Fear. The Dark Room where Negatives are Developed?

FEAR

The Dark Room where Negatives are Developed

This saying is bandied about by gurus and repeated, mantra-like, by the faithful. A related saying is "No Fear", which is actually another way of saying "No Respect." We are constantly bombarded with messages telling us that FEAR is "**F**alse **E**vidence **A**ppearing **R**eal", "**F**ace **E**verything **A**nd **R**ise" and "**F**orget **E**verything **A**nd **R**un". These messages seem to be saying that we can and should conquer our fears, that if we would only face our fears, we would rise above them and achieve all that we set our minds to accomplish. That is one reason why we must use quotations judiciously. Our minds tend to be lulled into thinking that the quotes are all there is. Seldom do we haul our lazy selves off our haunches and get down to finding out what the story behind any particular quote happens to be.

Some fear is actually good for us. It helps to keep us alive. Other fears are detrimental in the sense that they keep us back from being and doing all that we were designed to be and to do. Whatever fears we have, healthy or unhealthy, in keeping with the quote, when negatives are developed, we get pictures. We get photographs. What photographs we get depends on what light was absorbed by the film we call the negatives. If we have taken pictures of sad, angry, grotesque or horrible scenes, we will get photographs showing what we have pointed our cameras at. If we choose to take pictures of positive, joyful and inspiring scenes, we will get positive, joyful and inspiring photographs. Fear is not about negatives being developed in a dark room, it is about what we choose to focus on. So is boldness. We become bold when we choose to focus on thinking, saying and doing what is true, right and just.

There is a dangerous fallacy encouraging leaders to simply squash their fears and put it behind them, as though those fears would simply disappear. No, the fears do not disappear. They will remain until you have resolved the issues that caused those fears to arise. What does happen is that when you focus on achieving positive, future-focused goals in your life and take the first steps to achieving them, you find that you start to soar above your fears. That doesn't mean they have gone away! If you are flying around happily in the sky, your unresolved fears will be tracking you and they will shoot you down at the first opportunity they get! What you need to do is once you are in flight, take a bit of time to locate and destroy those fears. Recognize, though, that even as you take them out one by one, your fears have a very strong capability of being replaced, rearmed and even reinforced with more sophisticated fears. You don't have to spend too much time worrying about them, but take them out you must, one way or another. Simply ignoring them is foolhardiness that you cannot afford.

The two main motivating forces for humans are the fear of loss and the desire for gain. These ought to be had in balance, and that is not a simple matter of maintaining a fifty-fifty ratio. As long as we are in this world, we need to recognize our fears and use them to urge us toward nobler and worthier goals. Shame, which is the fear of loss of approval and admiration, coupled with the undesirability of feelings of guilt, can be a powerful force used to increase our desire for consistently

increased uprightness in our conduct, which means that we need to discipline ourselves and our thought patterns to form healthy habits which would support us in our growth. The abomination called the "politically-correct" would stir a great hue and cry over this, of course, trying to get us to believe that shame is harmful to a person's development and similar tripe. No, shame hurts our ego, and the ego is the part of us that recovers most easily and rapidly! However, shame is very useful in propelling us towards being more transparent and achieving greater congruence between our head and our heart. We will still wish to avoid the sting of shame for ourselves, of course, but that should not deter us from using shame to help others stay focused on growing themselves right.

This is one reason why excessive attention to "positive affirmations" can actually be harmful. Positive affirmations are great! I use them on myself and on others too! Just be careful that you do not end up indulging yourself in wishful thinking, in flights of fancy. It is fallacious to be declaring to yourself and to others that you are having a wonderful life, that you are a great and fabulous person to know and to be with while knowing that the reality is totally different. What needs to be done is for you to craft a game plan that is able to bring you there, and that you must have help from others in order to achieve that reality. It is fallacious to be "looking for the good in everything you see" when it becomes clear that there is absolutely nothing good in that area of your life. Clean up your act and move on!

This is why I so appreciate frameworks like the Full Range Model of Transformational Leadership. It seeks to move leaders toward Transformational Leadership Behaviours, and it also discusses the effects of negative behaviours which it recognizes we all, including even the best leaders, have from time to time.

Do not fear your fears. Do not ignore them, thinking they will go away. Do not simply focus on positives, thinking that the positives will cause them to vanish. Focus on the positives, have a great game plan that you know will work, and come back to deal with those negative fears often enough that they start to appear less and less often.