, engineers create new ideas, and trainers present information. Disagreement concerning how to evaluate
- **Halo/Horn effect:** Sometimes one characteristic about a person can influence all other attitudes about that person. Halo/Horn effect refers to the influence that positive/negative perception has in creating a generalized positive/negative evaluation
- **Leniency-strictness effect:** Some evaluators are lenient while others are very strict. Thus creating a leniency-strictness effect.
- **Central-tendency effect:** Some evaluators give average ratings to avoid "sticking their necks out" by identifying marginal or outstanding performance.
- **Inter-rater reliability:** Two evaluators observing the same behavior may disagree and give different evaluations. As a result of low inter-rater reliability employees can argue that their performance was not poor as another evaluator might have given them a better evaluation
- **Sequencing effect or contrast error:** The evaluation of one individual's performance may be influenced by the relative performance evaluation of the preceding individual, creating what is called a sequencing effect or contrast error.
- **Zero-sum problem:** In some performance appraisal systems the number of above average ratings has to be balanced by an equal number of below average ratings. Such systems create a zero-sum problem, since some individuals are forced to receive low ratings in spite of how they performed.
- **Numbers fetish:** An excessive focus by some evaluators is placed on numbers (numbers fetish) these people place too much faith in numbers

- **Recency effect:** Recent events tend to have an unusually strong influence on performance evaluation. Because of the recency effect and individuals performance for the whole year may be ignored as a result of one negative incident occurring recently
- **Biased subjective evaluations:** Some evaluations are largely subjective and rest entirely on the impressions of supervisors. Studies have been conducted. Supervisors tend to favor people who are similar to them. They tried to introduce object evaluations by creating guidelines but they were just as discriminatory as subjective evaluations.\

All of these criticisms represent legitimate problems that need to be addressed. But most importantly they need to be treated as problems that can be solved not ones that are impossible

Illustration of a forced-choice evaluation process

Limited foresight Can't Deal with uncertainty	Sometimes pompous or overly formal Uncomfortable with people he/she doesn't know	Incisive Thinker Experienced in chosen field
Needs supervision on most job assignments Does not provide job guidance to subordinates	Needs careful supervision Manages own people ineffectively	Anticipates problems Followers up on job as needed
Works at a slow pace unimaginative	Respected by most who know him/her Technically competent	Effectively does many assignments at once A steady influence

The more we communicate the less we communicate

- The notion that people need to communicate more is the most widely accepted idea in management.
- People need to communicate but most companies over communicate. We seem to believe everybody should be in on everything
- The experiment that put the lie to that belief was conducted by Alex Bavelas
- Line and Circle experiment
- Divided participants into two groups one where management was top down from central person and one where it was in circle participative management
- Both groups given same problem to solve from a box of marbles of solid colors identify marble which is most common the line group did much better
- When the problem was changed and marbles were mottled the circle group adapted and did better
- These findings have been used to support participative management for years. However people don't that when all lines of communication were open the problem solving capacity of the group diminished

- There is always an optimum level of communication
- Complete communication can be quite boring
- **A formula for tedium**
- In one exercise to demonstrate the difficulty and importance of achieving accurate communication participants are not allowed to speak unless they satisfy the previous speaker that his or her remarks were understood
- This is by done by repeating the previous message in one's own words and obtaining agreement that the summation was accurate
- This agreement is quite hard to get. Eventually participants learn the importance of careful listening
- This experiment starts to wear on participants in a few minutes. Participants get bored. Accurate communication becomes tedious
- Accurate information is only a small part of the role communication plays in our lives
- **Power Problems in disguise**
- Many supposed communication problems are balance of power problems.
- Introducing open communication in such a place can increase power of the powerful and reduce power of the powerless. It can actually worsen matters
- True in marriages and in boss employee relations (can get fired for speaking up)
- **Enough Already**
- Organizations that think open communication is key are in for a surprise.
- In a research project conducted at west behavioral sciences institute we set up an information center that employees could use to answer questions.
- However the more the popularity of the center grew the more nervous management became.
- They were scared that the chain of command was being circumvented. That non work related questions were being asked, and that the company couldn't handle such an active service
- When calls reached several hundred a day the center was discontinued. This suggests that open communication may be less important to the management then other organizational concerns
- **Data don't matter**
- Most executives don't use computers that connect to company management information
- Why are they computer naive?
- Most likely the computers don't give them what they want
- These systems gather mountains of info and ignore the needs of executive in favor of what others think executives want
- Executives want qualitative information not quantitative which is why they value meetings, memos and stuff over data. They need interpretations and opinions that has been massaged
- Unless management data is changed to what the executives want they won't find much use of computers.

