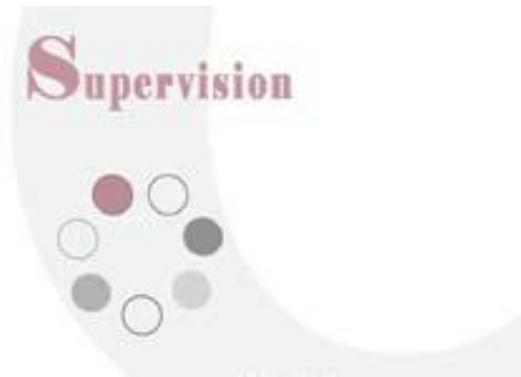


SUPER VISION

Popular Science & Technology Series



SUPER VISION

1. The Theme: Towards Effective Supervision

1.1 Performance and Supervision

Vinayaka Murthy is a supervisor we envy. Everybody who works under Vinayaka Murthy's supervision is committed to the task he has been given. The efforts of everybody in Vinayaka Murthy's place contribute towards the desired goals. And this is not a general opinion formed under any positive bias towards Vinayaka Murthy. We have examined his supervision from many different angles and collected definite evidence to form our opinion.

Vinayaka Murthy says that, through the active participation of his subordinates, he could earn their involvement and commitment to find and apply the best solutions in every day's work. All his subordinates want to win and the measure of winning is that, results are truly excellent.

We observed that Vinayaka Murthy does not give directions to his subordinates on a task-by-task basis except under unique emergency or 'last resort' circumstances. His directions arise from work goals and objectives on which he already has understanding and agreement with his subordinates. His subordinates are capable of operating on a more or less self regulated basis.

Vinayaka Murthy deals with his subordinates in an open and candid way. There is a free exchange of ideas between him and his subordinates. In fact, neither needs to be on guard, in order to avoid misunderstanding by the others. Whenever a mistake is committed it is viewed from the standpoint of the background causes responsible for it. There is no blame or punishment to anyone. He looks towards corrective actions so as to eliminate the causes of mistakes.

We won't say that subordinates of Vinayaka Murthy never complain. They certainly do and in fact are encouraged to do so. Vinayaka Murthy tries to understand, deal with and solve any complaints brought up before him. He does not believe in temporary solutions and soothing statements. Whenever his subordinates exhibit hostile reactions, Vinayaka Murthy reacts in a very serious minded way. He works to understand such feelings through open, candid, authentic interaction with the subordinates under non-judgmental and non-defensive conditions. He believes in genuineness of supervisor-subordinate relationship.

Vinayaka Murthy helps his subordinates see what can cause an excellent performance level to be reached, surpassed, or missed, whatever may be the margin. All his subordinates try to improve on their own, whenever they do not meet the realistic goals.

Is it not great? And that is why we envy Vinayaka Murthy. But then, why envy someone who provides an effective leadership? A better choice could be to learn the ways of an effective supervisor.

1.2 Organisation

We all work in organisation. Every organisation is created to meet some objectives and the people working in it are paid to contribute towards these objectives. Different organisations have different objectives. A hospital, for example, ensures prompt and proper medical care. A church looks after the spiritual upliftment of its members. A trade union fights for the rights of the work force. As the objectives of an organisation differs, its form and functioning changes. However, people working in organisations have, in common, one factor that each one of them is doing something, at some place under the supervision of some individual. The possibilities range from a signal man checking a cable connection high atop a pole in the middle of winter, to a transport operator driving a three tonner on a winding road with hairpin bends, a tradesman turning a maraging steel bulk head in the General Machine Shop on a sultry afternoon, or a systems analyst 'tickling' the computer terminal to optimise between conflicting criteria. In each case, there is somebody doing something, at someplace under the supervision of someone present at the spot or keeping an eye from a far away place. Every person is a supervisor in some respect and is being supervised by somebody else at the same moment. Any supervision thus involves a human being, performing some activity, in some context.

1.3 Performance or Conduct

Performance can be easily confused with conduct. Sudhakar Panday gives tremendous emphasis on the proper conduct of his subordinates. He insists them to wear neat clothes, encourages them to keep surroundings pompous and does 'police patrol' to ensure compliance. Yet the performance of his subordinates is no better than their counterparts in the sister departments.

Like Sudhakar Panday, many supervisors often judge human competency by their conduct during the performance and not the performance proper. In fact, performance is related to result. Performance is meeting your objective. The actions leading to this objective are conduct. Consider a soldier using a rifle for target practice. We watch, as he lifts the gun, sights down the barrel, and pull the trigger. We observe a set of actions. We may try to measure this conduct. For example, we can watch how fast the person is able to raise the rifle, sight, and fire. We can measure the width of the soldier's stance, the steadiness of the aimed gun and the pressure exerted on the trigger. And we can interview the soldier about the planning and thinking involved in shooting a rifle. But however accurate these measurements are, we still do not have any information on the performance level of the soldier shooting the rifle, i.e. , how many shots are there in the bull's eye.

Frequently, we find supervisors working hard to ensure that the subordinate measures upto certain carefully selected conduct codes rather than looking at his performance.

Consider, for example, supervisors who operate on elaborate systems for reporting tardiness, or absenteeism. These supervisors may accurately measure some interesting conduct but end up getting a little, if any, useful information about the performance of their subordinates. In fact, the focus on conduct usually comes about only after a degradation of performance. Frequently, the reasons for degraded performance are related to non-observable human conditions, or to difficulties with the activity, or to the context. Performance could then be improved by correcting these conditions. Conducive conditions motivate people to perform better.

1.4 Performance

Iqbal Masood howls at his subordinates whenever something goes wrong in his work place. He feels that just because of his subordinates, his target dates slip. Is Masood right? Like Masood, many supervisors seeking to measure human performance actually measure system performance. In many situations, human performance is only one consideration. The adequacy of equipment, computer, or even factors and people outside the organizational boundaries may all partially determine the success of a system. When trying to understand why a system may have problems the various components must also be evaluated. Too often, supervisors equate poor performance of their departments with poor performance of their subordinates, without taking into account other components of the system.

One of the most interesting examples of this is the consistency with which human error is considered to be the cause of so many road accidents. Investigators and onlookers attempt alike to attribute the mishap to degraded performance of the driver. The mechanical adequacy of the automobile, misleading road signs, chaotic traffic, rough road surfacing are frequently ignored. The human being is the most complex of all components in any system and rightly deserves to be singled out as the most likely reason when an accident occurs, a system falters or a mission fails. However, human performance is often degraded because of inadequate planning, poor design decisions, insufficient tools or even the impropriety of the context in which the activity is performed.

1.5 Supervision for Performance

Salil Chatterjee is a perfectionist. Till his draughtsman matches the dexterity of an architect he feels uncomfortable in accepting his tracings. Well, it is quite natural for supervisors to seek 'super performance' from their subordinates. However, one should never forget that a super or near perfect performance is possible only in situations where a highly skilled individual performs a satisfying activity in a favorable context. Super performance from any subordinate in systems with familiar activities and conservative career paths are most unlikely to go together.

Optimal performance from the subordinates is the second most attractive dream of the majority of supervisors. However, few designers have the requirement, resources, or know-how to design for optimal performance. Successful supervisors do not outrightly go to seek optimal performance levels. Many of them prefer to play safe. They estimate

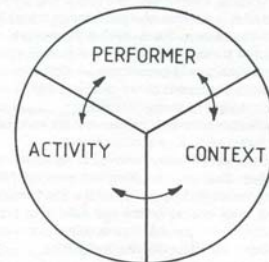
factors of safety and apply them. They usually aim for an acceptable level of human performance in their work centres. Furthermore, these supervisors establish the acceptable level of performance for their subordinates, after careful consideration of all the factors associated with the activity and the context They then do make efforts to achieve the commitment of their subordinates to attain this standard.

1.6 A Supervision Model

Effective supervision in any situation requires an understanding of the psychology of the person performing, the difficulties associated with the activity being performed, and the relevance of the context in which it is performed. This concept of supervision is too genuine to serve as a model for many, if not all, performance situations.

To avoid going out of context, we discuss the human limits and differences without going into the adequacy of each major components and their interfaces. Good supervisors must know three basic things about the people they are supervising. (1) What they can do-their basic abilities and skills. (2) What they can not do-their limitations. (3) What will they do-how can they be motivated to perform better.

Many supervisors, like Salil Chatterjee for instance, tend to focus only on people's strengths, and attempt to expand these abilities. But people's abilities and skills have very definite limits. No one on earth can run 100 Km an hour, jump 10 meter high or lift 1 ton load. Similar limitations exist with all workers in one or the other form, depending upon the work situation. A good supervisor must recognise the limitations of his subordinates and should not expect them to perform beyond their ability. Further, human limitations are not stationary and are directly related to both long-term and short term differences. Human limits, not only change as a person grows older, but they may also change on a day-to-day, hour-by-hour basis. Good supervisors take into account that these differences exist and use motivation methods of improving the performance of their subordinates. Usually, this is done either through persuasion or by coercion. However, a better technique could be to improve the performance of others by convincing them that improved performance is better in everyway.



Effective Supervision involves ensuring:
(a) The adequacy of each major components
(b) The adequacy of the interface between and among major components
A SUPERVISION MODEL

But how can this be accomplished? The answer to this simple question is very complex. And till a convincing answer is available, supervisors, like Panday, Chatterjee and Masood, are not going to change any of their ways to supervise. We asked this question to Vinayaka Murthy. He says there are no prescribed guidelines or rules for a supervisor to be effective. If a supervisor develops an awareness towards the different aspects of supervision, his actions would automatically get transformed and produce wonderful results. We shall try to do it in our next chapter, on aspects of supervision.

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2. The Scenario: Aspects of Supervision

2.1 Understanding the worker

More than the managerial skills of a supervisor, the nature and the thinking pattern of a subordinate decide the level of effectiveness of supervision in a work situation. The secret of effective supervision is to concentrate on and develop the strengths of a subordinate. Individuals have many facets, but for an average individual there is only one area where he might be capable. The supervisor should concentrate on that area and forget about his weaknesses because every normal person is bound to have a few of them. If a person has no weaknesses, it may be that, he has no strong points either and will be nothing more than a mediocre. All well-known leaders have their failings, but the important thing -and that is what really matters is that these people have produced results.

Being a good supervisor Vinayaka Murthy never takes personal considerations into account or a person's weaknesses. The important thing to a supervisor like him is, what sort of results a subordinate can produce. It does not matter if a film heroine or a tennis star has the most appalling tantrums, what matters is how that heroine or player performs. If the performance is good, both the supervisor and the subordinate have earned their pay. It is not pleasing people that is important - it is what one contributes.

2.2 Converting Work into Contribution

A supervisor must always make a distinction between work and the results of that work. For example, a hospital does not exist for its doctors and nurses, but for the manner in which it treats its patients. The existence of the income tax department is only justified, if it collects taxes efficiently and with least amount of botheration to the tax payer. An ambassador is to be judged by the way he gets acquainted with the country to which he is accredited and the manner in which he explains the view points of his country. Similarly, Research Laboratories will not be called so just because they are generating a lot of import substitution. Their efficiency will be judged by the time and money they take to develop a system or service equipment and deliver it to the user. Existence, for its own sake, is of no use. It is the contribution made that justifies an organization's place in the Budget books. If house keeping costs become the major expenditure head, the purpose of creating an organisation is defeated.

Good supervisors always ensure contribution by their teams. An important aspect of contribution is to look for the potential in a job. If the job is looked at completely afresh, a supervisor can probably make it contribute far more than it had done in the past. Ensuring that procedures are actually being acted upon, could well be an effective contribution on the part of a supervisor. But if the results are not delivered by the people he is managing, the contribution of the entire team would not be productive to the organisation. A supervisor has to go beyond adopting procedures and acting as per the

conventions. When time changes, every thing must change. Even the best policies become irrelevant, when the environment which made them necessary, no longer exists.

2.3 Creating Productive Environment

Panduranga Chari always has problems with his subordinates. He is not very comfortable with his bosses, either. Among many reasons for this problem, the foremost is the difference in the outlook of Chari and his colleagues. Why do such mismatches exist and how do they get created? Vinayaka Murthy points finger at the cultural manifestations as the answer. An organisation is an amalgamation of mixed cultures. Highly educated scientific personnel coming mainly from the middle and upper middle urban class; graduates and pre-university educated ministerial personnel mainly from the lower middle urban class; industrial employees with secondary education and industrial training, mainly from the lower urban class and rural population migrated to the cities. Each group has its own thinking pattern, its own ambitions and its own way of striving for the better. Working conditions also differ for different groups. Some are required to punch attendance cards while some don't have fixed working hours. Some get promotion every fourth or fifth year and some have no avenues for promotions at all. Some get extraordinary leave and some lose their wages if they fall sick. Some form associations while some join unions. Some are persuasive and some are militants. Some feel contented and some burn with the desire for more.

The crux of effective supervision is understanding the mechanics of this mixed cultural environment. Usually, the supervisor represents a different cultural group from his subordinates. The 'necessities' of the supervisor's group might be 'wants' of the subordinates, or even their 'desires'. A little misinterpretation of these leads to chaos. The moment nurses and wardboys behave like show masters, a hospital disintegrate. Whenever industrial workers start dictating task completion dates, an industry sinks. Ministerial cadre, having the upper hand in the affairs of a research laboratory results in 'research sans results'.

2.4 The Problem

How to do away with such a situation? How to stop a particular group from being unreasonable? How to put a particular group in its proper position without hurting the emotions or causing heart bums? These are the questions Vinayaka Murthy asked and resolved, for his fellow supervisors. Going by his experience, a supervisor should always remember that although the group pressure guides an individual's behaviour up to a large extent, individuals alone form the groups. Once individuals feel committed to their duties for which they are paid to perform by the organisation, they form groups which are in perfect harmony with the objectives of the organisation. A supervisor who hies sincerely can make each individual under his supervision complementary to each other. Synergy of efforts gets generated.

2.5 Supervisory Function

It definitely sounds logical but how can one work to realise the synergy of efforts in his group, we asked Vinayaka Murthy.

Vinayaka Murthy, is of the opinion that supervision is an art, practiced and perfected in a scientific way. After-all, what is supervision any way - a set of functions performed in every day work by a person who is responsible to ensure work output from a group placed by the organisation under his command. It is important for a supervisor to study how he performs these functions in every day work. Like Sudhakar Panday, a large majority of the supervisors view themselves as 'big brothers'. Such supervisors believe that since a group is placed under their command, they are big. They start playing the role of a Boss. Therefore, we decided to view the supervisor -subordinate issue in terms of 'a boss and his men' .We studied the mannerisms of some bosses around. The manner in which the boss gives work directions, is one. Another is how the boss and subordinate communicate. Others involve, managing mistakes, dealing with complaints, anti how the boss reacts to hostile feelings. A final one indeed is the matter of performance evaluation, i.e., how the supervisor motivates a subordinate to improve and develop.

As a supervisor, you can do any of these things in a number of ways. While you know best about your way of supervising, we hope you would like to see a cross-section of supervisory practices and know where you stand in the 'kaleidoscope.' The next chapter describes and examines some styles widely exhibited by the supervisors in our society. while performing these supervisory functions.

