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# CQI Learning Lunch

## How to Tell The Emperor He Has No Clothes - *Discussing the “Undiscussable”*

Host - Robin Cleveland  
517-381-5330

April 25th, 2011  
10:30 AM to 1:00 PM

*University Club of Michigan State*  
3435 Forest Road, Lansing, MI 48909  
517-353-5111

# Organizational Defenses - Obstacles

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## THE OBSTACLES -

- **Skilled Incompetence and Managerial Malpractice**
  - Change We Do Not Acknowledge
    - External Environment Always Changes While We Implement Solutions
    - Internal Environment (People, Culture, Brand, Performance) Always Change
  - Single Loop Learning
    - Blaming “the People”, not self
  - Organizational Inertia
    - Myth of the management “Team”
  - Faulty Inference From Data
    - Wrong conclusions
    - Attribution errors
    - False assumptions
  - Fear of Embarrassment
    - Fear of embarrassing self & others
    - Disagreeing as to what the facts really are
  - Bypass
    - Ignoring the facts
  - Cover-Up
    - Denying the facts
  - Budget Games
    - Talk about teamwork, while “team members” fight for “my share” of the budget
  - Making It All Un-discussable
    - Not discussing or even acknowledging the facts

Chris Argyris - William Bridges

# Skilled Incompetence? Really?

## **Not insults, but sociological definitions**

- *Derive from study and case work of Chris Argyris, Harvard University and others*
- *Primary Source = “Overcoming Organizational Defenses” by Argyris*
- *Study of “Espoused Theory” vs “Theory in Action” in Model I and Model II Learning Models*

## **Skilled Incompetence**

- *Counterproductive behavior*
  - ***Espousing one thing, acting another way***
  - ***Get into trouble without trying to manipulate and without political motives***
  - ***Unaware of own reasoning***
- *Best efforts*
  - ***Genuinely think the thinking, saying and acting match***
  - ***Clean motives, surprise at disconnects and own behavior when revealed***
- *Skillful*
  - ***Natural, routine, produced in milliseconds***
  - ***Spontaneous, automatic, unrehearsed***

## **Managerial Malpractice**

- *Self esteem in not being embarrassed or embarrassing others (threatened or threatening)*
- *Ambiguous or vague premises*
- *Inferences and conclusions without reasoning & logic*
- *Inability to consider we could be wrong, no learning from failures*
- *Internal competition, lack of commitment*
- *Bypass, cover up and fancy footwork*
- *No discussion of some subjects, difficult discussions made undiscussable*
- *Inflexible*

# Understanding Defensive Reasoning

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## Understanding The Problem

- All organizations have these defenses
- We all possess it to a degree
- Well educated professionals are especially susceptible
- Formidable predisposition against learning In action
- Rarely experience failure
- High success aspirations & standards - feed shame & guilt @ mistakes
- Do not know how to deal with it effectively
- Undeveloped tolerance for failure
- Undeveloped skills to deal with feelings
- Reinforce defensive reasoning
- Creates a “doom loop”
- Performance evaluations exacerbate it
- Fear failure and fear the fear of it
- Requires dual track solutions
  - Develop The Individual and The System
  - Connect Action and Learning To Knowledge

