



The Aware Leader

覺醒 Richard Metheny & Associates LLC

From the desk of Richard Metheny

Welcome to the first edition of The Aware Leader. The Aware Leader newsletters are dedicated to helping leaders become more self aware in a way that they may become even more effective. The content of the newsletters will focus on seven areas: consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, and citizenship. It is my hope that you gain insights from this newsletter that you can move to action. Why?



Sun Tzu in The Art of War said it best: *"So it is said that if you know others and know yourself, you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles; if you do not know others but know yourself, you will win one and lose one; if you do not know others, and do not know your self, you will be imperiled in every single battle."*

My 15 years as a human resource practitioner, coach to business leaders and observer has taught me that a large number of leaders have a limited set of leadership actions and become effective only when conditions match their one dimensional set of actions.

To compound this challenge they lack the self-awareness to understand this dilemma or when faced with the information they deny the feedback, avoid changing, and continue the same behaviors.

Paul Wieand, founder of the Center for Advanced Emotional Intelligence, states, *"In a time when change is the only constant a leader's self-concept can't remain fixed. Leaders have to be willing to listen and to learn from feedback, or they -- and their company -- won't grow¹."*

My guess is that you are currently a successful leader. Remember that the best athletes, actors, and singers all have coaches so that they stay on top.

If this newsletter gives you one nugget of information that helps you stay on top or continue your rise then we have met our objective.

ENJOY! .

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"We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark. The real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light."

Plato



Focus Area of the Month: *Consciousness of Self, Part I*

A series of studies was done in the 80's and 90's at the Center for Creative Leadership on derailed executives². These were executives who had success in the past but ultimately had to leave the organization involuntarily or had plateaued; they could no longer advance. The four main findings about the derailed executives are:

1. The executives had problems with interpersonal relationships
2. They had an inability to adapt to change
3. They were too ambitious at the expense of others
4. They had an inability to work with teams

It is my belief that these executives were unaware or avoided dealing with the personal areas of growth necessary to continue their previous successes. They stopped growing as leaders. The

journey of leadership is continuous and it requires us to hone the essential qualities and skills of leadership. A summary of leadership research³ indicates that effective leaders possess a number of qualities and skills:

1. High energy level and stress tolerance - have vitality and resilience
2. Self-confidence - self-esteem, are optimistic and persistent

3. Internal locus of control orientation - a belief that events in their lives are determined more by their own actions than by chance or uncontrollable forces
4. Emotional maturity - self-awareness, self-control, not self-centered, less defensive, oriented towards self-improvement
5. Personal integrity - behavior consistent with espoused values, honest, ethical, and trustworthy

Socialized power motivation - motivated to satisfy the need for power in socially acceptable ways, such as influencing others to accomplish a worthy cause or helping others to develop their skills and confidence

Research also suggests that effective leaders focus on their personal power to influence others more than their position power. Position power is based on the formal position that one holds. Personal power is based upon one's relationship with others.

Most leaders are made, not born. Leadership is a process, not a product. As former President Dwight D. Eisenhower told his son, "The one quality that can develop by studious reflection and practice is the leadership of men." Not only is successful leadership attainable, but attainment involves an exciting process of inner growth."

*"Know thyself,
presume not God to scan;
the proper study of mankind is man."*

Alexander Pope in his essay on man





Recommended Self Awareness Activities: *The Art of Noticing*

The preponderance of evidence should challenge us to ask, “how well do we know ourselves?” Improving who we are as leaders, parents, friends...human beings... requires awareness, curiosity, focus and initiative. The first trait essential to this journey is awareness of yourself and external circumstances. This requires the ability to observe around us and within us and recognize, i.e. identify, those things that are relevant to our immediate needs. It requires us to develop the cognitive ability of Noticing. We can sharpen this capability through mental exercises. Start noticing the self that you take for granted -your breathing, movement, what you feel and need? Observe without judgment. Practice self-awareness a few times a day; soon it will come without effort.

Once you're cultivating self-awareness, apply these skills outside yourself. Be fully present in the moment. Living in the present moment is the full awareness and appreciation of the life we have, right here and right now. Present moment awareness is being aware of what is happening in our self and our world instead of being lost in random fears from the past and uncertainties, hopes, and expectations for the future.

Another mental exercise aimed at developing noticing is repetitive observation and recall. Think about a street you regularly go down. Try to write down everything you can remember about this street. You may discover that despite the number of times that you have passed down this street, you can't remember exactly where the Seven Eleven is located, or what's on the corner. Go to the street and write down everything you see. Write a detailed map and remember it. A few days later repeat this exercise. If you make many mistakes, go back to the street again, and as many times as it takes to get it right. Don't let yourself off the hook. You're telling yourself that noticing is important. Your assignment this month is to become a “noticer.”

Noticing is the first step in building deep knowledge, developing a thorough understanding and awareness of those areas that can help you be even more effective as a leader.



*The range of what
we see and do
is limited by what
we fail to notice.*

*And because we fail to
notice,
there is little we can do
to change until we notice
how failing to notice
shapes our thoughts and
deeds.*

By R.D. Laing



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& Associates LLC**

Executive coaching
Team coaching
Organizational coaching

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Our business goal is
to assist individuals and organizations in becoming more
aware about how they lead so that they may achieve
greater results.

Visit our website
<http://www.theawareleader.com>
to find out more about how you can become
an aware leader.

Sign up for our monthly newsletter online.



Recommended Reading:

Self Awareness

Introduction To TYPE

>Isabel Briggs Myers (Myers Briggs Type Indicator)

Finding Your Own North Star: Claiming the life you were meant to live

>Martha Beck

Noticing

For Art Lovers: Learning To Look At Modern Art

>Mary Acton

On Seeing and Noticing

>Alain de Botton

References:

1. Pamela Kruger, A Leader's Journey, Fast Company, June 1999
2. Leslie and Van Velsor, A Look at Derailment Today : North America and Europe, CCL, 1996
3. Gary Yuki, Leadership in Organization, 1998