



Notes From Under the Prairie Sky

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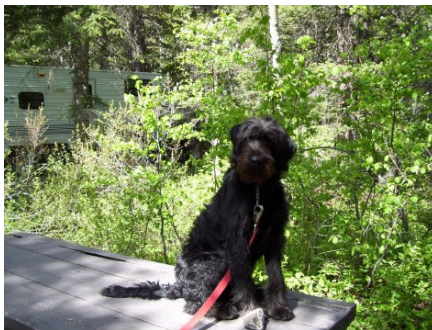


Leadership versus management: Is there a difference and what is it?

When I was getting my Masters degree at the University of San Francisco we learned something that has been central to my work since and that was "the difference between managing and leading". I have found since that many authors and theorists have their own ideas about the difference and they vary widely but to me this one made sense and I have tried to keep it in mind in all of my work since.

The difference is that you manage systems and processes but you lead people. Think about leading by example or following a leader. That does not happen with a manager. Also think about how leadership is all about how you listen and how you set your intention for the interaction. Leadership is all about people development where management is all about having the right systems in place for people to work within. The problems that occur in organizations typically are 80% management problems and 20% leadership problems. That is not to say 80% of the leaders are good leaders but it does point to the fact that a lack of good policies and processes cause the majority of problems. You may have a good policy but the process does not fit the policy. If you have a good leader and poor practice the organization will work fine for awhile as people believe in their leader despite poor processes and follow through. If you have fair practices that work people will put up with poor leadership for quite awhile as their day to day work is not really affected.

This week on the news there has been a great deal



Skidoodle at the Lake

If you are receiving this e-zine it is because you are a leader in a not for

profit organization or because you said you would like to receive it.

My purpose in sending this to you is to provide some information you might find useful or thought provoking in your leadership role or in your life.

All of my e-zines connect loosely so you may want to go back and read the earlier editions. They are available at my web site under e-zines.

I am not very proficient at this yet so if you have ideas for improvement or suggestions for topics just send me an e-mail.

For those of you who do not know who I am please have a look at my website at www.prairieskyexecutivecoaching.com

If you think you might want to know me better or might be interested in having me as your personal coach just send me an e-mail or call 406-781-2485.

Remember, your first two sessions are free and then it is up to you whether we continue.

My rates are geared to the non profit sector so they are reasonable.

My mission is to support passionate women in leadership positions however, if you happen to be a man and want to give it a try let me know.

I hope each of you will forward this e-zine to anyone you think would find it interesting.

of attention given to the most annoying things in the workplace. One of the top five consistently is food. The fridge is full of unidentified food; something smells awful and I am sure it belongs to "john" and he does nothing about it; the lunch room smells like some kind of spice I don't like; something exploded in the microwave and no one cleaned it up; Sara leaves food all over her desk and I don't like to see days old food and besides it is not healthy for the rest of us; someone is helping themselves to my...I seem to remember it was all about who made coffee and who washed the cups. Times have changed but has the issue.

Is this about management or about lack of good leadership. Can you imagine John thinking "I might have left something in the fridge but I don't recall it and it is not my job to clean the fridge, I have more important things to do". Who is supposed to fix this and how long do we go on allowing what ever is going on in the kitchen to irritate us and why does it. I have a clear recollection from about 20 years ago when a bookkeeper said to me (I was the Executive Director at the time) "you never make the coffee do you think you are better than the rest of us". I was stunned. I knew coffee was there most of the time and on occasion I would have a cup. I didn't really know who bought it or made it and I didn't really know how to make it. She also accused me of using the last of the sugar and not replacing it. I thought "did I do that". I may have, if there is sugar sometimes I have some and if there is none I don't have sugar. I never thought about it. After that when I realized what an awful role model I was being I learned to make the coffee and sometimes I would make it if I was the first one in. I never got very good at it and I would think to myself why I am I making this coffee when I am not the one who drinks it. What I came to realize is that we had no real system to make sure there was coffee and that it was made the right way by the right person. Some people were just more generous than others or they really wanted a good cup of coffee so made sure we had the ingredients and made it when necessary. So, is this a management problem or a leadership issue or is it both. First it is a management problem because the system such as it was did not work. It did not seem fair and was not fair. It was also a leadership issue as the supposed leader of the organization didn't even recognize there was a need for a system and assumed there would always be coffee.

In your organization there are managers and there are leaders and often they are the same person at different times and in different circumstances. Yesterday I got a new definition into my e-mail box and it stated managing is the doing and leading is developing people. It comes close. A manager makes sure there is a process and that it is followed and that it is fair to everyone. A leader makes sure that the manager has what she needs to manage the system. It could be knowledge, experience, mentorship, money or clear policy. As I read that much of the frustration and irritation

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people have at their workplace is often about the kitchen and how it is managed I really began to think about the system that may or may not be in place and whose job is it anyway to fix it. This is one of those things where the kitchen skills are not evaluated upon hiring and we often find that clean to one person is positively filthy to the next. Is it someone's Job to manage quality control around kitchen cleanliness. Is it everyone's job to pitch in on a regular basis? In my mind the kitchen is all about management. There must be a system and it must be seen to be fair to all employees. This is also one of those systems in an organization where everyone shares in the use of the system and has a stake in having it work well. The way I see it the leadership in this instance comes from the person who engages people in an examination of how the system could work better, how to get there and development of an accountability framework so it doesn't slide back to the old ways over the next few months. The management then creates the system and measures how it is working. Does this make sense to you?

Leadership creates the system, which may not be the paid leader but someone who comes forward and who people cede the position to. Once the system is set up it must be managed whether or not that title is applied. If John leaves things in the fridge he must understand there are consequences and he must perceive the system to be fair to him. If the system is working well he will know exactly what to expect and will live with the result. If John doesn't understand the system is it because he hasn't been informed or because he chooses to defy the system. If the system has not been widely understood and used there is a management issue. If John thinks he is above policy it becomes a leadership issue.

As usual there is a bit of gray most of the time but I found managing systems and leading people to be a good place to stand. I hope this is helpful to you as you lead and manage within your organization.

I am off to India with my daughter today for a three week trip of a life time. I hope to come back with new wisdom and understanding of people and our wonderful planet.

*Choosing joy for each of you on
your path,*

Gail