Further Reading

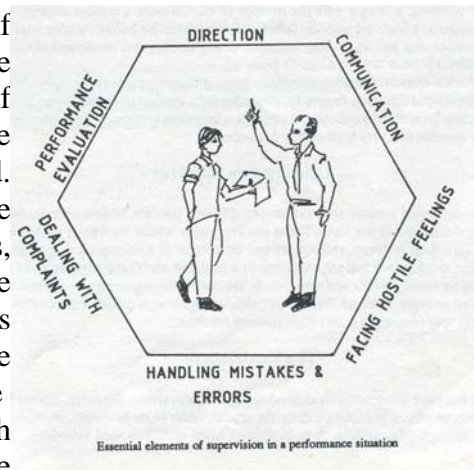
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3. The Ways: Styles of Supervision

3.1 The Possibilities

Before 'zeroing' on an effective strategy of supervising for committed contribution of all the subordinates, it is necessary to see the full range of supervisory possibilities. Differences between one person and another must be clearly understood. Awareness has to be created about how and why we and others behave in a particular way. Motivations, that lie behind our attitudes and behavior should be identified and analysed. Vinayaka Murthy gives tremendous importance to the way people resolve their conflicts, stresses, strains, and tensions that are likely to result from faulty ways of coping with problems. Let us examine how does he visualise the entire phenomenon.



3.2 The Orientation

Supervision takes place in terms of two basic orientations work and workers. For some of us, work is the most important motivation. For some others, workers are the 'all consuming' interest. For some others, neither work nor workers are very interesting. For a few supervisors, work and workers go together, each helping to enrich the others in the experience and enjoyment of working together.

How do we relate the work and workers as we grow, age, develop, and mature, tells us about our ways of adjusting to situations. But sometimes we are not able to adjust. This results in conflicts. We deal with a conflict in one way or the other. Why do we act and react as we do, tells us how do we make ourselves miserable or what it is all about, that we find rewarding. To understand our adjustments in the face of conflict is important to our personal satisfaction, to the satisfaction of those around us, to our ability to live a contended life and to our physical and mental health.

Vinayaka Murthy says that it is not very difficult to understand proper ways of dealing with conflict. We can learn the essential features of such adjustments and how they develop, and what can we do to change for more effective supervision. Some features are described by Vinayaka Murthy, thus:

3.3 Attitude towards Work

First is the attitude one has towards work. How much importance do we attach to the volume, quality, and rate of work under our supervision. Concern for work can be pictured in a number of ways. A shop incharge is concerned with production of things; a sale person with sale volumes; a lawyer with the number of clients seen; a teacher with

the performance of students; a husband with the family staying within the budget; a wife with the quality of housekeeping and so on. Any outcome of any activity can be viewed in terms of results or work.

Concern for work is not always present among different people to the same degree. It is also not present to the same degree for the same individual at different times. What do we need, in other words, is to understand variations in concern - from a very low concern to a moderate concern to a very high degree of concern.

3.4 Concern for Workers

Similar to the varied concern for work among different persons, is their concern for people. These are the people in our lives. These are the people whom we interact with, day-in and day-out To a shop incharge, technicians are the people; to a sales person, they are buyers; to a lawyer, clients; to a teacher, students; to a husband, the family members; to a housewife, maid servants, visitors and relatives. In the context of supervision, people means subordinates or workers. Concern for workers also varies through different intensities, ranging from a very low concern to to a very high degree for them.

3.5 The Contradiction

All of us are paid to accomplish desired results. The problem, however, comes from our dependency on others in accomplishing the results. Most of these results are accomplished with and through other people. A contradiction often occurs in such situations. When the concern for work meets the concern for workers we react to it in our own personal way.

Sometimes, we kill any concern for workers to get results, almost at any cost We use workers as tools in the pursuit of production. Some other time, work is given little or no importance to gain the warmth and approval of others. On some occasions, we exhibit little concern for things or people. We feel as if we desire nothing. So why to strive. for something -'Why to give and why to get' Suddenly we become emotionally neutral.

Our natural tendency, however, remains to promote reasons. Most of the time a balance is maintained between work and worker by having a moderate concern for work, coupled with a moderate concern for workers. Very often we do whatever is necessary to be socially acceptable and popular. Most of us, in a majority of situations, prefer to be a person who 'fits in'?

3.6 The Equilibrium

Looking at this phenomenon from the perspective of a force system, the situation of a supervisor -subordinate interaction could be visualized as a force balance. The supervisor gives direction to the effort exerted by the subordinate to the demand of the situation. This directing force, acts as a motivating force for the subordinate. In an ideal condition, it supplements the subordinate's efforts. The subordinate's efforts are further influenced

by his ability and commitment The equilibrium of these 'forces' gives performance. For this performance to become a meaningful contribution, another set of forces must have a synergic effect these include guidance from the supervisor, behavioral fit between the supervisor and the subordinate and psychological forces of perception and satisfaction. Eventually any employee performs under the equilibrium created by all these forces, described above.

3.7 The Style

Why does a supervisor behave in a particular way? Does he possess some definite behavioral characteristics? Vinayaka Murthy answered these questions in the following manner. The supervisory style dominant for a person in a majority of situations, is influenced by a number of psychological and social factors. Some of these factors are (1) the organisation in which the person is employed (2) the values or beliefs he holds regarding the way of treating people or the way of managing for the desired results (3) the deep-rooted personality characteristics, which pre disposes an individual to prefer one approach over another, and (4) the environment that has not helped him learn supervision. Besides, the situation itself may be a determining or overriding factor, dictating a set of managerial assumptions that are employed to deal with it Management of a crisis is likely to be different from management under routine circumstances. Therefore, although a supervisory style may be consistent for a person over a large range of situations, it is also true that supervisors move from one style to another according to how do they view the situation. This implies that not only do most of us have a dominant supervisory style, we also have a back up style; sometimes even a third and fourth. A supervisor's backup style becomes apparent when it is difficult or impossible for him to apply his dominant supervisory style.

Relationship between dominant and backup styles can sometimes be quite easily observed in how we deal with our children. When a child creates tantrums, we first try logic and reasoning to make him understand his 'unreasonableness'. But if it doesn't work, we get tough and possibly add a touch of ridicule to get the child's attention. Then, since we have created resentment and rejection, we switch over to love and kindness and hope that a chocolate or a stroll to the nearby park will bring the child around. Finally, still unable to elicit cooperation, we either revert to a strategy of threats and punishments or run away to a friend's house.

3.8 Analyzing Personal Supervisory Styles

Assuming that a supervisor approaches a situation according to the subjective appraisal of it and not according to the objective reality, it is interesting to note the deviations between the two. You may find it valuable to assess your own supervisory style. To make the link between different supervisory styles and your own way of supervising, clear, we have created four extreme characters. These characters are imaginary and real. They are imaginary in the sense that one by one it is difficult to find an identical supervisor and they are real because together they represent the entire spectrum of the supervisory techniques.

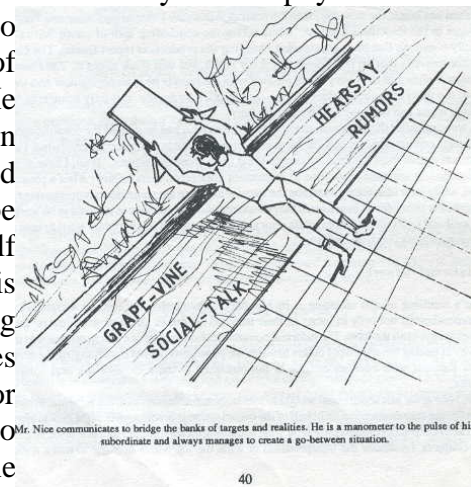
The first supervisor is Mr. Bull. He is highly concerned about work and has low, or no concern for workers. He strives for control, mastery and domination. He wants work at any cost. He creates conditions of work in such a way that human elements interfere to a bare minimum degree. He admires the authority obedience of slaves, of the medieval age.

Our second character is Mr. Cute. For him, workers are all important and their needs come first, always and every time. He gives thoughtful attention to the needs of people for satisfying relationships. This leads to a comfortable and friendly atmosphere and work 'tempo'. He is a disciple of the School of Coffee House Management.

Then there is Mr. Dull. He has attained emotional neutrality. He makes very little efforts to get the required work done, which is just appropriate to sustain his organisation membership. Low involvement in events and escaping from trouble are his prime characteristics. He interprets Gandhiji's three monkeys concept in his own way and avoids listening, observing or speaking to the extent possible. When it comes to interacting with persons, postman is his idol.

The fourth supervisor is Mr. Nice. He has moderate concern for work coupled with a moderate concern for workers. He promotes reasonableness as long as stable relations prevail. He ensures adequate organisational performance, through balancing the necessity of getting work done while maintaining the morale of the people at a satisfactory level. He is a believer of responsive leadership. Candid communication is his prime concern.

Then, we thought of portraying Vinayaka Murphy as a character in our supervisory 'opera'. In symphony with the earlier four names we named Vinayaka Murphy's character as Mr. Wise. This character is conceived as one who achieves the highest possible integration in terms of both quality of work and human relationship. He engages others through involvement, participation and commitment and helps himself to be a full and complete person by helping his subordinates to be effective and happy. He has a high degree of self esteem and inculcates it in all his subordinates. His subordinates perform by choice, after understanding the jobs performed by their colleagues. He creates interdependence through a common stake for organization purpose. This in turn leads to relationship of trust and respect. He is the man of the team.



Mr. Nice communicates to bridge the banks of targets and realities. He is a manometer to the pulse of his subordinate and always manages to create a go-between situation.

At this stage, before we are branded as male-chauvinist by our female readers, we would like to clarify that the choice of these supervisory characters has nothing to do with the inherent qualities of one sex and the basic limitations of the opposite sex. In our experience, female supervisors are as good or as bad as their male counterparts. The names given to the characters are purely for presentation.

The 'acts' narrated in the following pages highlight the operating mechanism of these five supervisors. The specific ways each supervisor performs the supervisory function of providing directions, communication, handling mistakes, dealing with complaints, tackling hostile feelings and performance evaluation are made the themes of each episode. Although the case histories taken up are adopted from the real life situations, they are in fact, the work of fiction. Any resemblance is unintentional.

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4. The Call: How Supervisors Provide Directions

4.1 Providing Directions

Try to imagine a purposeless organisation. Can you picture yourself being in an organisation that lacks purpose? We have attempted to do so but have been unable to identify an organisation that does not have a purpose. The organisations viz., educational, hospital, military, political, governmental, religious and family, all have been created to meet specific purposes. However, many a time the purpose for which an organisation exists is misunderstood by a large section of its employees, and their efforts are not directed to contribute towards the realisation of the intended goals. Since people make organisations, no organization's purpose can be achieved without people, nor does it exist under circumstances where one person is acting alone. To achieve it others need to be drawn in. And when this is attempted the problem of interpersonal transactions come into being. Needing more than one person to achieve results of a work is what leads to the function of providing directions.

4.2 Directions

In any organisation, an apex planning body or a key executive provides directions for the growth and development of the organisation through acquisitions or launching or expanding innovative research and development. Besides the scope and quality of these policy decisions, the success of an organisation depends on the number of creative ideas converted into workable products and quality and thoroughness of services provided by the organizing staff. It is therefore, very important that the goals and objectives for which the organisation is created are shared and understood by every body in the team. When each subordinate understands and is committed to the team goals, as well as the specific goals, he or she is responsible for accomplishing personally. Then the issue of providing directions takes a unique character. The frequent or specific directions of 'now do this, next do that...' 'Type of 'master- minding' variety becomes really unnecessary. However, before developing this idea of self evident direction, it is important to understand how different supervisors direct their subordinates to perform in the manner, as is seen fit by them. Let us go through some real life episodes, described as under.

4.3 The Wrapped Forgings

Vijay Kumar is a Scientist 'B', working in the Structural Engineering Division of an R&D Establishment responsible for developing efficient transport system. Early in the morning, he is going through the internal dak that had collected during the last four days when he was away on temporary duty to the Foundry and Forge Division of HAL, Bangalore, in connection with the development of some aluminium forgings for a light weight transport vehicle. As Vijay Kumar is doing this task his intercom buzzed. The Divisional Head is on the line. 'Have you seen the memo from the General Machine Shop

about the front panel forgings?' Vijay Kumar replies, 'No, I have not read it, as I was away at HAL last week, you might know'.

The boss adds, 'Read it immediately and come to me as soon as possible with your answer'. Kumar located the memo in the stack of papers and read it. It is concerned with defects in the front panel forgings procured by him from Indian Forgings, Madras last month. The forgings were given to General Machine Shop for subsequent machining. There, it was found that some forgings were slightly warped and it was difficult to machine the panel out of it. The Divisional Head had marked the memo to Vijay Kumar, instructing him to explain as to how it happened and report back in detail, exactly what he had planned to do to retrieve the situation. The note also set a deadline of two weeks to replace all the defective forgings by the correct ones. The designation of the boss was also written along with the date, under the initials at the bottom of the memo.

BK Sharma has been Heading the Structural Engineering Division for the last three years. He is thirty nine years old and has concentrated his attention on his performance and achievements, all along. He hails from a poor family and the hard living conditions had constantly drawn his attention to the fact that others had it better than he did and that poverty is a sin, and that the only point in life is to acquire the skills and the habits of hard work and determination that can overcome deprivation. Frustrations taught him to react with anger and hostility, to make his will prevail.

Vijay Kumar calls Sharma back and says, 'I have read the memo and your note. You know, all forgings are cleared by the Quality Control Department of the Indian Forgings. What the hell I can do if they are warped and not fit for machining?'

Sharma says, 'Who is responsible for arranging good forgings for panels?' Kumar says, 'of course, we are responsible. But you know...'

'What do you expect me to know? Should I tell the Director to fly down to Madras and ask the Indian Forgings MD to set things right for you', mocks Sharma.

'Well, I don't mean that', mumbles Kumar.

Sharma, leaning back in his seat, says, 'There is nothing much in it Kumar. I have given you clear directions, stating what exactly I wanted, and expected the results I had asked for'.

But what can I do, you tell me', Kumar says nervously.

'That is your problem. We all do our bit how can I wash your linen in addition to my own. If the correct forgings are not given to the General Machine Shop, slippage in schedules will be noted by the Director and in case he asks me for reasons, I will have no choice but to narrate your great achievements'.

Kumar left Sharma's room belligerent-wondering whose face he had seen, first thing in the morning.

4.4 Don't Give Me any Lip

In this episode we see Vijay Kumar being given directions for what he must do, in a 'solve the problem or else...' way. This is how Mr. Bull provides directions to his subordinates. What makes Sharma to act in the orientation of Mr. Bull could be seen from the fact that he offers no help, no suggestions, no thoughts as to how to solve the problem. We can assume that Kumar would have already solved the problem if he had known it how.

A big part of the job of a supervisor who operates as Mr. Bull, is to give clear-cut directions for what has to be done. Then, there can be no confusion; no excuses. If the job goes well, that is what was expected. If it is not carried out in the right manner the boss knows whom to blame.