Lost Causes are the only ones worth fighting for

- In “Mr Smith Goes to Washington” James Stewart plays a young man just elected to the U.S Senate. Before leaving for Washington he is encouraged by his father, who offers this paradoxical advice “Lost causes are the only ones worth fighting for”
- They are the ones most worth fighting for because they tend to be the most important ones. They require us to live up to the best that is in us, to perfect ourselves and our world. Lost causes can’t be won but they are crucial so we must try
- On several occasions while consulting with organizations, I have asked groups if they could identify “lost causes” in their work, goals that they were pretty sure they could not reach. Each time I was surprised to find how easy it was to elicit a response. Instead of being discouraged about recalling past problems group members felt relieved, often they would break up in laughter as they recalled problems that had taken so much of their time
- Even surprising was that identifying lost causes did not lead to abandoning them. Instead members of the group would share a realistic appraisal that their expectations could not be met, and then set about working on them anyway. They did this because the problems even though were impossible meant the most to them
- When I recognize how impossible my task is, I can move on ahead with the hope that things might change. The absurd lesson is to recognize that it is a lost cause and work on it anyway. Working with an arrogant doesn’t help
- **Valley of the absurd**
- A senior scientist at a well known agricultural university explained that the people in his organization sell ideas to the industry and government and it is his job to see if these ideas can work. The ideas are very absurd but instead of throwing up his hands he copes with the feeling that the idea is absurd and acts anyway going on ahead as if each were possible
- In his words he descends into the valley of absurdity till he reaches the peaceful valley floor from where he can about effectively. When it is time to leave, he climbs back up returning to his regular life, ready to work on what he considered originally absurd
- To put in my own words I would say that he:
 - a. Allowed the enormity of the situation to wash over him in all its irrationality
 - b. Embraced the absurdity even though he could not fully comprehend it.
 - c. Fallen prostrate before its overwhelming complexity, giving up before he starts
 - d. Then calling upon the deep reservoir of will, discipline, creativity, and whatnot, picked himself up and started anyway, still respectful, of the fundamental absurdity that he first recognized
- **Leaving Rake Marks**
- If the most important goals are lost causes then why do we keep playing this absurd game. We play it because it is a game worth playing and worth playing well
- I was consulting with a large government organization that manages parks. The men cleaning the campground were complaining to me that they not only had to pick up under the picnic tables which they were quite willing to do but were told to rak under the table as well.

- It seemed absurd to rake an area that is already picked. Why would supervisors want them to leave rake marks
- I started to think to myself why are rake marks so important
- Since then Leaving rake marks has become an important metaphor to me. It concerns going beyond the necessary to the desirable, beyond what is required to what is elegant, beyond the purely functional to the aesthetic.
- Maybe it is a key to managers to fight for lost causes, and at the same time keep doing important tasks well (leaving rake marks) . Maybe this unimportant task in some indirect way helps people to be better and happier. Maybe it can even help yourself

It's not One or the Other, It's Both

- Robert Blae and Jane Mouton Developed a powerful model for management called “The Managerial Grid” The basic lesson for managers was simple; you can't be just task oriented (oriented to only getting results) and you can't be just people focused (being interested in only developing your staff) It must be both
- This doesn't mean comprising one for the other or a little of each. It means being fully committed to both.
- This was rediscovered and elaborated by Collins and Porras in their book Built to Last They call it “avoiding the tyranny of the OR and embracing the Genius of the AND”. As they point out it is not about balance, balance implies going to the midpoint, fifty fifty, a visionary company does not seek balance between idealism and profitability. It seeks to be highly idealistic and highly profitable.
- The book shows that succeeding in business is not about excellence at pleasing clients or excellence at exciting employees. It is not a tradeoff. The very way that you excel at pleasing clients is to excel at exciting your people. Not one or the other, not even a little of each you have to be superb at both. Done right these things move together not in opposition to each other.
- Task focus goes hand in hand at great firms with a people focus.
- **Reinforcing (not Opposing) forces:**
- Caring about clients AND caring about employees, Task focus AND people focus, Business development AND people development, Tough AND Tender, Being demanding AND Being Supportive, Making money AND Having fun, Work hard AND Play hard, Financial rewards AND Psychological rewards, Being a manager AND Being a human being, Treating people as employees AND Treating people as human beings, Deciding with the head AND Deciding with the heart, Informing AND Listening, Taking care of today AND Building for the future, Autonomy AND Teamwork, Passion AND Compassion, Having the good idea AND Having the guts to stick with them.
- We know from previous chapters that people development is business development. The way to grow a business is to develop your people, energize and excite them and focus on winning.
- So, how do you grow people?
- Employ basic elements of coaching, be supportive and demanding, you work hard and play hard

- Reinforcing forces can be used as a powerful diagnostic tool. Ask yourself, or your people how well you are doing at each of those things, remember it is not about balance between a pair but about being superb at both.