



talking about...

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... **designing better relationships for better outcomes**

A newsletter for those interested in ontological coaching

Leadership Becoming

"Character matters; leadership descends from character."

... **Rush Limbaugh**

A vast amount of money is spent each year around the world to train organisational leaders. There has also been a great deal written about how to be a great leader. Indeed, if you go into any major bookstore you will find hundreds of books on leadership. People obviously buy these books in large numbers. This leads us to the conclusion that being a good leader is important to many people.

In some ways the money that has been spent to learn leadership has been well spent. Go into most large organisations and talk to the organisational leaders about leadership and you will hear what they have learnt in those programs and books. However, if you observe leadership in action you will often reach a different conclusion. Even though many leaders can talk leadership, they cannot or do not translate it in everyday ways of leading. Why is this?

In large part, it can be put down to the leaders' ways of being and observing. In other words, they may have intellectually learnt the skills of leadership, but they do not see situations in a way that would have them employ those skills. For example, many organisational leaders see the people who work for the organisation as a resource. At some level, this way of thinking can be seen in the well-used term "human resources". As a resource, the person has value as long as they are useful to the organisation. In this way of thinking, people fit in some way into a similar mould as all other resources – computers, cars and so on. When we think about resources, we think about how we can control and get the most out of them. Hence a leader with such a view will at some level seek to control and use the people who work in their organisation for their own ends. Yet most, if not all, leadership texts would tell us that leaders should empower and bring out the best in their employees for shared goals. When we seek to control people, we disempower them. This creates a situation where the learnt skills may be inconsistently applied leading to uncertain outcomes.

Good leadership is a practice not just a set of knowledge. To be more effective as leaders, individuals must develop their way of being and observing to a level that is congruent with the skills they have learnt. Learning leadership skills can provide a catalyst for a change in being, but this is generally not going to generate such a shift. Changes in an individual's way of being are not found in

training programs. They occur when an individual cannot find answers to life's problems through their current way of observing to the point that they must change. A new way of being is more often found through personal inquiry into self. It is the journey of a lifetime.

"Example is leadership."

... **Albert Schweitzer (1875 - 1965)**
French theologian, musician,
medical missionary

The Witch ...

This one was sent to us by a friend. We don't know its origin but we liked the moral.

Young King Arthur was ambushed and imprisoned by the monarch of a neighboring kingdom. The monarch could have killed him but was moved by Arthur's youth and ideals. So, the monarch offered him his freedom, as long as he could answer a very difficult question. Arthur would have a year to figure out the answer and, if after a year, he still had no answer, he would be put to death. The question? What do women really want?

Such a question would perplex even the most knowledgeable man, and to young Arthur, it

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seemed an impossible query. But, since it was better than death, he accepted the monarch's proposition to have an answer by year's end. He returned to his kingdom and began to poll everyone: the princess, the priests, the wise men and even the court jester, but no one could give him a satisfactory answer. Many people advised him to consult the old witch, for only she would have the answer. But the price would be high; as the witch was famous throughout the kingdom for the exorbitant prices she charged for her wisdom.

The last day of the year arrived and Arthur had no choice but to talk to the witch. She agreed to answer the question, but he would have to agree to her price first. The old witch wanted to marry Sir Lancelot, the most noble of the Knights of the Round Table and Arthur's closest friend! Young Arthur was horrified. She was hunchbacked and hideous, had only one tooth, smelled like sewage, made obscene noises, etc. He had never encountered such a repugnant creature in all his life. He refused to force his friend to marry her and endure such a terrible burden, but Lancelot, learning of the proposal, spoke with Arthur. He said nothing was too big of a sacrifice compared to Arthur's life and the preservation of the Round Table.

A wedding was proclaimed and the witch answered Arthur's question. "What a woman really wants is to be in charge of her own life." Everyone in the kingdom instantly knew that the witch had uttered a great truth and that Arthur's life would be spared.

And so it was, the neighboring monarch granted Arthur his freedom and Lancelot and the witch had a wonderful wedding. The honeymoon hour approached and Lancelot, steeling himself for a horrific experience, entered the bedroom. But, what a sight awaited him. The most beautiful woman he had ever seen lay before him on the bed.

The astounded Lancelot asked what had happened. The beauty replied that since he had been so kind to her when she appeared as a witch, she would henceforth, be her horrible deformed self only half the time and the beautiful maiden the other half. Would he prefer that she be beautiful during the day or night? Lancelot pondered the predicament. Would he prefer a beautiful woman during the day so that he might show her off to his friends, or at night, where he might enjoy her beauty in the privacy of his castle?

What would YOU do?

Noble Lancelot, knowing the answer the witch gave Arthur to his question, said that he would allow HER to make the choice herself. Upon hearing this, she announced that she would be beautiful all the time because he had respected her enough to let her be in charge of her own life.

Now what is the moral to this story? If you don't listen and learn, things are going to get ugly!

"Genius is divine perseverance. Genius I cannot claim nor even extra brightness but perseverance all can have."

... Woodrow Wilson (1856 - 1924) US president, political scientist, educator

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