Mr. Bull goes into details of the problem and how it should be, solved. Should the subordinate ask any question, the boss is likely to say, 'Wait until I have finished, so you have got the full picture. After finishing, Mr. Bull says, 'Now that is the problem. I have told you how do I want it to be done. Don 'improvise. No substitutions. No playing around and no shortcuts either. To seal the deal, Mr. Bull says,' any question?'- expecting none for he usually gets none. If things go wrong, Mr. Bull can always say, 'I asked you if you had any questions. You didn't have any, that time. It is all your fault.'

Giving directions in this way becomes difficult when the problem is one, with which the subordinate is not very familiar. It is worse when neither the boss nor the subordinate has any deep understanding of how to cope with the situation. The supervisor can't rely upon the subordinates expertise, yet he can't afford to admit being uncertain about the best way to deal with it Mr. Bull may shyly consult his colleagues to get their best ideas without asking them directly as to what's to be done. Then this is conveyed to the subordinates, directly. Or, the supervisor may bluff, knowing it is a rare subordinate who is willing to stand up and challenge. If the job gets done successfully, the boss may never know the ingenuity and toil it took for the subordinate to get it all together. The supervisor might say, 'Good. You see it was simple. I told you'. Beyond that Mr. Bull knows that if things do not turnout well, subordinates can be blamed for being stupid. He can then point a finger at the Director for having failed to give trained manpower even to meet minimum standards of competency.

4.5 Look Busy Feel Easy

He aims at getting results at any cost. Subordinates are no better than 'machine tool spares' for him. It may be noted that such supervisors are abrasive and bullying. You will agree with us that some subordinate may, at any time, refuse to tolerate further abuses.'

Such supervisors then face a rebellion of 'silence' and non-cooperation. The results for a short time can be very effectively achieved by supervising in the style of Mr. Bull. However, used over a long term, this style of supervision motivates people to become 'look busy feel easy' type. Subordinates start hating Mr. Bull and slowly this hatred 'turns' them to 'beat the system'.

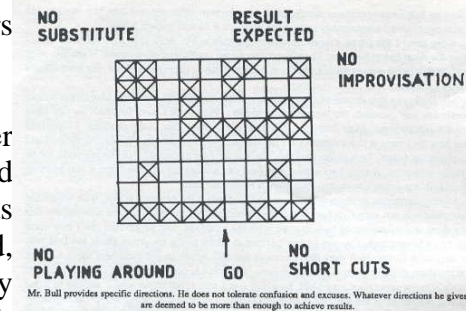
4.6 Adolf Hitler

The perfect example of this style of providing directions is Adolf Hitler, the founder of German Nazism and infamous tyrant who precipitated the Second World War. Hitler's assumptions about managing things were, eliminating disagreements before they arose. With a heavy hand, Hitler made his countrymen follow his directions and comply with his ideology. In exchange for this compliance, he promised his men the 'pride' of a superior race and the 'fruits' of the territories he conquered.

4.7 Roaring Readers

Venkat Reddy is 42 years old. He heads the Advanced Technology Division. He is sitting in his seat reading a one-page memo that has just been received. The document addressed to all divisional heads, is on the subject of return of books drawn from the library. It is strongly worded. After citing several examples of scientists retaining books over years, it stipulates that nobody would retain a book with him for a period of more than a month and it is part of the divisional head's responsibility to ensure this. Failing to comply is to be reprimanded. Indifference will be noted by the Director. Reddy is aware that many such officers work in his division.

Venkat Reddy has had a troubled past. His mother left him when he was a toddler. His father remarried when he was in school. His step mother was excessively rejective of him. Feeling neglected, Reddy developed a strong need for approval. Reddy is a happy person now. He has a family with a wife and two children. Life is secure under the umbrella of helpful in-laws, neighbours and bosses. Reddy is grateful for such a shield and he continuously rechecks with his in-laws, family members, neighbors and colleagues- 'Is this good? Is this right? Am I doing what you want? How do you want me to do this? Reddy tells his children also to be loving, kind, gentle and respectful to the elders.



Reluctantly, Reddy picks up the memo and walks into his weekly divisional meeting. He is too worried to make a light conversation. In fact, he even interrupts the tea break to get the meeting started clearing his throat; he takes up the first point on the agenda. He says, awkwardly, look friends, I know it is a difficult subject to bring up, but we are under pressure. They want us to return the books which we have drawn from the library, within one month of the issue. I think, we need to discipline ourselves a bit in this regard'.

Several hostile remarks come from his colleagues. 'How can you get even the feelings of an advanced subject in one month?' 'One month is not enough to get yourself oriented with a book'. We are the only persons using these books. Why the hell do they want to play School Master here'. 'We have better things to look at than that fat issue clerk'. 'Why don't they automatically reissue a book if it is not returned in a months' time'.

Reddy feels very uncomfortable. He says, 'I would appreciate if something can be done about being punctual regarding this'.

The conversation shifts to the next agenda point.

Later in the day, Reddy meets the Librarian and sympathises with him for taking so much trouble in retrieving the books. He apologises for the erratic attitude of the officers in his division. He requests him to provide him with the details of the books retained by his team members and promises to see that the books are returned in time. The librarian is impressed with the concern Reddy has for him and his work. The meeting ended with a hot cup of coffee brought by the librarian from his home.

4.8 Apologies and Promises

Reddy is following Mr. Cute's approach of providing direction. When faced with rejection from subordinates on bringing up an unpleasant topic, Reddy backs off in a fashion that totally de-emphasises the importance of the books being available to all readers. Further-more, anticipating the 'moment of truth'; when he will be grilled in the Divisional Heads' Meeting whether the memo is being complied with or not, Reddy makes a futile attempt at taking care of the problem himself, by approaching the librarian.

When directions must be given, Mr. Cute is likely to mention that a need exists, but does so in a very indirect way. He only hopes that subordinates are interested enough to take initiative themselves and ask questions to find out more about the situation. In this way, he expects them to 'own' the problem. It is not imposed on them, rather it is picked up and now it belongs to them. In offering answers to questions which is around about way of giving directions, the supervisor contributes to their understanding of a problem that concerns them. In this indirect manner, always Mr. Cute seems to be helping subordinates to deal with 'their' problems and almost never demands their help to solve a problem that has crept up. This is well and good when subordinates are really motivated to find and solve problems. However, it seldom happens under Mr. Cute's orientation of supervision. Under this kind of supervision, subordinates can work at whatever tempo is congenial and comfortable, without any fear of being taken to task for not producing more.

Why Mr. Cute does so? Why does he cultivate an atmosphere of warmth? One reason for this could be the fear of disapproval. Fear is an intense emotional reaction, and fear of being personally rejected is the strongest. Mr. Cute reacts to others according to his built-in uncertainties, rather than to the objective properties of the situation itself. In his efforts to avoid rejection, he is likely to be solicitous, acquiescent to others, and malleable.

This type of supervision certainly does not annoy the subordinates. Nor does it tie them down with self-defeating tensions or stimulate tensions that upset them and shatter their concentration for hours together. But there are some people who find challenging work rewarding, with stimulation originating in the work itself. When such persons are not challenged, frustration sets in because even though they may be well paid, they may feel that they are wasting time and making little or no contribution. They become resentful of their manager and contemptuous of his lack of efforts in the interest of organisational objectives. By giving approval without providing opportunity for genuine accomplishment, Mr. Cute may also provoke frustrations among subordinates which he most devoutly seeks to avoid.

4.9 Ambitious People Leave

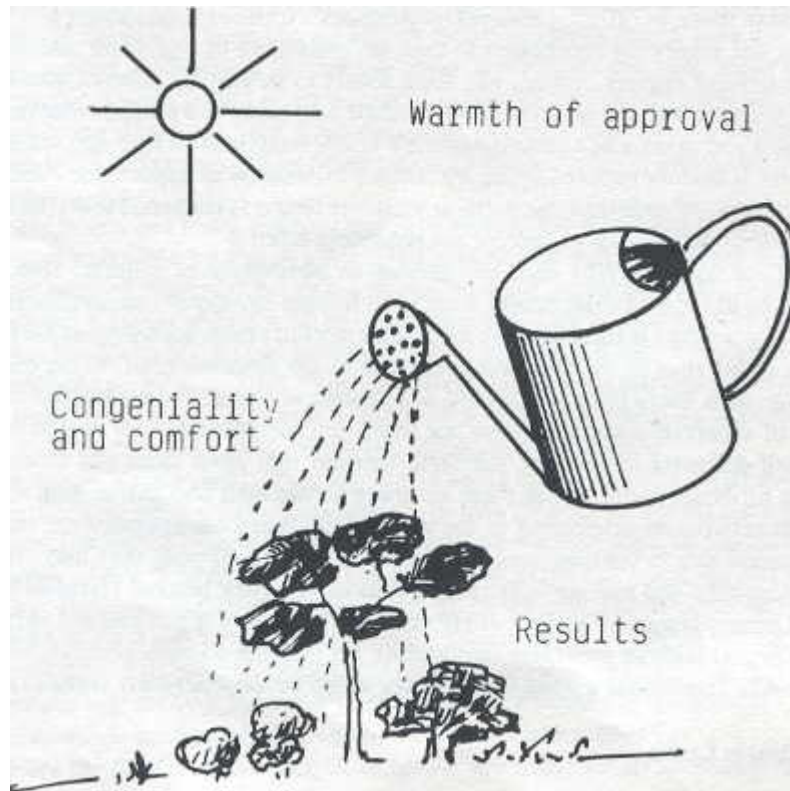
Subordinates who are committed to achievements and apply themselves to the tasks at hand, often visualise different and better ways of doing things. Changes that are required to bring better ways into practice, particularly those which involve several people, are likely to be unsettling and promote differences and disagreement. This is the thing Mr. Cute dislikes most. Therefore, when they see their creative and original ideas being smothered rather than being given a practical shape, they seek other opportunities.

Ambitious subordinates, who are dedicated to work and want to make a success by being productive, are unlikely to stay long under Mr. Cute. They come to realise that their efforts are not only likely to go unnoticed, but may also be retarded by the supervisor who will subtly pressurise them for less production in order to avoid stirring up others.

He plays for the gallery. All his actions aim at image building. Exchanging pleasantries, patting backs, tea parties, offering lifts are his prime gimmicks. Most of his conversations with his subordinates are about topics that have little or nothing to do with the work. This approach creates welfare organisations and the entire organisational energy will be consumed in the house keeping tasks itself, if applied in the long run.

4.10 Jehangir

The reign of Mughul king Jehangir, is recorded full of instances where directions were provided in this fashion. Jehangir's sole passion was to meet the whims and fancies of his beautiful wife, Noorjahan. He can be characterised by geniality. He was friendly with the queen, her associates, and her subordinates. He showered all of them with kindness. Jehangir lived through his days in 'Utopia'-unmarred by tensions and frustrations of a ruler.



4.11 Stubborn Stenographer

Gopal Rao is an Office Superintendent in the Finance Section of a large project organization. He is almost bald and has a pot belly. He has completed 28 years of service in this organisation. At the time of his last promotion, nine years ago, he was 42. Smt. Gopal Rao is a Bank Officer and earns a little more than Gopal Rao. She is possessive and supervises Gopal Rao very cleverly at home. She has created an overly coercive atmosphere of constant criticism and rebuke. They have three daughters. Two are placed in a residential school. The third and the youngest daughter is kept in a creche ever since Smt. Rao joined duty after her maternity leave.

At present, Gopal Rao is approaching his Stenographer with some typed sheets of papers. She is a fair complexioned lady, in her thirties. She is trimming her nails. Gopal Rao puts down the papers at her desk and asks her to retype a few pages of a chapter of Annual Budget Report. Some of the paragraph titles had been changed and some figures were revised after the completion of the original typing.

The Stenographer responds belligerently with, 'We do not retype chapters just for that. If you say, I will apply correction fluid and retype the titles and figures'.

Gopal Rao keeps his cool. His face is expressionless. 'The boss said we should do it', he mumbles and walks away.

The Stenographer glares at Gopal Rao's retreating back. She does not retype the sheets. Instead she calls the Planning Directorate and asks if retyping of a budget report chapter is necessary just to change some of the paragraph titles or a few figures here and there. The Planning Manager said that as far as they are concerned, it was not necessary. The stenographer strides into Rao's office to pass on the Planning Manager's opinion.

'So you see, Mr. Rao, I was right-there was no need to retype it. I am going for tea now. After coming back I will make the necessary corrections'.

While leaving the room she gave Gopal Rao a smile. A smile that reflected more vanity than vitality.

4.12 Message Passing

This is an instance of Mr. Dull oriented supervisors, giving directions and responding to a subordinate's reluctance to carry out the requested action. Gopal Rao passed on the retyping job to the Stenographer. The Stenographer resisted and finally Rao went along with her justification which she obtained from the Planning Directorate. If Gopal Rao's boss questions him, he can very easily carry the Stenographers answer one step further.

So, you see that Mr. Dull's approach of giving directions is, 'Here is what they want to be done. It is set out in this memo. Let me know when you have finished'. Then Mr. Dull leaves people alone, letting them do their work as they see it fit, hoping they will solve their problems by getting help from each other rather than coming back for assistance. Mr. Dun does not think in terms of goals or schedules. He also needs no planning because problems are turned over to subordinates.

In a sense, we might say Mr. Dun is a postman. He takes the word from the level above and hands it to one level below, adding to it only if necessary. This is passing directions 'through proper channels' by becoming part of the pipeline itself. Mr. Dun always keeps himself 'out of trouble' and believes in being 'away from the firing line'. You may notice Mr. Dun falling sick and applying casual leave on crucial occasions.

Whenever a supervisor with Mr. Dun's orientation is asked by his superior about how things were going, he invariably answers, 'Okay'. Further discussion is not encouraged by this kind of answer, yet there is nothing negative in it. In case the superior supervisor contradicts and points out some specific problem under his domain, he ponders, wonders if he is in trouble, and mumbles or tries to talk his way out of the situation if uninformed. Under such circumstances, he justifies inaction by saying, 'They would not understand', 'There isn't enough time', or 'Nobody would pay attention anyway'.

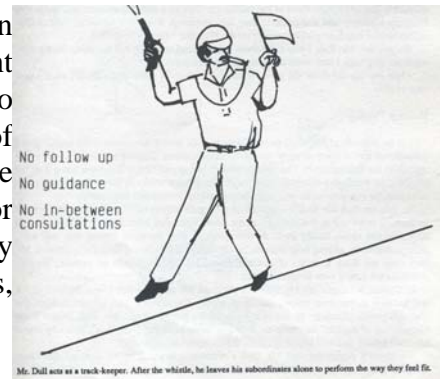
Why such a supervisory style emerges in organisations? There are conditions within organisations that promote the emergence of a Mr. Dull oriented supervisory style.

A wide spread Mr. Dull reaction is found in work activities where divisions of work and task simplification has been carried out to the extreme. In monotonous situations,

repetitions, unchallenging work, it has been estimated that as many as one-third of an organisational work force can be apathetic, bored, uninterested, withdrawn, and are uninvolved in the job itself. This population adjusts itself to the supervisory style of Mr. Dull.

4.13 Non Direction

How is it possible for an organisation to persist in ignoring its 'dead wood'. Probably it is in the silent expectations that operate in our organisations to guarantee every one job security after a few years of service so that a supervisor is safe until retirement. The resultant loss in productivity is either tolerated or ignored. The work situations lose direction. They become bureaucratic in nature, outlive their usefulness, and start 'making work' instead of doing work.



