

The Mindful Manager is a Wise One

A wise one does not simply act in habit or by rule but judges – s/he chooses to choose, even if their choice is to act in habit or by rule – the wise one takes responsibility and owns the choice.

Simply said – not simply done! We are both the beneficiaries & victims of our evolutionary psychology – we are seekers of familiarity and animals of habit. It is a facet of human behaviour that is accentuated [and exploited] by the enculturation-educational process that ensues immediately we enter the world of others. We become in a **great hurry to see what they expect us to see, and make the choices they expect.**

There is a well-worn English proverb that – ‘he who hesitates is lost’ –but it would seem that if we are to judge we must resist our inborn and infused proclivities and ‘**hesitate**’. A wise one must have a mind disciplined to this task.

Our tendency to jump to conclusions about what we should do/how we should act is seriously problematic, and our trait of leaping to assumptions about what faces us is fraught with danger. Our quick-fire jumping and leaping does not allow the world to speak to us, and reveal itself in all its possibilities. The disciplined mind of the Mindful Manager resists these acrobatic tendencies, hesitates, dwells, and gives itself a chance ‘to change its mind’– a wise one ‘has a certain form of disciplined engagement with the world’; **a reflexive, somehow hesitant, disposition that lets the particularities & distinctions of the pertaining circumstance reveal themselves, rather than only the seeming generalities that provoke a comfortable habitual response.**

In this disciplined engagement with the world **a wise one is mindful of the foundational character of the judgements we make in the crafting of the nexus of assumptions on which we base our judgements as to ends & means** – what we might usefully term the **construction of our beginnings**. Our beginnings being the foundational array of interconnected assumptions on which we base our choices. They include what are often uncritically labelled truths & facts - with this whole nexus of assumptions usually being mindlessly labelled as reality. The Mindful Manager winces when s/he hears the phrase – ‘the reality is.....’

A wise one understands the precarious character of the wicked world foundations of our choices of ends & means. S/he is also mindful that our **construed realities, our constructed beginnings** provide the **foundational legitimation of means and ends**, and that therefore, as Grint comments “*we should ... pay much more attention to the role of leaders ...in the construction of contexts that legitimate their intended or executed actions*” [2005 p1472]. **A wise one understands that truth & reality are not simple conceptions**, and that these labels should be used with great care.

A wise one is intrinsically ethical. S/he is receptive to the particularities of circumstances and engages, shaking off the shackles of habit & rule, to take responsibility and choose. **S/he owns the choice.**

The quality of ones ethics rests in the judgment of others, as to whether our judgments as to what ends-to-have/means-to-use were ‘good/bad’, and as to

whether you did the 'right/wrong' thing. This judging of what is '**good**'/'**bad**' and '**right**'/'**wrong**' is the fundamental judgement that we all can make – in choosing to choose it is the fundamental judgement that a wise one always confronts!

Practical Wisdom is the capacity Aristotle termed **Phronesis**. He saw it as the master virtue – the excellence in judgement that governs all the other virtues. Aristotle terms a wise one a **Phronimos**

'Nichomachean Ethics', the book in which Aristotle contends with this topic, can be seen as a preparatory text for proper engagement with the topic he covers in his later tome – 'The **Politics**'. It is clear that he sees practical wisdom as the essential capacity that enables the governing citizen to successfully deal with the intrinsically ethical choices in the wicked world with which they must contend.

The Mindful Manager understands that the work of **leading/managing is intrinsically political**, as it is a work of governing, and involves the wicked world situated melding & mobilising of **divergent perspectives & disparate interests** in pursuit of a collective purpose within/for a community. **It is for the political arena that Aristotle saw practical wisdom as the paramount virtue** –it is therefore its nexus of dispositions and capabilities that the Mindful Manager seeks to acquire.

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