***Knowledge***

***+ Action***

***+ Learning***

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***= Improvement***



# Defensive Reasoning vs. Productive Reasoning

## Reduce Defensive Use

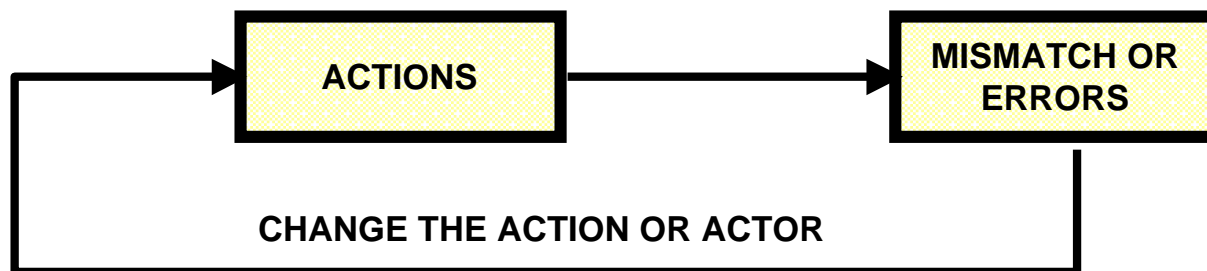
- Model I Theory
  - Espoused vs. Action Mismatch
  - Part of Culture & Used With Skill
- Unaware of Reasoning Processes In Use
- Self Esteem Tied Up In Not Being Embarrassed
- Past Success Breeds False Confidence
  - Attention To Preserve Status Quo
  - We Have Success, Must Be Right
- Limited or Low Value Choices
- Ambiguous or Vague Premises
- Inaccessible or Unused Data
  - Technical and Business, Behavioral
- Inferences and Conclusions
  - Without Reasoning & Logic
  - “I Am Not Wrong”
- Ineffective Strategies & Tactics
  - No Learning From Failures
- Self-Fulfilling Predictions and Behavior
- Internal Competition
- Lack of Commitment
- Bypass, Cover Up and Fancy Footwork
- No Discussion of Some Subjects
- Difficult Discussions Made Undiscussable
- No Integration of Individuals & Team
- Inflexible, Lack of Learning
- Conservative, Cost Focus
- Fueled By Fear

## Increase Productive Use

- Model II Theory
  - Espoused vs. Action Match
  - Must Be Embedded With Continuous Action
- Awareness of Reasoning Processes In Use
- Self Esteem From Consistent, Effective Behavior
- Future Success Demands Uncertainty
  - Attention to External Changes and Future
  - Consider “How Can We Become Right?”
- Competitive, High Value Choices
- Premises Made Explicit
- Data Collected Rigorously
  - Technical and Business, Behavioral
- Inferences and Conclusions
  - Tested By Open Inquiry & Logic
  - “Could We Be Wrong?”
- Effective Strategy and Tactics
  - Learn From Each Use
- Logic Not Self Sealing
- Internal Collaboration
- Internal Commitment
- Discuss The Bypass, Cover Up & Fancy Footwork
- Discuss The Undiscussable
- Practice Regularly To Solve Real Issues
- Integration of Individuals To Team
- Agile, Flexible, Learning
- Entrepreneurial, Value Focus
- Fueled By Trust

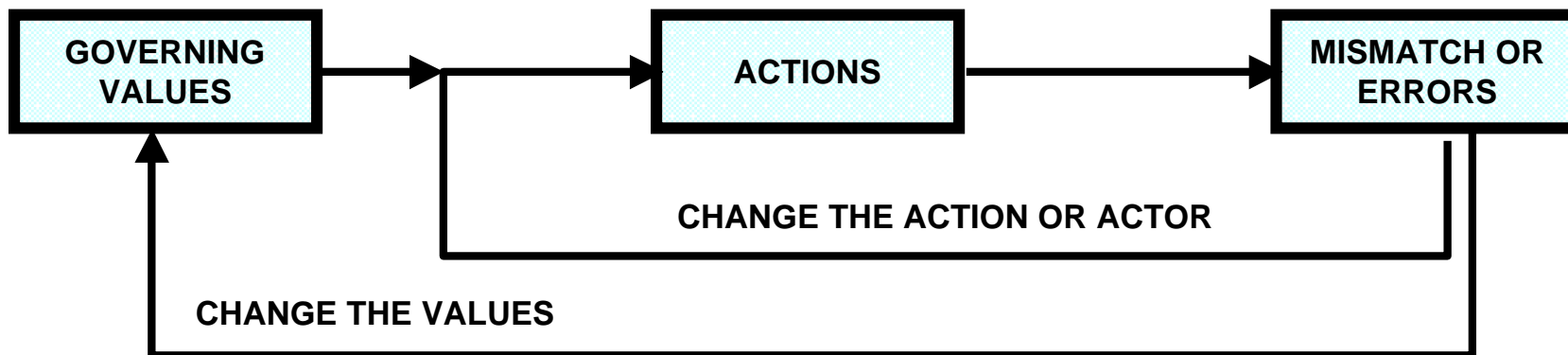
# Single Loop Learning - Double Loop Learning

## SINGLE-LOOP LEARNING



Invalid or Incomplete Information - Ineffective Roles & Policies, Designed Errors = *Fix Blame*

## DOUBLE-LOOP LEARNING



Valid Information - informed Choices - Monitored Implementation = *Fix System*



# Organizational Defenses - SOLUTIONS

## SOLUTIONS

### Acknowledge Changes In The Environment ASAP

- And In Every Meeting Ask “What Has Changed”
- Adapt Plan To The Changes
- Engage The Stakeholders