The subordinates who are eager for 'leg room' may find a Mr. Dull oriented boss ideal, without even recognizing the supervisory style of the boss for what it is. If the subordinate is self-initiating, the supervisor's withdrawal is almost unnoticeable. He interprets delegation as approval of his competence and charges forward, full steam, ahead, or if a subordinate recognizes that his immediate supervisor is a Mr. Dull type but if his next superior supervisor understands the situation, then his involvement and commitments can be great. He can simply ignore his immediate boss, and respond to the higher level boss, who provides whatever guidance and rewards needed by him.

4.14 Nizan

The last ruler of Hyderabad acted in a indifferent fashion in deciding his course of action when all the states of India got independence from the British. He failed to provide clear directions to his followers. His directions, which were vague, abstract, and general, led his men nowhere. He adopted a 'straddle the fence' strategy. He wanted to offend no one and thus appeared to be on both the sides at the same time. Once the final course of action was decided upon by the Indian Government to overthrow his regime, he coolly joined the Union of India.

4.15 Buttered Side of the Bread

Col. Menon is the Director of Project 'X'. This is a top priority defence project and every body in the South Block is keeping a watch on its progress. Col. Menon is tall, handsome and in his forties. He has a no-nonsense attitude towards work but believes in maintaining cordial atmosphere in his Directorate.

Col. Menon's father retired as a Brigadier after a very successful career in the Indian Army. He was an ambitious person and passed on similar traits to his son. Col. Menon attended the best schools and lived up to his father's expectations. After growing up, he retained some of his childhood habits. One such habit makes Col. Menon appear to be more guided by others' expectations than by his inner convictions. The social ethic of adjustment, based on appropriateness as defined by others is of ultimate value for Col. Mennen.

At this moment, he is sitting around a table with most of the officers of his project team. They are waiting for the clock to strike two so that they can start their special meeting. Col. Mennen has been informed by the Director earlier in the morning that since the new Raksha Mantri is very budget conscious, he had better start preparing his project managers to maintain proper and ready accounts of sanctions and purchases by the work centres coordinated by them. This will entail maintaining ready reckoners of expenditure and providing figures on different expenditure heads as desired by the Raksha Mantri.

Col. Menon is little worried. He has a fairly good idea regarding how his Project Managers will react to this proposition. Raksha Mantri's passion for accounting has already been widely publicised. Recently, he had over heard several remarks from Project Managers that the accounting work load was too great to bear, in view of the already committed time schedules,. Furthermore, they feel that as technical persons they have more important things to do concerning the Project than to become 'accountants'.

The Colonel calls the meeting to order at two o'clock. He opens by asking, 'How would you like to talk about doing a little financial management now and then, as we work through our usual programme? I know several of you are keen accountants-now you can indulge in your hobby during work time and get appreciation for it'. Immediately there are groans of 'Oh no'. Several of the Project Managers complain that it is not the part of their jobs and that they are overloaded anyway.

Col. Menon responds, 'Well, all of you know which side one's bread is buttered we are going to do something about it and I want all of you to have an eagle's eye on the money transactions. However, I understand your pre-occupations with project trials and I will appreciate if you would do it on a 'work-load permitting basis'.

4.16 Responsive Leadership

This is Mr. Nice's approach in giving directions. He acts more or less with a tentatively 'balancing' response, to rumours and feed back received. Mr. Nice believes in 'testing the wind' before stating a specific position. When resistance is encountered, he moves to a compromising position that at least, partially satisfies subordinates as well as his own superiors.

Moving forward, always in step with others and never in the lead, typifies the approach. It stays within the bounds of what every one else is doing as the ultimate criterion for appropriateness or pertinence. According to this line of thinking, a supervisor does not

command or direct, to get the job done so much as he motivates and communicates. He avoids exerting formal authority. His approach is to request and sell, in order to make people want to work.

Mr. Nice keeps up with each person's performance and reviews his progress from time to time. If a subordinate is having a difficulty, he tries to reduce pressure on him by rearranging conditions of work whenever possible. We might say, that a supervisor with Mr. Nice orientation keeps an eye on the tempo, people are ready to adopt, not by trying to speed it up but rather helping them to accept a situation they can feel okay about He makes more things more acceptable by ensuring that each subordinate feels free to come back if any help in carrying out the work is needed. Also, he prefers to maintain a tentative profile, while giving orders and does

4.17 Traditions and Routines

To give a sense of certainty to his directions, Mr. Nice often falls back on traditions, long established practices, or routinised procedures. When he can rely on history, he is relieved on being called to account for his own convictions. When traditions are not available, he finds out a precedent, even a single one, to solve conflict so that neither he nor his subordinate lose face.

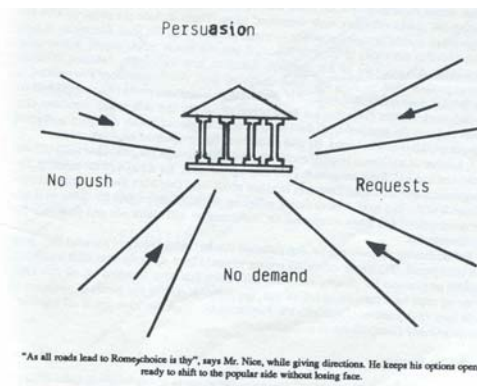
His conformity to the rules gives him the security of being an organisation member in good standing. Conflicts related to the exercise of independent judgement, are avoided and he is operating within the 'system', in the safest and most secure way.

4.18 Akbar

The political transactions of Emperor Akbar towards the kings and rulers of the smaller states were based on Mr. Nice approach of providing directions. Akbar expanded his empire to a large part of India without much confrontation. His was an uncomplicated approach, characterized by accommodation and adjustment. Because of Akbar's pervasiveness, any ruler who stood out as a saviour of his motherland took the risk of provoking envy and caused uneasiness among the rulers of the neighbouring states. His efforts to defend his territory were confused with 'creating trouble' for the 'peace loving' people. As a result, the rulers who wanted to fight against the Mughuls took a 'better think twice' attitude.

4.19 Poor Performers

Dr. Ranganathan heads an establishment of the National Research and Development Organisation. His parents expired in a road accident when he was a child of five. He was brought up by his grand father, who was a retired school teacher at that time. Stunned by the cruelty of fate, the old man gave a deep thought to his grand son's education. Keeping



in view the uncertainty of his own life, he decided to guide his grandson's growth and development towards the capacity for independent self-direction, based on his own sense of social responsibility. Living in an environment in which life was not all that easy, Ranganathan as a child, learned the natural consequences of his own actions, without direct guidance or evaluation.

Last week, Dr. Ranganathan was in Delhi to attend the Programme Management Board meeting of a big Research and Development Programme in which his laboratory is a participant.

In the concluding session of the meeting, work centre performance objectives were discussed. From the data on performance for the past six months, it became evident that there were a number of work centres identifiable as poor performers, relative to the laboratory and programme performance standards. Dr. Ranganathan noticed that in his own laboratory two of the work centres were poor performers. In fact, he realized that they were making the Project fall short of the over all objective.

It was agreed upon, at the conclusion of the meeting, that improvement efforts must be stepped up in these poor performing work centers.

When Dr. Ranganathan arrived at his laboratory he arranged a meeting of all Group Directors and reviewed with them, the objectives that had been agreed upon for accomplishment during the coming year.

'The number one item, of course, is unit performance. In that connection, 'a problem we have is that two of our work centres are performing below over. all averages', states Dr. Ranganathan.

'To begin with, can we discuss how their performance might be improved? Let us see how many ideas we can develop here, as a first step towards getting this problem licked', he suggests.

This kind of approach is not a sudden departure from his past supervisory style. His subordinates know they can bring up ideas, without the risk of being rebuffed, being put down or being ignored or smoothed over. Accordingly, as the members begin thinking over the unit performance problem and possible solutions to it, ideas are proposed and Dr. Ranganathan writes them down on the back side of a computer output sheet. Frequently, the growing list sparks off other team members' ideas. These include the proposal that Dr. Ranganathan should discuss the power shortage problem with the State Electricity Board,

Which provides electricity to these facilities (of late, the erratic power supply was causing many break downs). One of the members describes how inadequate transport facilities hamper persons from working over time on crucial days. Another member's suggestion is that through team effort, 100 per cent of the routine maintenance could be accomplished on the two work centres (This has not been achieved for the last two years).

Someone else points out that the manpower in the two centres be augmented with the spare personnel strength available at other units. He also offers two chargemen from his work centre.

A number of additional improvements are identified through the combined tea efforts. Individual and task force assignments are then agreed upon. By the end of the meeting, Dr. Ranganathan and the Group Directors are clear about what they have to do, to improve performance of the two work centres facing problems. Soon a detailed plan for doing so is under development and when completed, Dr. Ranganathan will check out and finalise it for implementation.

Before closing the meeting, Dr. Ranganathan thanks Group Directors for what they have just contributed. 'No single individual among us could have come up with such a comprehensive programme for phasing out these difficulties that have bothered us, all this time. What we must have been doing before was 'fire fighting' on bits and pieces of problems of these two work centres...' remarks Dr. Ranganathan. 'Now we have got it all together', comment many Group Directors enthusiastically.

4.20 Filling the Blanks

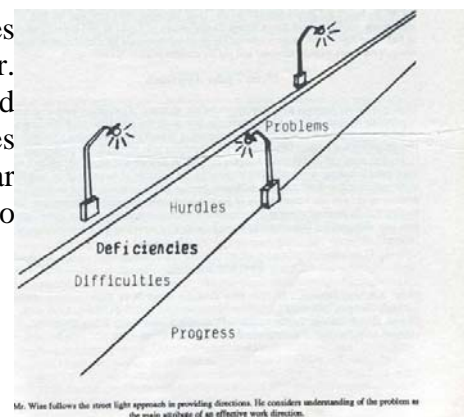
Under the supervision of Mr. Wise, directions are given in a way which is quite different from any of the other approaches. The basic difference is that goals and objectives have already been created, shared, and understood, through the team's problem-solving and communication process that is built up and maintained by this kind of leadership.

Thus, the supervisor's role is that of keeping 'from here to there' gap, between 'to be attained' goals and the present realities of progress in focus, as the gap is being narrowed and closed. The supervisors role is to maintain involvement rather than rely on obedience and 'police-patrol' of subordinates at their work locations. Mr. Wise sets little store in formal authority and power to penalise. Rather, he attains respect for his skill in aiding people to participate in a way that permits them to see the same path way, of what needs to be done, as is seen by the supervisor.

Dr. Ranganathan is a supervisor with the orientation of Mr. Wise. He approaches the problem of bad performance in two groups by involving all the Group Directors in formulating steps to improve the situation, rather than imposing his own steps for improvement.

4.21 Experimentation

Because of his readiness to try out novel approaches to the resolution of conflicting points of view, Mr. Wise is likely to be known as an experimenter and innovator. Experimentation for resolving differences is done, when two or more courses of actions appear equally attractive or when the outcome is difficult to



anticipate from the available facts, or when the participants see a situation from different and apparently irreconcilable perspectives. Evaluating alternative ways of operating experimentally, suggests moving forward into new terrain that will lead to a solution that previously had not been recognized. But how could it be done? Well, a pilot project. test run, or trial period may provide the actual basis for testing innovations. The dilemma, of which solution to utilise may be resolved thus and the basis behind a certain work direction could be established.

Mr. Wise knows that though a particular goal may be clear to him and though he may be able to give adequate directions for accomplishing it, it may be resisted by his subordinates if it makes no sense to them. He considers understanding of the problem as the main attribute of an effective work direction. Mr. Wise thinks, 'My job is to make decisions, but it is equally important to see to it that 'sound' decisions are made'.

4.22 Lord Rama

This approach of providing directions can be seen when Vibhishana came to Lord Rama for refuge. Before accepting Vibhishana, Lord Rama consults all his ministers. Almost every one was of the view that Vibhishana, being the brother of their enemy Ravana, could not be trusted. Lord Rama listened to all. Then Hanuman told him that he had seen Vibhishana praying to Lord Rama during his exploration of Lanka to find the whereabouts of Sita. Lord Rama went by the evidence. He proposed that in the light of Hanuman's testimony, Vibhishana must be accepted and got the consent of all of his colleagues.

4.23 Picture your Approach

Now, you should examine your most characteristic approach of providing work directions to your subordinates. Do you fit in a particular type or do you shift between different positions? Try to observe the consistency or discrepancy in each style. Analyzing your style of providing directions would further aid you in identifying your strengths and weaknesses.

Do you enjoy the competition, inherent in decision making and take a determined forward stand in making decisions which stick or get the opinions of the entire group and lean in the majority direction? Are you deliberate, precise and determined while providing directions or do you use contributions of your subordinates, if possible? Before you stop reading this chapter and move to the next chapter on supervisory function of communication, how about writing five sentences about your style of providing directions to your subordinate?

Further Reading

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5. The Word: Crux of Communication

5.1 The Link

Communication with your subordinates on technical/organisational/general personal matters is a very important function in your performance as an effective supervisor. To get the maximum and the best from your subordinates, you have to communicate on the goals and objectives of the organisation to each of them emphasising the importance of his own specific contribution towards the realization of these goals. Also, you have to act as a sensor to every constructive idea emanating from any of your subordinates and relay it to an appropriate forum for critical examination and facilitate implementation.

5.2 Conversation

Most of the time, communication is misunderstood with conversation. In fact, they are quite different. A good conversationalist need not necessarily be a good communicator. A conversation is most often devoid of any useful information, Majority of us, in many situations find the ideas put forward by another person as not appealing. Other persons also often reciprocate the same feeling to our ideas. When such a phenomenon occurs between a supervisor and his subordinate it automatically implies that some thing very wrong would be brewing in there and it ought to be removed to attain targeted results. This can be done by replacing conversations by communication. Let us have a look at the following transactions, to understand the difference between a conversation and communication.

Rama Rao is a Group Director. He is coming out after attending the Technology Council meeting where Arun Kumar, a Structural Engineer working in his Group, had given a presentation on the leak prevention methods in high pressure gas bottles. 'Your talk was very informative Kumar, Rama Rao says with a smile. Oh, it was nothing', Kumar says, blushing. This is conversation. A communication could be: 'Thank you Sir, I was working on high pressure sealings for the past three months'. You may notice the information Kumar passed on to his boss.

Athar Ali and Krishna Prasad are colleagues working in Composite Production Centre. They are relaxing after an extended tea break when they see Pradeep Datar coming from a distance, Ali says, 'This poor fellow did not get promotion this year too. How dare 'they' do such a thing to a young scientist?' Krishna Prasad takes a deep breath and says, 'There, there, man. I don't know why does he work under that stupid boss in the very first place' 'This is a conversation which could be made into a communication like, '-Well, that is not a good news. But there is nothing to get disheartened about. After all, only 50 per cent officers were promoted this year'. Here, factual information is provided.

