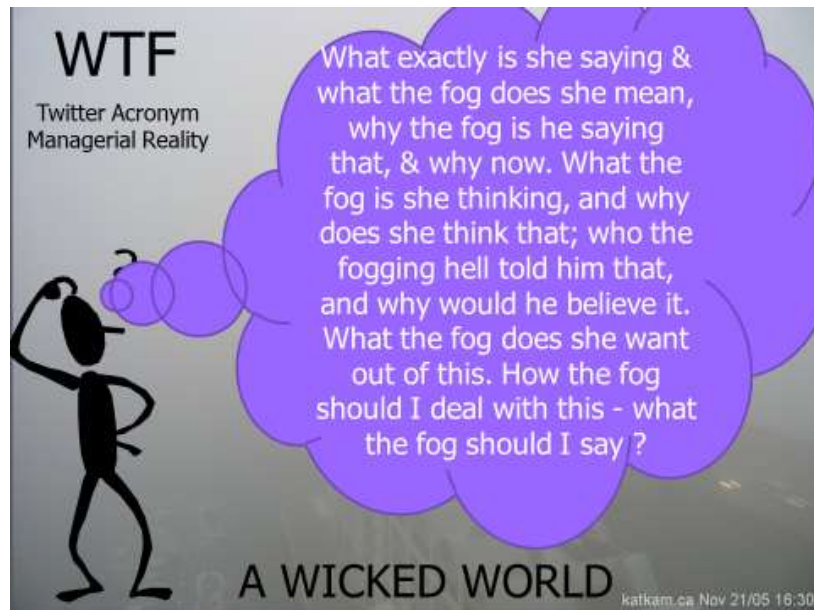


Disposition towards Others



The Mindful Manager's disposition towards others is, as are all her/his other dispositions, founded on reflexivity. The wise one strives for reflexivity as s/he understands that there is **no such thing as a view from nowhere**, and that there are many other 'somewheres' arrayed around the meeting table – that **many houses of habits, with many different windows on the world**, are engaged in our attempted dialogues. We must not unreflexively leap to assumptions about our partners in dialogue, about what they are saying, what they mean by it, or about why they are saying it – **we must hesitate, suspend judgement, and attempt a naked receptivity to what is being said**; no matter by whom.

The wise one is **mindful of the diversity of 'somewheres'** amongst her/his collaborators, and **curious** as to their detailed character. The mindful manager purposefully seeks to understand the habits of attention & interpretation of her/his interlocutors - s/he is **curious & inquisitive**, and demonstrates **manifest interest in the perspectives of others** and their origin. The mindful manager pursues an **enlarged mentality** – attempting to understand what shows up as mattering to others, and how it shows up to them. In pursuit of powerful productive dialogue s/he attempts to take a view from other 'somewheres', and to think representatively – **striving to attend & interpret as others do, and think the way they think**.

The Mindful Manager understands that the work of leading/managing is a work of governing, and that it involves the wicked world situated melding of divergent perspectives with regard to beginnings, ends & means in pursuit of a collective purpose within/for a community. S/he also understands that it requires, not only the melding of perspectives, but also **the melding of disparate interests**.

The wise one understands that organizations are a '**mess of vested interests**'. There are the vested interests of its individual participants, those of groups within it of one form or another, and those of all its other stakeholders - to have a stake in something is to have a vested interest in it. What is judged by some to be in the **best interests** of a collective may run counter to what certain of its stakeholders view as their own best interests – and what is in the best interests of one stakeholder may conflict with those of another – both of which may, or may not, run in contradiction to the best interests of the collective – whomsoever is the judge of that! It really is an 'interesting' mess with which the mindful manager has to deal – but deal with it s/he must – one must deal with the world as it is not as one might wish it to be.

In thinking representatively the wise one strives to 'see' the world as others do, and think the way they think, but is mindful of what might be in the best interests of her/his collaborators to 'see' when engaged in the making of judgements as to our[?] beginnings, ends & means. The wise one is mindful of motives.

The Mindful Manager understands that participants in an organization are simultaneously co-operators in a common endeavour, and rivals for the tangible and symbolic rewards of successful competition with each other. The hierarchy that prevails at any one time in an organisation is both a control system and a career ladder – and it is a triangular one – there is less space on the rungs at the top. Organizational participants are, as my old friend Professor Tony Watson says, "Clambering over each other to get on!" We are at one and the same time collaborators and competitors -the wise one is mindful that we operate in '**collaboratition**' not in simple collaboration. The wickedly equivocal & complicated context of collective endeavour exacerbates this situation as it is most often impossible to isolate the contribution of an individual to a particular outcome - good or bad. Credit can frequently be falsely captured, and blame unfairly deflected because of this loose connection.

It is somewhat paradoxical in this context that an organisation is a collaborative system grounded in trust. **Trust** enables the avoidance of the potentially paralyzing complexity of purposive collective endeavour. 'Trust' is the material from which organisations are made – trust that someone means what they say, and will do what they say they will do. As one of my students once said – **in organisations you are mad to trust anyone, but if you do not trust anyone, you will go mad!** In collective endeavour the judgements one makes as to whom and in what to trust are fundamental – **in whom & what to trust is your choice and choice of immense importance.** A Mindful Manager attempts to think representatively in all dimensions and explores the interests in play as well as the viewpoints propounded.

We do not live in a neutral world - it is a veritable forest of opinions, positions & interests. It is a world where interests are protected & pursued, and ideas, viewpoints & beliefs defended. An organization is a nexus of viewpoints and vested interests held together by trust –it really is a wicked world where judgement is key!

THE PARADOX OF TRUST

- ▶ You have to be mad to trust anyone
- ▶ **BUT**
- ▶ If you do not trust anyone you will go mad



Peter Lenney - Mindful Manager - Peter Lenney