



We Don't See Things As They Are, We See Them As We Are.

There is seldom such a thing as an absolute truth. Everything we see and hear causes us to come to a conclusion about what we have seen or heard based upon our own experiences up to that point. A magician will deliberately use our way of perceiving things to suggest that something impossible has just taken place, and therefore entertain us. A man boarded a tube train with three children and sat in the corner seat while the children started playing loudly and running up and down the carriage. After several stops the other passengers were becoming increasingly annoyed and one of them eventually spoke to the man, asking why he didn't keep his children under control. The man raised his head slowly and looking over to where his children were playing apologised to the other passenger saying he had not really been thinking about the children, he had just come from the hospital where his wife had, after a short illness, died, that morning.

The passenger had failed to see things as they were because his own perception had only included the children, not the grieving father.

At work the same thing is true. People will make assumptions about others or about situations based on a perception that has been created in the past and has no relevance to the current situation.

When these assumptions are used the outcome can never be what was expected because the original premise was wrong.

The following are two lists.

The first was created by North American Middle Managers in response to a survey that asked them what were the ten most important things to their employees.

The second list was created by the employees answering the same question.

- 1 - Salary
- 2 - Bonuses
- 3 - Vacation
- 4 - Retirement
- 5 - Other Benefits & Perks
- the money line -----
- 6 - Interesting work
- 7 - Involved in decisions
- 8 - Feedback
- 9 - Training
- 10 - Respect

Note:

Managers rank money items as their employees' Top Five Motivators. When employees are asked to rank their own Top Ten Motivators the list looks like:

- 1 - Interesting work
- 2 - Involved in decisions
- 3 - Feedback
- 4 - Training
- 5 - Respect
- the money line -----
- 6 - Salary
- 7 - Bonuses
- 8 - Vacation
- 9 - Retirement
- 10 - Other Benefits & Perks

In this instance the managers demonstrate their failure to appreciate what is important to the workforce. This means that whatever they do it will be the wrong thing because they do not understand what it is the workforce need,

The managers are not at fault for their attitudes. Their attitudes have been created for them by the environment in which they live and work.

Ultimately we need to change the attitude of the managers.

We are not trying to suggest that we can change what they believe is important, simply allow them to understand that there is a difference between the way they think and the way their workforce thinks.

Having done this it is a small step to the solution that allows the manager to continue to manage. When the manager understands that this difference exists and therefore that the basis for all of his decisions is flawed he comes to understand that the only way that he can support his staff is to ask them what they think is important.

This strategy has two effects. One is that the manager will find out practically what his workforce really needs.

The second is that by asking the workforce for their ideas and acting on them the Manager begins to include the workforce, to allow them to participate and therefore begin to take ownership.

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