Shanta Ram and Keshu Sastry work in Finance Section. They prepare tax returns of all the officers working in their establishment. Both are in their fifties and live within tight

budgets. Dropping his pen and leaning back in his seat Sastry chuckles, 'It is disgusting, the taxes keep going up to feed all these 'no goods' at the public trough'. Shanta Ram looks at him and says, 'Where will it all end?' 'Now look at this alternative response -'We are living in a welfare state. If we are going to keep spending on poorer sections of society, we have got to get the money from somewhere.' This is communication which breaks the conversation before it could develop into a gossip.

5.3 Communication

For a communicant, it is important to realise that communication is a two party affair and that it aims at passing off or getting back a specific bit of information. To make a communication effective and avoid it from turning into a conversation or gossip, it is necessary to have a look at the psychological positions usually taken by the communicants. The following examples highlight some typical psychological positions, supervisors and subordinates take in our set up.

5.4 Psychological Positions

When talking to a subordinate, supervisors very often take the 'Big Brother' stance and expect the subordinate to play the complementary role. If the subordinate complies, things work fine, otherwise, the work suffers and the purpose of both the supervisor and subordinate being in the organisation gets defeated. Let us look at some examples where things work fine with a 'superior' supervisor.

When the supervisor said 'I am so worried about my son's examination tomorrow. I cannot concentrate on this report'; the subordinate received the covered message and complies, saying, 'You can leave work early to go home and assist Babu in his preparations. I will complete the report'. Another supervisor orders, 'I need 25 copies of this report for the Board meeting this afternoon. Go and get it for me'. The demand is not reasonable. Even if the subordinate drops all other work he is currently doing, it will be a difficult task.

However the subordinate obeys, saying, 'I will get the copies by 2 o'clock. Will it be O.K?' Yet another supervisor fires his subordinate like this -'If you cannot type a page without mistakes, why don't you throw your electronic typewriter out of the window. 'The subordinate does not react in the spirit and says, ' something else made you so angry, Sir, that you feel like throwing things around, I will retype the letter. Excuse me for the same.'

Now let us look at the situations where a cross -communication takes place between a supervisor and a subordinate. The supervisor is upset with the results his subordinate has given after an experiment. He says, 'There must be some more variables which you have not considered for this experiment.' The subordinate replies, 'so what, who cares around here?' Another supervisor asks his subordinate, 'Can you get the test set up ready by this afternoon?' The subordinate says, 'Today I have to go to dispensary .Group Director expects expenditure account. All helpers are on Restricted Holiday, and now you want me to prepare the test setup.' Yet another supervisor fires his subordinate on being unable

to trace an important paper, 'You would misplace your head if it was not fastened on to your shoulders. 'The subordinate retorts 'don't compare my head with your useless memos.'

5.5 Convictions

When taking position about themselves before entering into a transaction with the supervisor, subordinates are prone to conclude some extreme situations. Some feel that they are smart. Some consider themselves as stupid some feel that they are powerful, some consider themselves inadequate. Some have a belief that they are nice, and others understand that they are nasty. Some believe they can't do anything right and some believe they can't do anything wrong. You may find a subordinate who says, 'I am as good as anybody else around here' and you may also hear someone telling, 'I don't deserve to hold my position.

As you may notice, none of these situations is correct. In fact, the actuality lies somewhere in between the two extremes. However, since a subordinate has already taken a stand, the supervisor is likely to make mistakes during the transaction that follows.

Similarly, when taking positions about his boss, subordinate may conclude: Boss will give me anything I want/nobody will give me anything; Boss will help me/He is out to get me; Boss likes me/Nobody likes me; Boss is nice/Boss is mean. Again you see, in reality, the boss is somewhere in between these two extremes and the exact stand depends on the context and merit of that particular transaction. But once a psychological stand is taken by one party, the expectation from the other party is to play the complementary role. If this position is not clearly understood by the second party, it may likely to deviate from the expected stance and the communication will not be effective. Let us see how our five supervisors communicate with their subordinates. Here are some real life transactions.

5.6 The Vigilance Officer

JP Saxena is a Vigilance Officer in a large Public Sector Undertaking. He is 47 years old and a good tennis player. The competitive spirit is in his blood. As in office, he enjoys the 'win - lose competition' at the tennis court also. He is always punctual. He walks straight at a 'faster than others' pace. He speaks 'maximum words per minutes' in his office, as well as in the entire neighbourhood. One of Saxena's responsibilities as a Vigilance Officer is to verify the cash balance in the Accounts Section, from time to time. Today, he had an early tea and minutes before the regular morning tea break he arrives in the Cash Section. The Cash Assistants standing together for the tea greet him with a respectful 'good morning'. He announces, 'I am starting with a spot checking of cash; go to your respective counters'.

'Please have your seat, Sir. We are about to take tea. Why don't you join us, Sir,' the Chief Cashier says. 'It is all right', Saxena says. 'Just put your cash registers at one table and finish your tea without wasting much of my time', orders Saxena.

At that moment. The Accounts Officer enters the Cash Section. Seeing the Vigilance Officer he welcomes him saying, 'Good morning Saxena Sa'b, this is quite a surprise. I did not know you are visiting us today.' 'You are not supposed to know either' cuts Saxena. 'I do not usually set up appointments in advance for Vigilance checks', he replies curtly.

'Please come into my office Sir, till my men arrange the Cash for counting. Let us have a cup of tea', Accounts Officer tries to relax Saxena.

'I have already had my tea and I want to be here only till the counting is complete. Now ask your 'guys' not to waste any more time. Also, keep the doors closed as long as I am here', Saxena seals the deal.

5.7 Communication Diode

Here, Saxena is following the approach of Mr. Bull.

He feels that communication can be more than just one way, from boss downwards, but it is mostly that way. Reverse communication is only to report compliance. His role as a Vigilance Officer is to outline what is to be done, how, when, and by what time. Others are deemed as subordinates by him. Their role is simply to comply, he believes. We are not saying that Mr. Bull doesn't want the subordinates to communicate at all. He certainly does. They should nod agreement with what they have been told. Then, there can be no doubt. They should know who is going to do what, when, and how. They should report as soon as the work is finished. Then, his job is to check and assure himself that every thing had been done in the manner 'he had outlined'.

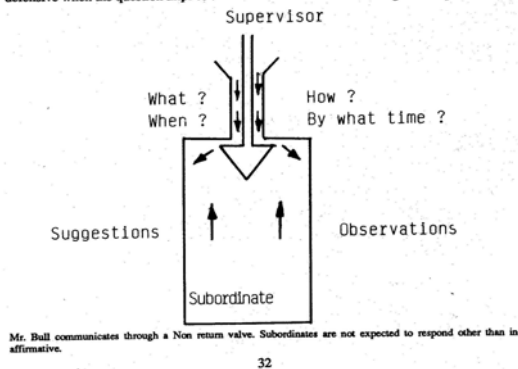
Mr. Bull's concept of communication between a supervisor and his subordinates is the formula 'Tell them, tell them that you told them, and tell them again'. Then there is no need for subordinates to ask questions. Questions confuse the issue. They waste time too.

In this episode, the Vigilance Officer imposes his will on the Accounts Officer and his subordinates, almost relying on pressure tactics, to reduce their resistance and threatening them with failure. He is unnecessarily offensive in referring to the staff of the Cash Section as 'your guys', and expects them to forego their morning tea (which he himself has, however finished). The Accounts Officer is also expected to buckle in a similar way.

5.8 Offensive Questioning and Defensive Listening

In the ordinary course of person-to-person discussions, Mr. Bull's ways of winning a point can be observed in the manner a supervisor asks questions, as well as how he does

listen to what is being said to him. These are important aspects of communication.



A typical way to take the offensive is to ask a question but not explain the reason why the information is wanted. The supervisor does this because it is a speedy and direct way to get to the point. He is neither wasting his own time nor the time of his subordinate. As he sees it, the question is essential and that is sufficient reason for asking it. The subordinate is put on the defensive when the question implies that it is asked because something is wrong.

On the other hand, when a subordinate speaks, Mr. Bull is likely to be anticipating a threat to his all-important targets. If through such defensive listening, the supervisor can find errors or omissions, he can launch an attack on those points. Defensive listening has the advantage of keeping the boss alert to the opinions, thoughts, and attitudes being revealed. The disadvantage is, however, that he need not realise what he is really being told. What he hears stimulates his aggressiveness and triggers his 'win-lose attitude'.

For Mr. Bull, words are more than vehicles of communication. They can be weapons in deed. His orientation leads to evaluating attitudes that results in black -white, good -bad, all -or - none types of thinking patterns discussed earlier. In such situations, judgments are premised on pre-established criteria. In addition, dogmatic phrases such as 'always', 'never', 'you can't', 'you must', and 'you should', are used to box in his subordinates.

5.9 Tactics and Taunts

He often exaggerates facts, uses uncheckable data, and twists logic. He quotes authority for his views and challenges the authority quoted by others. Raising his voice and dramatics, are his other communicational tactics. Ironically, Mr. Bull does not do all these deliberately. None of these involve any outright dishonesty. Mr. Bull tries to keep his conscience clear. He is quite certain he has always acted with utmost sincerity and personal dedication to the righteousness of his cause.

Mr. Bull loves taunts. One of his often used taunts is 'How much do you want to bet on whether or not I am right? Come on, lay down whatever you have in your purse'. He does it to make his subordinate look ridiculous. He waits for something to go wrong and then

pounce on the subordinate who was responsible in his judgement He justifies his efforts with the argument that people cannot improve unless they are aware of their shortcomings and take action to correct their own deficiencies.

When everything fails, Mr. Bull pulls his rank on subordinate in order to suppress disagreement This results in negative information being passed up through each level. For example, information about quality control problems at lower levels is filtered and muted to the point that when it does reach the top, much of its validity has been lost However, in this process, the subordinate level is 'protected' from aggressive or punitive action from the top, at least in the short term. 'Forgetting' some part of a frustrating incident is another mental trick subordinates of Mr. Bull develop while communicating with their supervisor.

5.10 Winston Churchill

The British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill used to communicate in the above mentioned orientation in the difficult period of World War II. He used to communicate to bring his adversary to his knees. By the successful use of humour Churchill made his opponents look ridiculous. His communication used to be loud and argumentative. His approach to communication could be summed as 'How could you possibly understand what I was saying when you did not know what I am talking about'.

5.11 'Hardly' Working Workers

During a weekly Group Directors' meeting, the Director is emphasising the need to curtail the non-productive working hours. He observed that the employees form a crowd and gossip near the punching clocks while going in or out of the laboratory. This incidence belongs to a Regional Research Laboratory established to make advances in the field of chemistry and chemical technology. Director felt that it creates a bad impression about the general discipline in the laboratory and asked the members to see that there are no gatherings near the punching clocks.

Nirmal Palekar is the Director of a Rubber and Industrial Polymer Group. He is in his fifties. A bit bulky, fair complexioned and highly cultured person. He is extremely compliant and agreeable and would go out of his way to please his subordinates, whom he always calls as his associates.

In his early childhood, Palekar developed a strong emotional conflict between resentment of parents and docile submission to them. His mother was a very strong personality .She always dominated all her children with strong ties of affection and dependence. She wanted Palekar to become a mature person who is loving, kind, gentle, and respectful to her. And in this specific way Palekar was shaped.

Palekar meets his so called associates in a regular get-together, every Wednesday afternoon. The session begins at 3 O'clock with refreshments and social conversation.

Palekar enjoys these meetings and looks forward to every Wednesday. He mixes up with his subordinates freely and shares their moods.

Today he had started the session by expressing concern about erratic water supply in the city and potholes on the roads. After lightly touching some points that were discussed in this week's meeting of the Group Directors, he finally mentioned, 'Employees are taking very long time near the entrance gate and Director is very upset about it. He has asked me to convey that he would appreciate if we could motivate our colleagues to be a little faster in their movements'

'We are neither wardens of a prison camp nor are we on the patrol duty to observe curfew in the locality. We are scientists and lesser involvement with this kind of problems will be better for our productivity', someone comments.

Palekar lets the remarks go by. He says, 'Look, we must understand the Director's position also. He has to run the 'show'. For what goes at the benches, he is not holding us responsible. His concern, however, is that -whatever happens within the four walls of our laboratory must not be made public. All that the old man wants is a disciplined look at the gate. I feel we should be able to rise to the occasion.'

The members exchange glances. Few grunts of 'Hmm ' are made. The mood of the gathering turns damp. Palekar becomes uncomfortable. He changes his posture in the seat. Then someone starts discussing Employees Cooperative Society .The conversation shifts to the persistent non availability of Colgate toothpaste in the Society's General Store. Patellar feels relieved.

5.12 Indirect Expression of Position

Normal Paler has acted in a Mr. Cute manner. Mr. Cute normally communicates in a non controversial manner. Although he does not remain silent, he expresses himself in such away that he is not taking a fixed position or even making a 'declarative' statement from which he might later have to retreat. His communication expresses a point of view but in such an indirect manner that if someone disagrees with it, the point is not directly turned down. He makes efforts to continue discussions only if there is agreement in sight.

A supervisor with Mr. Cute's orientation communicates frequently with subordinates. He encourages get togethers and other forms of social interactions in his department. Friendly 'give-and- take' assures that every thing is okay, in the sense, people are feeling good. The best way to do this is to maintain close, and informal conversation. Then any rumblings of dissatisfaction are detected as they first begin to appear. By anticipating whatever is going on, Mr. Cute can be helpful in assisting subordinates to adjust to their situations. Taking time to listen may relieve whatever tensions currently exist. These conversations often are about topics that have little or nothing to do with work. And Mr. Cute may like it better if he can join a friendly discussion in which somebody else starts rather than taking the initiative himself.

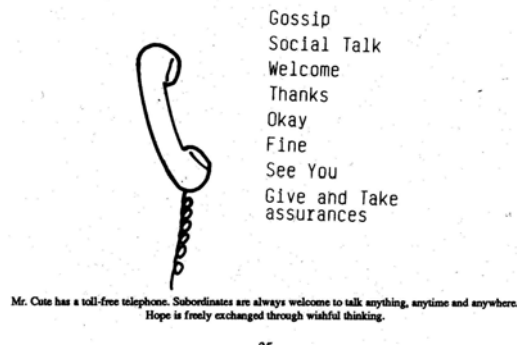
Notice the way in which Palekar fails to communicate the main issue of the problem of nonproductive working hours. He tries to express his Position in an indirect manner and makes a weak request to 'give a disciplined look', instead.

5.13 Happy Family

'Togetherness' is one key concept when Mr. Cute communicates with others in his work place. He looks at his work group as 'one big, happy family'. He is likely to go overboard for 'togetherness', not only to perform tasks, but for sociability. He feels this can avoid reduction in productivity because one member would help another who is feeling poorly or has fallen behind.

Meetings are the occasions for getting together in view of a Mr. Cute oriented supervisor. He does not start meetings until everyone is present. This indicates their social importance. When topics are avoided because they might imply work pressures or criticism of a person, meetings continue to be unimportant to organisation tasks. Under this type of a communication network, people are not anti- work in the sense of actively resisting it, but because of the lack of interest of their supervisor, they tend to become less and less involved in the work in course of time.

