

A Reason For Everything

October 2, 2020

Let me begin with a principle in life. No one wakes up in the morning and says, “I think today I’ll be an asshole.” No one. Some people become that, and some become it sooner than others, but no one intentionally desires it.

People behave in certain ways because of reasons. There is a reason for everything. A key employee quits, a team doesn’t function well, a marriage fails, a child rebels, an athlete suddenly goes into a slump – there is a reason for each of these things, because there is a reason for everything.

Understanding the reason behind a problem is the beginning of understanding the solution to a problem.

We all know that makes sense, but too often we seek to jump to the solution before we fully understand the reason. “I know the answer; tell me the question.”

Understanding the reasons behind things takes time and patience. It requires listening and empathy. It involves delving into complexity and the messy world of relationships. But it is worth the energy and effort to get to the reasons behind a problem because when the cost of the problem is great, the cost of the solution is great, and the benefit is also great.

I’m not talking about excuses. Excuses are not the same as reasons. Excuses are an attempt to shift or escape blame. Reasons are an understanding of deep causes. They are not the same as excuses.

President Herbert Hoover was not known as a particularly warm person. He worked tirelessly and obsessively. He neglected his family and had few if any close friends. He loved projects, and the bigger the project the more he loved the challenge of solving it. His lifetime of humanitarian accomplishments are legendary.

At the beginning of the first World War he led the effort to get 100,000 Americans who were stranded in Great Britain back to the US. During that same war he single handedly led the effort to feed eleven million starving Belgium people. He was appointed by President Wilson to lead the U.S. Food Administration. He built what is now called the Hoover Dam, and as

Commerce Secretary he spearheaded humanitarian efforts all over the United States.

But why? What motivated him? There is a reason for everything.

Hoover had been orphaned at eleven years old. He knew hunger and desperate loneliness. He knew poverty and abandonment. He knew what it was like when it felt like there was no way out, and no one to help. He knew what it was to have the world turn against you. It fed in him a deep compassion combined with a drive to help people and to use his intellect to create vast projects for the betterment of others

Well at least that's my theory. But it's just a theory. We don't really know what was inside the mind and heart of Herbert Hoover, because no one ever asked – or if they did it is not recorded. It's too bad because perhaps if someone had attempted to get to the deeper side of Hoover and help him understand what motivated him at the deepest level, he might have been an even greater leader than he was.

The great leader needs to understand the reasons things happen and the reasons people behave the way they do. In understanding the “why” you can make an informed “what to do.”

The great leader needs to understand the “why” for themselves. “Why do I do what I do?” “Why do I react the way I do?” “Why do I shine in certain situations or with certain people, and not with others?” This is the essence of EQ – Emotional Intelligence. The people who understand themselves the most – understand why they do, what they do, the way they do it – are those with the highest EQ.

Who you are at your core guides and determines “why you do, what you do, the way you do it?” It is what I call your “Core Motivator,” and it is the key to understanding who you are at the deepest level.

Every study has shown that the higher the great leaders all have a high EQ. it is the key to being the most effective leader you can be. When you know what motivates you at the deepest level you can leverage your greatest strength to be the leader you were created to be.

The great leaders also know the “Core Motivators” of the various members of their team and “why they do, what they do, the way they do it.” They

understand their team at the deepest level and are able to understand why the various members of a team behave and react the way they do. The great leader understands the EQ of the members of the team and leads all of them to be the best they can be.

One of my least favorite phrases when relationships break down is, "it's been bad for a long time." I hear that over and over. A key employee leaves and they say, "it's been bad for a long time." A marriage fails and they say, "It's been bad for a long time." I think, "If it's been bad for a long time, then why didn't you do something about it a long time ago?" Problems don't get better with age. Why didn't you get in front of the problem before it reached the point of no return? There is a reason for everything.

It doesn't have to be bad for a long time, but in order for you to get in front of a problem before it becomes "bad for a long time," you have to understand the "why?" Why is this person reacting or behaving this way? Why is this problem occurring?

The answer probably lies in what is deepest inside of them, their "Core Motivator."

Understanding who we are at our Core is the beginning of understanding "why we do, what we do, the way we do it," and it is also the key to understanding why conflict and dissatisfaction arise. Getting in front of those issues is the key to addressing problems before they get to the point of no return. Diffusing issues before they become huge problems is one of the keys to great leadership and understanding who people are at their Core is the most important element in understanding how to address their core issues before those issues become disasters.

Months before Robert Kennedy was assassinated, he was asked in a television interview which historical character he admired the most. After initially saying "Abraham Lincoln," and then "Teddy Roosevelt," he then paused and said,

"I admire still a lot in Herbert Hoover's career. I thought that his earlier career and what he did working in the mines and his career in China what he did for Europe after the First World War and what he did during the 1950s, the Hoover Commission of the United States, were just marvelous contributions to our country and to his fellow man. Of course, the difficulties that he had in the nineteen twenties as part of the cabinet and while he was president of the

United States, but when you consider his overall career there were some marvelous things that he did." (From Hoover: An Extraordinary Life in Extraordinary Times by Kenneth Whyte)

Why? Why would Robert Kennedy pick Herbert Hoover as the person he admired? There's a reason for everything, and it may tell us more about Kennedy than Hoover, but that is another newsletter.

Know Who You Are And Be It!