

I Tot I Taw A Puddy Tat!

Hi, this is Elijah Lim, and to borrow from what Tweety the yellow bird said, "I tot I taw a puddy tat!" Now, we're quite familiar with that expression and what does that mean? Well, I'd like to discuss today something about what we see, how we interpret stuff, and what we understand by data that is presented to us. And first of all, we need to recognize that there are a few things about data, about information, about knowledge.

First is what we observe, or what I call facts. Facts are things like "What did you see?" "What did you say?" "What did HE say?" "How did it feel? What was the texture?" "What did it smell like?" "What did they do?" And more specifically "What did you SEE them doing?" You state the facts.

There's another level that is called interpretation. And interpretation is based on the facts, based on some assumptions that I have made, based on what I know is happening elsewhere, I interpret what I have seen, what I have heard, the texture that I feel, as meaning something. That's interpretation. And from the facts and the interpretation, we form a hypothesis, and then we go out, we do certain things to test whether or not that hypothesis works, whether the hypothesis is true.

Now, I would like to invite you to be very careful about how you handle your data, and how especially you present your data, because it's going to affect the decision-making process rather drastically.

One of my bosses used to tell us that we scare ourselves with data. One of his illustrations can be seen in the drawing that you see on the screen right now. It's a map of an area of operations, it shows enemy positions, it shows where our...the Blue forces are. Blue Force...the blue colour is meant usually to highlight where the good guys are, meaning us, and red of course are the bad guys, and you look at this map and you see up there...what those circles with two dots represent are actually what we call Sections, and the Section is essentially maybe ten, eleven men, and...he gave the illustration that we scare ourselves because we draw the Sections to be THAT big. Now if you look at the area that is depicted on the map, it's pretty impossible for ten or eleven men, or even twenty men, for that matter, to dominate an area that is THAT big. And...but the trouble is when we present the data in this fashion, somehow, because it's VISUAL, we get it into our minds that the whole area is crawling with enemy troops! And in actual fact, just by looking at the map and the scale, you would realize that it would be a very, very tough job for these guys to be all over the place, they have obviously have got to be concentrated in some area or other. But we scare ourselves when we look at depictions like these.

What do you scare yourself with in your business? How do you look at your data? How is data presented to you by your people who are in charge of getting the data? Because what you ask for, you're gonna get. And when you look at stuff, keep your eyes open, let your brain work and don't let the data fool you, data is supposed to serve you, but very often it can be a case of data misleading you, or rather, you allow yourself...we allow ourselves, to be misled by what is actually fact, but we see it as something else. So, before we draw conclusions from data that is presented to us, or even data that we ourselves have come up with, ask ourselves a couple of questions. Is the data complete? What is it really showing us? What are the numbers...what is

the graph really telling us? And what is it NOT telling us? What else is missing? What else should be there? And once we have that mindset and we ask those questions, we can be pretty sure that the data is going to serve us well. Because otherwise we would be running around in circles like a headless chook exclaiming "I tot I taw a puddy tat!" Thanks for watching, and have a nice day!