5.14 Tea, Coffee or me



Tea clubs are the permanent features in an organisation with this kind of orientation towards communication. The day begins on a light note as people drift in for tea and snacks. This is breakfast for many, hence time is taken in the same spirit. Around 12 O'clock, hands are washed for a thirty minute lunch session which starts at 1230. Since talking while eating is not considered a healthy manner the lunch interval is followed by a fifteen-to-twenty minutes rest -chat-break. The informal rule is 'Leave your problems at your desk ...no serious work discussions during the breaks.

A supervisor with this type of orientation meets his subordinates frequently and encourages them to meet him whenever they like. His door is always open. His desire is to get them the things they want without their having to ask. This is his way to communicate with people.

subordinates of Mr. Cute often say, ' I would not want a change of work. I enjoy the people I work with. I couldn't ask for better conditions of comfort and serenity'. This kind of person feel secure in an organisation that satisfies their cravings without imposing demands.

5.15 Ghalib

The legendary Urdu Poet Mirza Ghalib wrote in the most difficult times of Indian History. Small rulers and scattered groups were fighting the British to save their motherland. The atmosphere was filled with resentment and frustration. Yet Ghalib completely side stepped these emotions in his poetry .This communication to his readers was done under the fear of disapproval of the powerful. The fear of being personally rejected did not allow Ghalib to make a honest communication. In his efforts to avoid rejection he wrote poetry which is solicitous, acquiescent to others, and malleable.

5.16 Data Processor

N. Rama Prasad heads the Material Management Division (MMD). He is 45 and has completed more than 20 years of service in a Development Establishment dealing with fuel efficient transport vehicles. During his stay in the establishment he has worked in five divisions in different capacities. With his present seniority he gets the top position in this division where other officers are at least two ranks junior to him.

Prasad comes from a lower middle class family which migrated to the city to escape from poverty in the village. Both of his parents took up work to earn a decent living in the city. This unfortunately resulted in an intense conflict between them. The child Prasad witnessed daily quarrels and late night fights. The only escape he could have from these terrifying emotions withdrawal. As he grew up he came to react to any conflicting situation in a similar fashion. Now he has a family consisting of wife and three children but he keeps an unusual emotional distance between himself and them. He resents any bonds put around him. Neither he wants others' affection nor does he want to fight them out. He no longer has any harsh feelings towards anybody and manages to get along with every body, on a fairly even keel.

Prasad has finished his morning 'Puja' after taking his seat and is persuing the Dak. Mathivanan, a Stores Superintendent in his Division walks in. Mathivanan is a young man. He is a commerce graduate and takes immense interest in his work. He is brimming with confidence. He seems to have been inspired by a problem and what he sees as an excellent solution to it.

Mathivanan believes that with the growing volume of incoming stores, there is a need to computerise the preparation of Inspection Reports (IRs). He further feels that there should be a central data processing unit with MMD hooked up to the terminals in all technology directorates in order to keep in close touch with the stores demanding officers and to clear payments expeditiously.

'Well, I don't see anything wrong with the level of service MMD is giving, Prasad says. 'We do have some complaints from some Group Directors, but they have hardly anything better to do otherwise', he chuckles. 'Our working level scientists are, by and large, contented with our work', Prasad says with a proud smile.

Mathivanan is not convinced. He knows things are not as good as seen by Prasad. 'The point is not the degree of happiness officers in the laboratory have in dealing with MMD, it is the payment to the suppliers which gets delayed if an IR is not cleared. The Establishment is getting a bad name due to such payment delays' .Mathivanan explains to Prasad.

'I can see your point Mathivanan, but things are not as straight as you see them. All your talk is very appealing but who will give us a Data Processor? You don't know what a tight-fisted fellow our CFA is. And I won't blame him also, the entire budget process is complicated beyond the understanding of a common man's mind. Asking for a Data Processor is going to take a lot of work on our part, and I see very little hope of our getting the equipment anyway', says Prasad.

Mathivanan continues to argue persuasively, providing examples and reasons why would it be beneficial to make the effort.

Prasad doesn't react any further. He lets Mathivanan talk for a while and then says, 'Well, Mathivanan, we had a very good discussion. Now better get back to work. I shall see what I can do about it'. Mathivanan leaves and Prasad turns back to other things until it is lunch time.

A week later, when Prasad stops by Mathivanan's Office he asks him whether he was able to do anything about securing the equipment they had discussed.

Prasad solemnly replies, 'I have been thinking about it and intending to look into the budgetary process required to bring the item to the CFA's attention'.

He then says, 'Well, I won't keep you, Mathivanan. Thanks for bringing it up'. He leaves.

5.17 Little Talk

This is Mr. Dull's approach to communication. Prasad fails to respond candidly to Mathivanan's request. It is probably obvious to Mathivanan that the boss, never really intended to do anything.

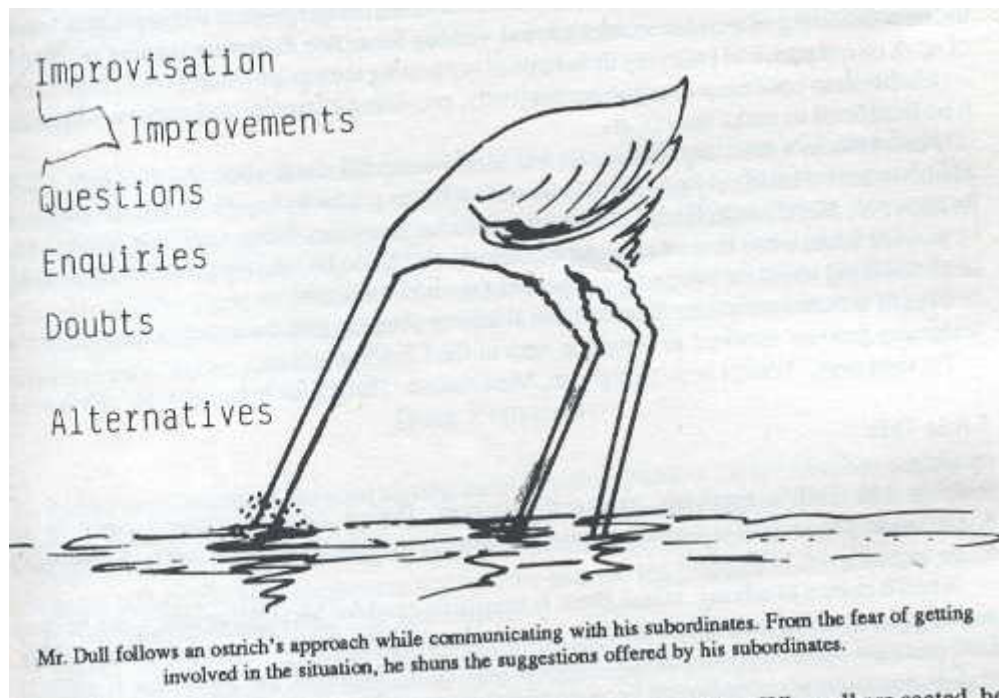
When it comes to talking, infact, there is very little need for Mr. Dull to talk, since he does not think in terms of giving information to subordinates. Yet there are number of ways a Mr. Dull oriented supervisor goes about communicating. For example, the supervisor is unlikely to pose questions to subordinates because questions provoke answers and sometimes counter questions. Then the supervisor has to deal with them. The supervisor therefore, prefers to leave it up to the subordinates to make enquiries, on

the assumption that the subordinate should know what information is required. Day in and day out Mr. Dull says to himself, 'If they want the information, they shall ask for it'. If they do, Mr. Dull answers if it is within his knowledge or, if not, promises to find out. More often, Mr. Dull answers, 'Somalingam is the expert on that -why don't you go and see him?'

And, when it comes to listening, Mr. Dull is not too attentive. A Mr. Dull kind of supervisor is neither emotionally involved with subordinates' problems nor feels the necessity to demonstrate his knowledge in solving these problems. The preference is to let subordinates talk as much as they wish and to turn their thinking to other things.

5.18 All Form No Substance

Mr. Dull's approach to communication is to cooperate with requirements. This translates into, 'going through the motions'. If the system calls for each supervisor discussing goals with subordinates, he does so. If it calls for the supervisor to review these with his own supervisor, he does so. If it requires documentation and paper work, he does so. On paper, it would appear that Mr. Dull is a very serious supervisor and communicates systematically with his hierarchy.



Yet Mr. Dull's approach is 'all form, no substance...'. Mr. Dull does not give his thought and emotions to what it might really be possible for him to accomplish, by communicating in a particular transaction. Communication is just 'message passing', for him. He holds scheduled meetings for downward communication as a matter of establishment's policy. He discusses changes in procedures, policies, and the like and

asks each member to initiate appropriate changes within his own area of responsibility, In the meeting itself. Mr. Dull's behaviour appears commendable. He listens and takes notes, both indicators of his own supervisory interest in the activities pertaining to his division.

As per his usual custom, he calls his five subordinates to his office, When all are seated. he reads the decisions taken during the meeting carefully, so that no one can say later that he was not communicated, After his recitation, he files his dated notes and keeps them in his cupboard.

If a subordinate ventures a question concerning how and when a particular change is to be effected Mr. Dull says. 'Director did not comment on that'.

5.19 Wajid Ali Shah

The last Nawab of Awodh. Wajid Ali Shah was a popular ruler, and yet he failed to communicate with his people when the British invaded his kingdom. Wajid Ali Shah's communication was evasive. It was an 'unnatural behaviour for a king, His was a situation of communication break- down, which ultimately led to self-abdication.

5.20 The Production Reports

Ganesh Parsai is a Supervisor of the Inventory Accounting Section in the Material Management Group of a large production organisation, He is 35 years old and maintains an athletic physique, He is a well dressed person and gives a lot of importance to general cleanliness and office decor, He is punctual and likes systematic way of doing things, He is married and has a five year old daughter.

Parsai is sitting in his office. His section is responsible for accounting the incoming raw material and following items of fabrication, periodically. The section publishes inventory and material stock report for the information of various groups in the organisation. During the last four years he has supervised this section, the systems have been redeveloped and all employees have been thoroughly trained in their particular jobs. Recently, Personnel Manager interposted a newly recruited engineer to Parsai's section. The new comer is a man in his twenties. This is his first job. He has taken up material management as a 'minor' subject of studies during his post graduation in Mechanical Engineering.

Parsai assigned a job to the new officer which entails preparation of Group-wise production reports. After gaining familiarity with the job, the new officer approaches Parsai with a plan to consolidate the Group-wise reports (items fabricated Group-wise) into two, more comprehensive reports (material consumption and expenditure incurred on items fabricated for all Groups.) The officer contends that this would continue to provide the information the groupwise reports had furnished, yet require only 60 percent as much time to prepare them. Besides, this consolidation would allow the organization's management, updated figures on the cash flow in fabrication. One group will be able to

know any surplus available in another group to meet its immediate requirements. Parsai replies, 'Yes, it seems to make sense but let me check with the various Group Directors and Planning Manager who use the reports, to get their reactions'.

Showing friendly interest in a subordinate is in Parsai's nature. He has been brought up by his parents as a child who is adaptable and socially -centred. His father was a Bank Manager in a small town, He encouraged child Parsai to fit into the appropriate group, take on popular points of view and gain satisfaction from belonging.

Parsai has lunch, the next day, with Director of Auxiliary Fabrication Group and Planning Manager in the Executive Canteen. While taking the concluding dish of carrot 'halwa', he casually mentions that he is considering changing the production report format. The Group Director conveys that he is not sure if it is for better, but will think about it. The Planning Manager replies that he is very much pleased with the reports he is receiving now and would hate to see them changed. Parsai ends the conversation by saying 'it is only something he is thinking about and he would let them know later'.

A few days after this luncheon meeting the officer who had suggested the consolidation of production reports, approached Parsai, asking about the status of his recommendation. Parsai offers him coffee from the flask he used to bring from home and replies, 'Well, I have studied the situation. It will take some time to implement your recommendations'. After a pause, he added, while your idea seems sound on the face value, there are some latent repercussions and it is probably better for us to maintain the current reporting system since it seems to be working very well and users like it I appreciate your suggesting on this and certainly want to hear any other suggestions you have in future'.

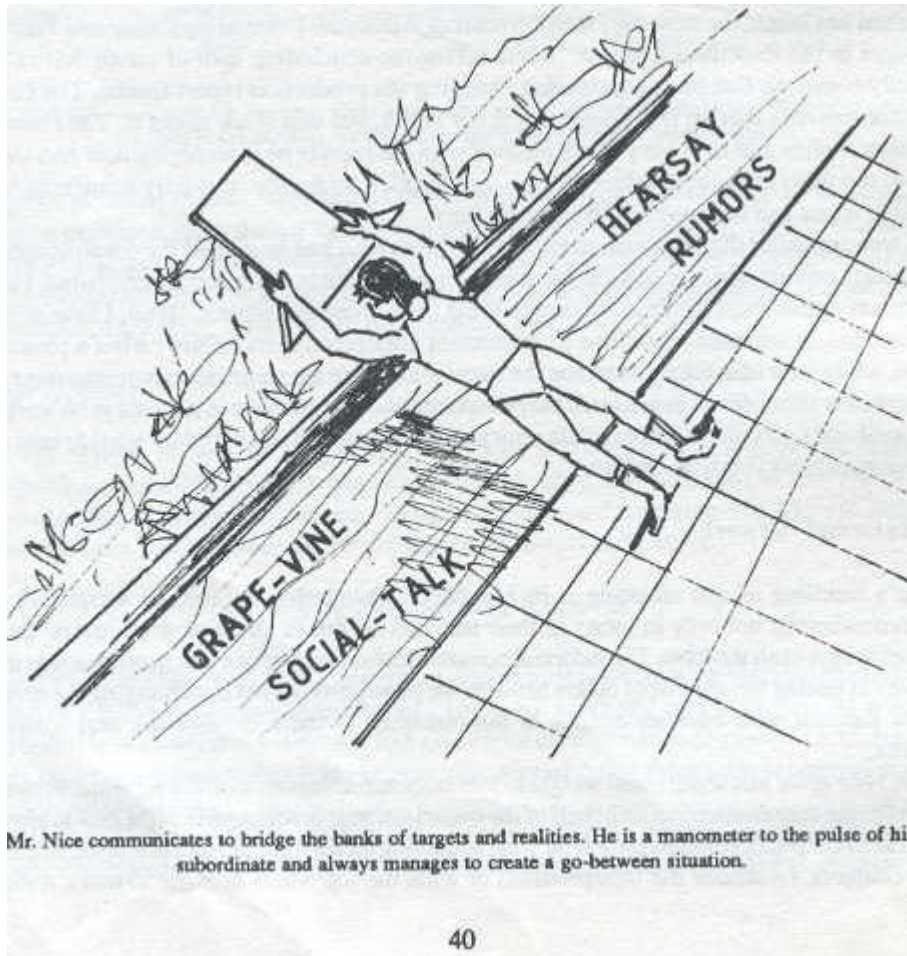
5.21 The Informal Network

Parsai's handling of this situation is in Mr. Nice's orientation because he weighs all the recommendations not only in terms of their true merits, but in terms of what 'users' think, without access to all the facts. The informal communication system of a luncheon chat was used as away of testing the attitude of others towards the possibility, rather than bringing the several people together who have an interest in the outcome, to think through the best solution, together.