### Discussing The Un-discussable

- Purposeful Dialogue
- Ladder of Inference
- Left Hand Column Tool
- Ask more questions

#### *A Progression of Questions*

1. *Would you say a little more about that?*
2. *Could you review what you just said and let's reflect a minute on it together?*
3. *What is the explanation, I don't understand?*
4. *What is your understanding of \_\_\_ ?*
5. *What does the data say?*
6. *May I read to you from my left hand column?*
7. *Could we ask you to help us learn more about this by examining the facts together?*

## ENGAGEMENT OF THE STAKEHOLDERS

- Rebuild Trust
- Listen Carefully
- Understand What Matters To Them
- Share Self Honestly Without Hostility
- Ask For Feedback and Take It Whenever You Can Get It
- Trust Others As Much As You Want Them To Trust You
- Find Ways To Extend That Trust Further
- Don't Confuse Trust With Being A Buddy
- Don't Be Surprised If . . . . .
- Constantly Remind Yourself To Tell The Truth

# Solutions Toward Productive Reasoning

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## Solving The Problem

- Leadership must demonstrate Theory II In action
- Teach people to reason and examine
  - By reshaping our own behavior
- Identify the inconsistencies
- Acknowledge that we design and implement actions
  - With consequences we do not intend
- Learn to identify what individuals and groups do
  - In defensive reasoning
- Understand how it contributes to problems
- Collect valid data & analyze it
- Test the inferences
- Question conclusions
- Reduce & overcome defenses

***Knowledge***

***+ Action***

***+ Learning***

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***= Improvement***

**Step # 1 - Critically Examine & Change Theories In Action**

**Step # 2 - Start At The Top or Core of Value Chain**

**Step # 3 - Connect The Program To Real Business Issues**



# More Solutions Toward Productive Reasoning

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## Implement In ALL Work Relationships, Not Just Training

- Use Left Hand Tool, Ladder of Inference, other tools
- Think about issues and discuss as a team
- Work openly and effectively, with more options
- Grow as individuals & team by solving problems together
- Develop deeper understanding of our roles
- Lay groundwork for continuous improvement
- Learn to learn from the system & process

***Knowledge***

***+ Action***

***+ Learning***

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***= Improvement***

# Purpose Focused Dialogue

*This is a method to discuss knowledge and create solutions around questions which matter to teams.*

## **BASIC ELEMENTS - How it Works**

### **SEAT AT ROUND TABLES of 4 - 8**

*With Large Paper Sheets, Markers,*

### **EXPLORE QUESTIONS, ISSUES, IDEAS**

*Discuss What Matters To Their Situation in  
15 - 20 Minutes*

### **WRITE / DRAW KEY IDEAS & CONNECTIONS**

*Record & Share Major Insights*

### **TRAVEL IN SEVERAL ROUNDS**

*Carry Questions, Ideas, Insights To  
New Rounds*

### **TABLE HOST REMAINS**

*Briefly Shares Previous Questions,  
Ideas, Insights  
Travelers Connect Ideas From  
Previous Tables*

### **LISTEN FOR CORE QUESTIONS, INSIGHT & PATTERNS**

*Blend Perspectives In  
Progressive Rounds*

## **BASIC PRINCIPLES - How to Work It!**

### **CLARIFY PRINCIPLES & CONTEXT**

*Define Purpose, Participants,  
Time Limits, Possibilities*

### **CREATE COMFORTABLE SPACE**

*Pay Attention To Invitation,  
Refreshments, Music, Lighting*

### **EXPLORE SIMPLE, CLEAR, POWERFUL ISSUES**

*Ask Open Ended Questions  
Which Matter To Participants*

### **ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION**

*Share Your Best Thinking,  
Listen Attentively, Make A Difference*

### **DIVERSIFY PERSPECTIVES**

*Link Discoveries In a Widening  
Dialogue and Conversation  
Build on Other's Thinking*

### **LISTEN TOGETHER**

*Find Deeper Wisdom  
As A Team*

## **SHARE QUESTIONS, INSIGHTS, PATTERNS IN TOWN HALL CONVERSATION**

*Larger System Becomes Evident, New Actions Become Possible, Team Value Becomes Obvious*



