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A Startling Observation About Leadership Revealed

A little while ago I attended a “town hall” meeting of a group to which I have been a member and one-time leader for well over a decade. At this meeting of about 200 people, I experienced a **phenomenon that may have always been there**. Let me explain.

There are members who feel comfortable in criticizing the leadership, the direction and other parts of the organization. They are vocal in their criticism, **sometimes sparking controversy** and sometimes adding fuel to fires already lit. But, often, when they become titled leaders of the overarching organization of the group, something changes within them, something that they are not aware of .

Suddenly, as if a switch has been activated within them, their criticism transforms into a call for peace and understanding, for tolerance and respect. **Those who criticized, now call for an end to “negativity”**, the same negativity they had sparked or fueled, themselves, at one time.

Until recently I had not noticed anything askew about this change. But, for some reason, I now focused my attention on a question. I asked myself: **“Why, as leaders, do we shut down criticism, when as followers we initiate or support criticism?”** As leaders we tend to seek harmony while as followers we tend to seek a voice. But so often, neither listens to the other. Each merely wants to shut the other down.

I find it interesting that we cannot look at both **criticism and the role of “leadership” as being two sides of the same coin**. Neither are inherently “better.” **Neither are inherently “right.”** I believe voices want to convey something even if their expression, or the words themselves, seem divisive. Leaders are not necessarily parents or moral authorities but can think they are, because they have been given implicit responsibilities or titles.

How do you view criticism? Do you try to shut it down? Do you tolerate it? Do you know how to speak to it, so it feels heard, while still maintaining your center? How do you view leadership? Does it have an implicit authority that overrules a “voice?” **How do you build a bridge to listening and collaboration** when criticism and harmony live together?

Life is so much brighter when we focus on what truly matters...



We have heard the phrase *“live each day like it’s your last”*. We updated it to *“live each day like it’s your best”*.



This Month’s Offer:

For those of you in the Money Focus programs, we will provide an extra 20 minute call with Bhaj for a question or concern you might have about building your own significance.

This is in addition to your regular April call with Bhaj

Contact grace@focusandsustain.com to take advantage of this exclusive offer.

This offer ends on April 24, 2018

April Fools

The BBC, in 1956, presented a prank documentary which *“featured a family in Switzerland carrying out their **annual spaghetti harvest...carefully plucking strands of spaghetti from a tree and laying them in the sun to dry.**”* The dupe worked as thousands called in asking how they could grow spaghetti trees.

April Fool’s day, one theory goes, **began in 1582 in France**. That year, the French adopted the Gregorian calendar which meant moving new year’s day from March 25 to January 1. Those continuing to celebrate the new year on March 25 were considered fools. The French also celebrated the Poisson d’Avril, April Fish, where they would pin a paper fish on a friend’s back, without their friend knowing.

In **1698**, Londoners were invited to the **“Washing of the Lions”** near the Tower of London. A big crowd gathered but found that **they were pranked**; no lions, no washing. But what makes it more perplexing is that **it continued into the 19th century** with some even selling tickets to this “event” by going through the verifiable “white gate” which also turned out to be non-existent.

IN 1998, Burger King announced, on April 1, that it would offer a **whopper for left-handers**. What’s the difference? **The toppings would all be rotated 180 degrees**. Apparently, Burger King was inundated with orders for the south-paw while others called in to make sure their burger would be oriented correctly. WOW?!

“You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have”

Bob Marley

Life Matters

Quick Tips



Money Focus

Habits, behaviors and discipline are key components to a healthy financial relationship.

As you review your money habits and behaviors this year, take the time to **celebrate a significant break-through** you have had in your spending habits.

It may be with your communication about money. It may be about staying within your budget. It may be your gaining control of a financial category that was challenging for you. **Celebrate your good habits to keep them going until they become natural.**

Life Focus

When communication matters, **active listening matters**. Our normal casual conversational style will not work. It will be ineffective.

Active listening is hearing what the speaker intends to say, rather than already thinking about what you want to say next as the other one is still speaking. It requires shutting off the pre-dispositioned mind. Active listening **requires asking clarifying questions**. It requires **letting the speaker make their point before making yours**.

Don't scramble your communication; pay attention and listen first. Trusting relationships depend on it.



Legacy Focus

Philanthropy is an activity that many families embrace as a **means to connect the family**. It is a powerful tool that can build synergy and understanding. When done as a family initiative, it can **build trust**, common values, and powerful communication.

Its power can add vibrancy to your family's rich story. Whether it is **with time or with money**, your power to influence and impact is just what an organization is waiting for. How will you design your family philanthropic initiatives?

Life Matters



N.Cog Wants to Know: “Was It Something I Said?”

I thought I would **learn a new skill** so I went to a music store in pursuit of an instrument to master. I looked at the violin but decided against it when one of the salespeople said **I looked more like the bow than a player**. I then turned to a guitar and decided with my already awesome looks, that I would make an instant guitar icon.

After I paid for the guitar I asked about lessons. The salesperson told me that the first five lessons were fifty dollars then ten dollars after that. I told him that the terms sounded fair and that **I would start with lesson six**.

He kicked me and my instrument out the door. What did I do wrong – was it something I said?