Mr. Nice gives just about equal weight to formal communication as to the informal network. When formal communication on behalf of the organisation is involved, Mr. Nice makes always an effort to keep subordinates posted on what is coming down from the top. If it is too negative in its contents, he shades the interpretation of what the top wants in order to make it more palatable. But no dishonesty is involved. While passing the word also, he reshapes the wordings and present the matter so that it would not produce trouble 'upstairs'.

5.22 Open Window

Mr. Nice's interest in informal communication is mainly because it is an open window to the pulse of the people around. It brings out the ways they are feeling, the matters which are disturbing them, the pressure points that worry them, and like wise. By keeping the antenna



out and knowing all these things, Mr. Nice is in a position to take or to recommend different measures of actions. The supervisor with Mr. Nice orientation can start a contradictory rumor in order to block one that has been heard but that needs to be countered. He can use what is known from the informal communication network as the basis for timing either good or bad messages from above. Beyond that, of course, by 'keeping in touch', he frequently is able to pass information up that permits higher levels of management to take corrective action concerning matters that would have a bad effect on organisational productivity , if left unattended. Nothing about this informal communication is official, and it is likely to be indefinite as to who said what and to

whom. His famous phrases include 'They are saying', 'It has been suggested', 'Everyone seems to want', 'Several of my people have told me' and so on.

5.23 Go Between

In terms of what is being said among people, and what other people are eager to know, a Mr. Nice oriented supervisor is in a 'go-between' position. He keeps the bosses higher up tuned in to what is going on and tries to figure out what the 'public relations consequences' of a course of action will be in the event it is made 'official'. By a series of corrections, Mr. Nice oriented supervisor can find a position which gets the job done in a 'reasonably' good manner, without stirring up too much trouble.

Under this kind of supervision, you may notice the presence of grapevine, rumors, hearsay, as well as a good deal of irrelevant talk that is not pertinent to any organisational purpose. However, while Mr. Nice's communication does not truly belong to the organisation, it is about the organisation.

5.24 Lawrence or Arabia

Colonel T. E. Lawrence did not belong to any Arab state or tribe. He landed up there by circumstances. Yet he communicated with the local population in a very powerful way. His ideas of self-respect were well taken by the people, living under Turkish tyrants. He led Arab military campaign against Turks, and fought for independent Arab states. Colonel Lawrence's communication was the 'information transaction through feelings'. Words played very little role there.

5.25 Raw Material

Santokh Singh heads Production Planning and Control Group in the Directorate of Engineering in a Armament Development Laboratory .He is in his forties. He comes from an agricultural background. His father was a progressive farmer. Not only was he quick to adopt advanced techniques in farming, he had an explicit systematic model for the kind of person toward which he intended to guide Santokh Singh's development His father wanted a son who had the capacity to act with authority in any situation. Santokh Singh lived up to his father's expectations. He is spontaneous and acts as per his wishes.

Singh is going through the progress status reports from various shops in the Directorate. As he studies this information, he notices that production in two of the units is down by 10% and 20% respectively. All other units are at or above the standard performance level, established collectively by all work shops in the Directorate. Singh checks with the Project PERT. He sees that the delay would lead to slippage of PDC. He knows that Director, Engineering will be asking about it. very soon. Singh picks up the telephone and summons the foremen from the two units to his office. He asks them to bring all technicians concerned with the components at hand.

Singh begins the meeting by asking the possible reasons for the sluggish progress of components production in the unit. Both foremen reply that, while there have been some problems recently, they felt progress is at par with the normal pace. Singh is not impressed. He produces the weekly reports and suggests they study them in order to understand the numbers. After a few minutes, everyone agrees that progress in their unit is definitely down. Some further discussion leads to an agreement that each foreman and technician immediately evaluate the activities under his direct control, and another meeting is scheduled after two hours (after the lunch break). Its purpose is to develop a plan of action to rectify this problem.

Santokh Singh believes in active participation of all, in problem solving and in decision making. He feels that passively accepting instructions as to what to do or inactivity reinforced by social isolation hampers most a subordinate's growth and development. He considers communication as a process to build up mutual understanding. His communication with his subordinates is open in contrast to the hidden, closed, or mis-directed communication that, he feels, increases barriers to understanding.

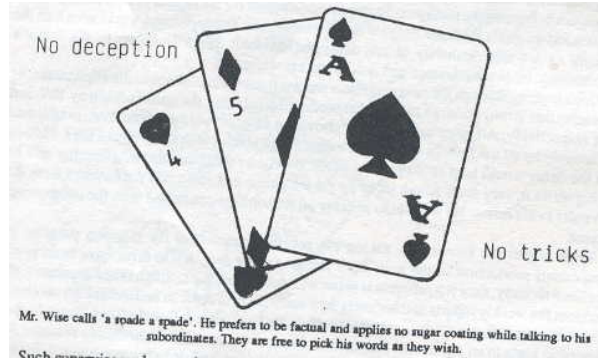
The following meeting is held two hours later. The members are ready with the information. The data from each foreman and technician is evaluated. It becomes obvious that the problem has arisen from late deliveries of raw material to the two units. It also came out that the material supply is a bit erratic, on the whole. Most of the time material arrives without proper identification marks and in part quantity. It is agreed that Singh and his Materials Foreman will immediately go to the Materials Bank to seek a solution to this problem. All the foremen and technicians return to their respective jobs.

5.26 Earning Agreement

As you can see, Santokh Singh is acting in a manner of Mr. Wise. A supervisor with Mr. Wise orientation communicates in order to promote understanding and to earn the agreement of subordinates in defining problems that exist and identifying the necessary actions to solve them. Authentic communication is basic to achieving these goals. What does it mean?

To begin with, it means that the supervisor does not alter the message just to make it easy to swallow. The supervisor is factual and applies no sugar coating. He presents the problems in honest, realistic, and objective terms. When progress faltered, Santokh Singh called on the two foremen affected to discuss it rather than ordering them to get with it or ignoring the problem until it got worse and fit for the intervention of Director, Engineering.

Mr. Wise gives respect to the opinion of his subordinates. He



earns respect for his detailed knowledge of the problem, grasp of facts and data, ability to see connections between things, and awareness of the approach toward the solution that is likely to have the best consequences. That is real authority. This authority is not based on rank but rather, based on knowledge and contribution.

Such supervisors always place a premium on their skill in listening to the varied opinions and receptivity to ideas represented by others. Mr. Wise does not listen to agree; he listens carefully to understand before commenting. Consequently all his subordinates know, towards the end, what to do, as a team in their own right.

5.27 No Sugar Coating

Mr. Wise prefers to be factual. He applies no sugar coating. Thus, the word is suitably passed on in a way that leaves subordinates the option of picking it up or not as they wish. Nor is the message shoved down subordinates' throats as an edict Neither does Mr. Wise use a public relation approach, by trying to make things look more positive than they are, to charm subordinates by his magical powers of persuasion.

What Mr. Wise does is to communicate in honest, realistic and objective terms. This implies that if a supervisor is presenting a problem before his subordinates, he describes any given problem in terms of what the current difficulties, being encountered are; what is the cause for Mr. Wise also indicates possible solutions if clear-cut ideas are available to him as to what a good solution might be.

With this approach to communication, as the supervisor presents and discusses his views subordinates do not feel that they are being sold some item in a 'reduction sale', or being accused or being bulldozed. Rather, they come up to understand as to what the problem is, as the supervisor perceives it. Then if they see in a different way, they are in an excellent position to get the supervisor to recognise and accept whatever limitations there might be, in his own understanding of the problem.

5.28 Other Side of Midnight

This can be done by pointing out the discrepancies between how the supervisor describes the problem and how they understand it For example, they may point out unjustified assumptions the supervisor may be making by identifying facts that 'could not be so'.

There may be a situation where the supervisor may presently believe that a certain work activity must be discontinued because it is not helping productivity. Then some subordinates point out and explain the purpose that it does serve. If this is favourable, the supervisor has no difficulty in changing positions. If the supervisor's opening definition of the problem squares with what subordinates also understand, then agreement on action can be reached quickly. The communication skill of Mr. Wise is, in helping others to express themselves openly and to think through options and alternatives so that the best answer emerges. Whether this best answer comes from the supervisor or a subordinate is not important, but however, it is, identified and used

5.29 Everybody Wins

Mr. Wise oriented communication promotes a 'everybody wins' situation because it creates the strongest likelihood that each person's knowledge and skills, would be brought into use. This also means that team members feel directly involved in the problem solving. By the very fact of their participation, the solution becomes 'genuine' and thus earns the full commitment of every individual team members, for implementation.

5.30 Kabir

The communication of saint poet Kabir was based on mutual understanding. Kabir felt the miseries of weavers. He observed and suffered the exploitation, in the name of religion and social norms. He realized that his fellow individuals genuinely wanted to know the reasons behind what was going on. And therefore, Kabir told people, in a forthright and candid manner, how he understood the situation. His free two-way exchange stimulated among the masses openness, trust, and spontaneity. Many hundred years later, even now the power of Kabir's communication can be felt in his simple and direct words.

5.31 What is being transacted?

Key to the difference between communication styles of various supervisors is, the complementary transaction concepts. Some supervisors communicate to get compliance for what they say. Some communicate to get approval for what they pass. Some don't feel like saying anything but say because they are forced to do so. These supervisors are not bothered about the response they receive from their subordinates. Some strike a balance between 'I say- you listen' and 'you say-I listen', situations. However, an effective communication is when 'Both say and both listen'.

Where are you? Do you listen to your subordinates? Do your subordinates hear you? Do you live in an environment where things can be said and heard? Do your ears, eyes, thoughts and expressions work in unison? Or, does one get precedence over the others? Which one of these senses of your system is getting sparingly used, of late? Think and write down before you get busy with the next chapter on Mistakes and Errors.

Further Readings

Blake, R.R. and Mounton, J. S., *The New Grid for Supervisory Effectiveness, Texas: Scientific Methods*, 1986.

Harris, Thomas A., *I am OK -You are OK*, New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

6. The Care: Handling Mistakes & Errors

6.1 Billiard ball

The human mind operates, to a large extent, with reference to the final causes. This is so obvious that it might seem impossible to neglect it. Yet it is neglected by all those supervisors who employ the billiard ball analogy of causation to their subordinates. Of course, on a billiard table the ball moves primarily by efficient causation, but man operates in a totally different way. Man is the only creature in the world whose presence is constantly being dominated with reference to the non-existent, but nevertheless potent future. What does not exist, influences what exists. An effective supervisor must be able to see beyond the billiard ball. The errors or mistakes committed by a person have multiple dimensions. A supervisor should see through all the dimensions of an error or mistake committed by a subordinate, before handling it. A wrong corrective plan of action of a supervisor often starts a chain reaction of mistakes and errors by his subordinates.

6.2 Mistakes and Errors

There are at least three general causes of mistakes and errors. The first is when a subordinate does not have the necessary skills or background to carry out the tasks. This increases the likelihood of mistakes because errors creep in any situation in which people are eager to fulfil their objectives but, at the same time, do not know how. Such situations can be easily anticipated and prevented by specialised training courses.

A second kind of mistakes and errors, arise from inadequate participation skills. Supervisor's lack of experience in bringing about an effective discussion, about the task, often results in a 'lesser than dear' understanding on the subordinate's part. Possibly the supervisor is too hurried and pushing the, discussion along, too fast. Such supervisors are likely to gloss over points that subordinates think they understand, but actually do not. May be, at that time the supervisor fails to recognise subordinate's need to probe more deeply into a problem. The correction here is for the supervisor to reexamine his leadership.

The third cause of mistakes and errors is the boredom and worry. These errors are not traceable to insufficient knowledge and skill or faulty understanding at the planning stage. They derive from the lack of spontaneous attention and concentration.

6.3 Boredom

Boredom occurs when attention is deliberately paid to something which is not interesting. The situation that could have become interesting is effectively blocked. This results in fatigue, trance, and eventually mistakes. Boredom is a psychological condition which can rather be easily tackled by an intelligent supervisor.

Many a time, boredom sets in when a person is in a state of suppressed excitement. When he becomes keyed up and awaits the starting signal from somebody else, he commits mistakes. A good supervisor has the capability of recognising such a 'clock watching' situations. He also knows how to avoid his subordinates from entering into such a state of affairs.

6.4 Worry

Everybody holds certain notions and convictions about the nature of work he is doing or planning to do. Whenever a certain task is performed some things are likely to happen, which do not go along with the notions and convictions of the performer. Then he comes across certain things which are at odds with his expectations. On such occasions, he tends to get worried. Furthermore, traditionally established opinions about work, worker, and work conditions are so deeply rooted in all of us that their modification seems to be wrong and worthy of condemnation, even though, our first hand experience confronts us with the necessity of modification. And each time we confront such contradiction, we get worried.

Man has very strong emotions. He also proposes very rich and sensitive feelings. In addition, there are some fantasies over the feelings. Things are felt in accordance with the fantasies about those things. There are times when our fantasies and feelings get a severe blow. On such occasions we are likely to feel angry. Since the disappointment is related with the work, our anger can flare against work. Then it turns to all those things for which our life long standards of what is 'proper', seem despicable. At such moments we feel disgusted and are tempted to cast aside the work in hand.

During these moments of disgust and wrath against work it would be best if we could express it to our supervisor, face to face. But if the situation is too complicated to do it and if this is not practical, the next best option will be for us to fire it off to the surroundings. This is the most frequent reason of equipment breakdown in the work situations. Whatever we do, we try to get it off our chest. If a supervisor provides his subordinates a ventilation for their frustration, then many of the mistakes and errors would not occur in the very first place.

Most of the supervisors are personally responsible for the discomfort their subordinates experience in doing their work, in the sense that they are forced to do something they do not like. By asking a subordinate to do something that he has not taken up willingly a supervisor has committed an aggressive act aimed at the subordinate's present status quo.

Some supervisors do it intentionally and try to cool off their subordinates with constant shower of phrases like 'I am asking you to do it with the best of my intentions towards you' or 'Do it for your own good', or 'If I would have been in your position, I would have done the something you are being asked to do', or 'We have had much tougher times in our days'. This has a very serious effect on the psychology of a subordinate. His confidence gets shaken. He starts feeling incompetent. He becomes worried-the worry of being insufficient, the worry of losing the next promotion, and all the more, the worry of

being worthless. In this mental state, whatever a subordinate performs goes tangential to the objectives of the task given and a series of mistakes and errors are committed unintentionally. A good supervisor never does it But how to avoid it from happening under our own supervision? To understand this, we have to go deep into the mechanism of dealing with mistakes and errors of the subordinates by the supervisors with different orientation. Study the following incidences.

6.5 The Leaking Bottle

Abhijit Sengupta is a smart young professional who has risen in the hierarchy rather quickly. He is a mechanical engineer and works as a Deputy Project Director in a large developmental project involving servo controls and pneumatic actuation systems. He has a brilliant academic record. His wife is a Gynaecologist and runs a private clinic in the garage of his official accommodation. He has two sons. Both are given all comforts possible at home. There is a VCR, a PC with several video games, remote control toys and so on. However, they are restricted from playing outside and mixing up with 'an sorts of' children. Sengupta wants his sons to become whiz kids -the ruling class of tomorrow.