# Building Competence & Organizational Learning

## A Comprehensive Learning Program

- **Begin With Focus on Everyday Leader Behaviors**
- **Participants Willing & Skilled Outsiders**
  - Innovators & Early Adopters
- **Participants Explore & Commit To**
  - Be Open
  - Don't Cover Up
  - Don't Bypass
  - Discuss It All
- **Learn Skills**
  - Productive Reasoning
  - Reduce Defensive Reasoning & Org Defenses
  - Discuss The Undiscussable
- **Evaluate Theories**
  - Espoused Theories
  - Theories In Use - Model I and Model II
  - Record Discussion & Agreement
  - Replay, Discuss, Inquire
  - Reflect & Evaluate
- **Redesign Change Program**
  - Map Defensive Routines
  - Integrate Technical Knowledge & Features With Behavior
  - Organize What To Change
  - Measure Change
- **Design & Implement Change Program**
- **Develop & Spread Model II Learning**

## Design & Implement A Change Program

- **Begin With Selecting Problems To Address**
  - Important to Director & Team
  - Requires Development of Skills
  - Applicable To Many Future Cases
  - Plan Future Follow Up Sessions With Coach
- **Practice Model II Learning**
  - Practice Skills
  - Evaluate Theories
  - Replay, Discuss, Reflect, Evaluate
  - Map Routines & Actions
  - Organize & Measure Change
  - Report Results

## Expand & Spread Model II Learning

- **Offer Organizational Learning in Several Directions**
  - Board, Leaders, Stakeholders, Key Allies
  - Innovators & Early Adopters to Demonstrate
- **Integrate Model II Inquiry & Learning**
  - Senior Leaders, Managers, Directors
  - Innovators & Early Adopters to Demonstrate
- **Develop A Group of Internal /External Resources**
  - Consultants, Change Agents, Educators
  - Includes Contract Intervenors
  - Innovators & Early Adopters to Demonstrate
- **Expand To Customer, Client, Supplier Relationships**



# Lunch!

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- **Let's collect our lunch!**
- **Room will be secure**
- **Staff will take your drink orders**
- **While you dine, discuss this**
- **Make sure everyone is heard from**
- **Be prepared to share your answers to the following questions!**

# TABLE DISCUSSIONS

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## AT EACH TABLE DISCUSS:

- **WHAT ARE OUR NEXT ACTION STEPS?**
  - **How can what I learned here be helpful to my workplace and the people within it?**
  - **What will happen if we don't discuss the "undiscussable"?**
  - **What would be my next steps?**
  - **Who could be a champion for these next steps?**
  - **When can we start?**
  - **What did I learn here?**
  - **Could we report back on how it works to tell the emperor to put on some pants?**

# Future Agenda

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## Future Discussions = 3 Weeks + 1 Weekday

- May 17th, 2011 = System of Profound Knowledge
  - June 8th, 2011 = Overcoming Roadblocks
  - June 30th, 2011 = Innovation and the Alternatives
  - July 22nd, 2011 =
  - August 15th, 2011 =
  - September 6th, 2011 =
  - September 28th, 2011 =
  - October 20th, 2011 =
  - November 21st, 2011 = slipped date due to conflicts
  - December 8th, 2011 = changed due to November change
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- What Are Your Ideas?



# Other Subject & Speaker Suggestions

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- Benchmarking
- Brainstorming
- Civility - Lack of it Costs up to \$300 Billion Annually (Pattie McNeil)
- Comparisons of Quality Management Systems
- Continuous Improvement
- Design & Control of Quality (Ian Bradbury of Peaker Services, Inc.)
- Effective Measurement for Training & Development Initiatives
- Gipsie Ranney
- Having Difficult Conversations - Principles and Tools
- How to Plan the Perfect Meeting
- Influence (Influencing Your Leader and Your Team)
- InThinking, Investment Thinking, Thinking Roadmap
- Lean Project: Eliminating the Waste In Performance Reviews (R. Steele of Peaker Services)
- Mentoring & Partnership Between Generations (Baby Boomer, GenX, GenY, Transition to Future)
- Quality Assurance Through Proofing
- Six Sigma
- Tales From The Front of the Parade - When We Told The Emperor to Put on Some Pants!
- Training vs Learning - What Makes The Difference in Performance?
  
- What Are Your Ideas?

# **CQI LEARNING LUNCH**

## **How to Tell The Emperor**

### **He Has No Clothes**

*Discussing the “Undiscussable”*