Sengupta has a strong and imposing personality. He dominates every scene he enters. He loves playing a 'big brother', and believes in training his people 'his way'. He justifies this to himself and others, for several reasons which we will not be discussing here. What we will discuss now is the incident which occurred during the last week. An experimental field trial was conducted on a weapon system at a Army Base in the presence of the Defence Minister. Top army officials were also present to witness the trial. Unfortunately, the show ended in a fiasco. The pneumatic system of the weapon system had malfunctioned resulting in abortion of the experimental trial. Now Sengupta is back. He knows that because of bad workmanship, a faulty connection to the high pressure gas bottle created the real problem. Additionally, he knows that Prem Kumar of Quality Control Division and Vidhyasagar of Pneumatic Control Division have inspected and certified the system as, 'field trial worthy' before they were shifted to the Army Base. Sengupta calls them into his office.

'You are responsible for the mishap you know', he begins addressing Kumar.

'I am responsible', Kumar retorts. He is an engineer with average skills, but takes his work very sincerely and seriously. He is not happy with what Sengupta had conveyed. He told Sengupta, a month ago that it would be impossible to carry out complete control checks on the gas bottle - pyro valve assembly in the prescribed time. In his zeal of giving the equipment in time for the field trial, Sengupta pressurised him to expedite. When Kumar resisted, Sengupta forced him to complete all tests with the help of a scientific assistant, he has managed to rope in from a sister work centre.

'In order to meet your trial date you put Vidhyasagar with me, saying that two of us could speed up the inspection. What does Vidhyasagar know about Quality checks? I can't train guys from other divisions and inspect everything twice', says Kumar.

Vidhyasagar feels offended. 'Oh no, what makes you think I goofed it off!' he protests. 'I have been working on pneumatic systems for the past 14 years. I could not have missed a mistake like that', he says, washing his hands off.

'But it happened; and it happened because of the negligence of you people. I don't know when you people will learn to work properly. It is a disgust to manage with workers of your class and caliber', Sengupta shouts.

Both the persons feel very badly. Vidhyasagar recovers first saying, 'I remember now - I came from the bank, and Kumar Sa 'b said that he had gone through the component inspection reports and that there is no need to open up every thing again. He asked me to file all the papers in a folder and put up, along with the field trial worthiness certificate, for his signatures'.

'Don't make up stories', Prem Kumar says heatedly. 'First, you people do not work and then comment on officers', he sneers.

Then he turns to Sengupta, 'I have seen the photographs. How can you say it was this assembly which caused doom. I believe even infantry people have not been able to establish what went wrong. It could have been anything. ..'

'That is enough', Sengupta interrupts. He leans back in his chair and removes his glasses. 'I am not worried, I didn't sign the field trial worthiness certificate. Kumar has signed it and an I know is one of you must have made the mistake. If any enquiry comes, I will be forced to put you on probation', he informs Kumar and Sagar.

'Don't repeat such mistakes in the next trial due for the next month', Sengupta concludes.

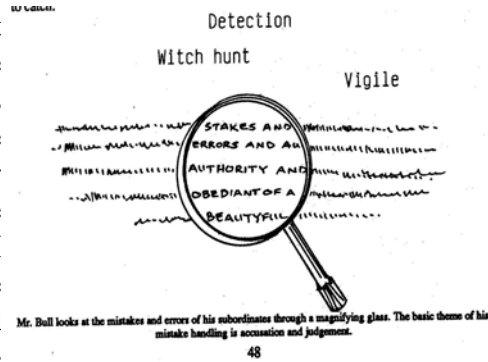
6.6 Challenge to Authority

This was Mr. Bull's approach to error management. The emphasis was to place the blame rather than solve a problem and improve the quality of future inspections. It is unlikely that Kumar and Sagar are motivated to improve upon their performance. In spite of clear cut directions provided by a Mr. Bull oriented supervisor, things go wrong under his supervision. Mistakes occur regularly. Errors often appear. Subordinates commit blunders. Let us see how Mr. Bull deals with mistakes made by his subordinates.

Mr. Bull rarely overlooks a subordinate's mistake willingly. He does it under the fear of its reoccurrence. He believes that if a mistake happens once, it will happen again, unless it is nipped in the bud. He feels that regardless of precautions to avoid them, mistakes usually mean that either subordinates were not working productively or they were venting their anger by making something go wrong purposely. Mr. Bull cannot put up with mistakes because they challenge his authority.

Whenever Mr. Bull discovers a mistake, his immediate reaction is 'Who did it? This calls for disciplinary action'. Such supervisors seek to force their subordinates to admit faults.

This has different kinds of results. First of all, it may scare the subordinate so badly that he becomes nervous, gets upset, and forgets everything he knows to find the solution. Or, the subordinate may become so resentful that every time the supervisor says, ' You did. ..', the subordinate says back, or at least to himself, 'I didn't. ..'. Out of sheer defiance, the subordinate refuses to admit anything. Subordinate and supervisor come to an impasse, at least on the surface. But not down deep. The reason is that Mr. Bull's way of dealing with mistakes often results in the subordinate 'causing' even more mistakes. Few real perpetrators ever get caught. Subordinates go underground and the mistakes reappear. Those who cause them remain hidden. There to catch.



In case of a Mr. Bull, the basic theme is the arbitrary manner of accusation and judgement. This is like a 'Now I have got you, you son of a bitch', game. This is like waiting for something to go wrong and then pouncing on the subordinate who was responsible.

6.7 Nixon

Handling of affairs by US President Richard M. Nixon when Watergate 'burglars' had been apprehended in National Head Quarters of the Democratic Party, is on the lines of this approach. As the President of the United States, Nixon exercised authority over the smallest details of the activities of his subordinates. His men were obligated to obedient compliance but did not adhere to the lines of accountability and responsibility when hell broke over the issue of spying the political opponents, in the world's most powerful democracy.

6.8 Tunnel Vision

In his efforts to dominate and stay in charge, a Mr. Bull oriented supervisor is likely to take a position and stick to it. He becomes blind to the evidence that contradict the validity of the position taken. He operates with a tunnel vision, and insists on a course of action that might be failing in all likelihood. At this point, a vicious win-lose cycle, that feeds upon itself, may occur with the supervisor becoming more insistent that his is the only course of action. His vision is the total scenario. Once this happens, subordinates start doing minimum work required to retain their jobs and income -no more, no less. They withdraw into a world of indifference. 'Less work less mistakes, and no work no mistakes '. Although it appears, obvious' that the people who respond in this way are lazy, apathetic, and indifferent, it is not the case. The control and mastery of their supervisor had made to die the subordinates, who are subdued.

6.9 The Fuse Wire

Rama Murthy heads the Metrology Division of a large production organisation producing precision machines and specialised fixtures. He is thirty eight years old. He maintains a big moustache and dye his falling hair regularly. He preferred to remain unmarried and lives alone in his one bed room flat in the city Centre. He has a rich collection of foreign movies and invites his colleagues on weekends for a after dinner show on his VCR.

He is on his routine morning inspection. He sees Shankar Reddy sitting, with a long face, near the 3-D measuring system. Shankar Reddy is a Technical Assistant Grade-1 and Operates the 3-D measuring system which is one among the most priced assets of the organisation and is one of its kind in the country. He appears to be very upset about something. 'What is wrong Shankar?' Murthy enquires. Shankar Reddy says, 'This machine has blown off right in the morning'.

Murthy becomes upset. This machine is the most sought after equipment around. Not only did components from various work centres of his organisation line up for inspection at this facility, inspection jobs come from outside agencies also on payment basis. 'It is very bad', whispers Murthy and has a systematic glance over the equipment. He observes a 5 Amp fuse wire fixed in lieu of the specified 0.5 Amp one.

Anger starts rising in Murthy. 'Why was this fuse wire used?' he asks. 'There are no 0.5 Amp wires left and I had to complete the inspection by today', Reddy answers.

'Don't break yourself with this sort of pressures man. If no 0.5 Amp wires were there, you should have waited for instructions. Even if you complete the inspection today you are not going to get a citation or cash award Now we have to face firing from all quarters', Murthy says. He is extremely angry, and frustrated.

Reddy gives him a blank look. He does not know what to say. Murthy also fails to find any more words. Total silence marks next thirty seconds.

'Well, go and have your tea, Reddy. Such things do happen in the work', Murthy breaks the ice.

Reddy feels relieved. 'Thanks Sir' , he grins, remarking, 'you are a great man, Sir, not like those blood sucking supervisors'. He washes off his guilt and goes off to join the tea queue at the Employees Canteen.

Murthy feels great. He cares for his men and they know that. He is lucky to have grateful guys with him, 'What Reddy said is what actually is', thinks Murthy. 'How many supervisors look after the happiness of their subordinates in this organisation', he wonders. 'Peace of mind is one thing every subordinate needs and it should be provided by every supervisor', Murthy says to himself.

Next half an hour is spent on writing a SOS to the Service Engineering Group for taking up the repair work immediately and raising a special Cash Purchase requisition for ten spools of 0.5 Amp fuse wires.

6.10 Victims of a Tragedy

This is a Mr. Cute oriented approach in that the supervisor's major concern is for caring for the feelings of the employees, with little or no concern for productivity of the organisation, the proper use of equipment and materials, or the self responsibility of the employee for being fit to do the job.

A Mr. Cute oriented supervisor feels that 'harsh' attitude towards mistakes and errors can only hurt a good relationship. Rather, the view is that a supervisor should be generous in understanding what has happened, sympathetic with 'victims' of a 'tragedy', and helpful in clearing up the after effects of whatever a subordinate did or failed to do. Mistakes and errors impede progress. Unless handled in the way described, they can produce friction, disrupt good feelings, and chill the warmth and harmony that supervisor and subordinates have a right to enjoy in their daily transactions.

Mr. Cute dislikes mistakes and errors. His heart goes out to the person who fails, because he knows how bad that individual must be feeling. Focusing in a warm and friendly manner on actual or imagined 'hurts', rather than on the error itself, follows Mr. Cute's assumption that people 'naturally' want to do what is right. 'Therefore', he reasons, 'the person who has committed the error must have already felt bad, and he would be even more disturbed if I put any emphasis on it. Help the person turn away from the problem and not to dwell on it'.

6.11 No Postmortems

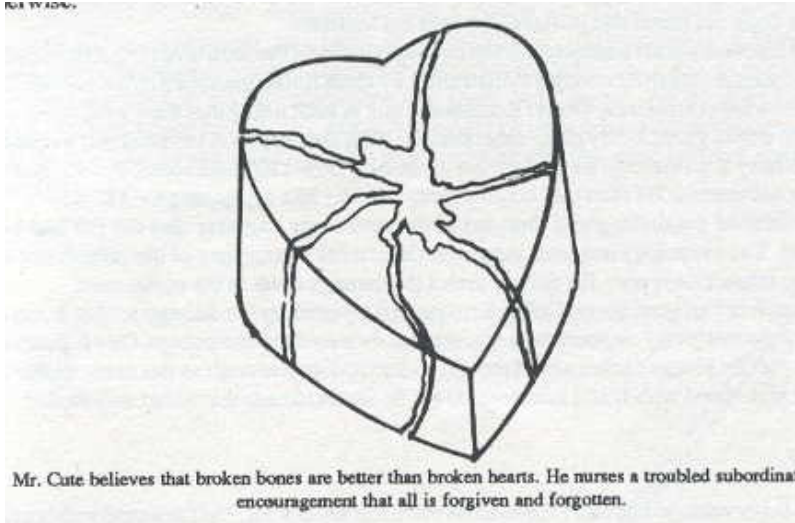
Mr. Cute's attitude toward mistakes and errors is 'to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative'. The supervisor can do this by not blaming anyone and putting the best face possible on a bad situation. Mr. Cute hates postmortems.

Instead, he cautions a subordinate in some manner such as, 'Well, I know you did your best. Don't worry, things will work out. We shall look after it'. Blame is not placed on a subordinate and he is helped to find relief from any blame which may be felt from within. If that does not work, Mr. Cute is likely to nurse a troubled subordinate with encouragement that all is 'forgiven and forgotten'.

This attitude is particularly evident when the mistake or error has been one of violating rules or policies, particularly if unresolved by others. Under the supervision of Mr. Cute, policies and procedures are not 'so rigid that people are forced to stay within them'. They are simply guideline indicators, rather than fixed or inflexible requirements. 'After all, when some one is upset and confused, it is awfully difficult to 'walk on the line'. Looking at it from this angle, Mr. Cute sees no need for constant vigilance for a mistake or error. By the same token, even if a subordinate does go against important rules or regulations,

Mr. Cute feels that a gentle reminder and another chance will really help the person to realise and avoid the problem again, and appreciate all the more for his being understanding and not getting nasty.

6.12 Smothering Differences



In spite of all the efforts of Mr. Cute, mistakes and errors are bound to arise. Differences between him and his subordinates keep surfacing, no matter how much diligence might have been applied towards harmony and agreement. Reconciliation through the supervisor capitulating by saying the error is not too important and that he really does agree, is the most likely step to restore

togetherness. The Mr. Cute oriented supervisor smooths over discontent by asking people to appreciate how small the mistake is compared to how big it could have been otherwise.

6.13 Emperor Ashoka

During the battle of Kalinga, Emperor Ashoka reacted according to his built-in uncertainties rather than to the objective properties of the situation. Ashoka was a very strong king indeed. He fought and won many battles to expand his territory.

However, deep inside within him, he was not sure about the rightness of this bloodshed. There was a fear of ethical disapproval in Ashoka's mind. This had an intense emotional reaction on Ashoka and fear of being personally rejected by the religious authorities pushed him to a religious life. After imposing his will on others all along he suddenly decided to lead people rather than pushing them. He worked hard thereafter to gain back the approval of his people.

6.14 Inveiglers

Gowri Krishna, one of the shop supervisor in General Machine Shop, shuffles slowly towards the office of Head Production Control. He is in his forties. He is a lean person of small height. He smokes non-filter cigarettes and is very fond of 'Pan Masala'. His wife teaches in a secondary school and runs a dance school in the evenings at home. Gowri Krishna has no liking towards dance and prefers to spend his evenings in the public library adjacent to his house. He is having the signed inspection report of a component, handed over to his shop for machining a few days ago. The component has been shifted

to the surface treatment facility for anodising. He is going to give the inspection report to the production controller as evidence of completing the job assigned to his shop.

He reviews in his mind the situation that had occurred a couple of days ago in his shop. He and his assistant were drilling stud mounting holes in a component urgently required for the field trial of a vehicle currently under development in his organisation. There was a slippage of six weeks in the schedule of trial. Every one in the organisation was looking forward to the trial date. Drilling of stud holes is one of the final operations on this component.

After Gowri Krishna and his assistant drilled three of the eight holes, they realised that the location of the hole was taken from a completely wrong axis. Gowri Krishna admonished his assistant on being clumsy. He could see the problems ahead. Asking for another component would be just short of asking for the moon. 'I guess you know we shall be in a lot of trouble if anyone finds out about this mistake', he tells his assistant.

Gowri Krishna had his assistant to stand by the doorway of the shop to act as a look out while Gowri Krishna plugged the wrongly drilled holes by force fitting uncapped rivets and redid the drilling from the correct axis. Gowri Krishna did this in such a way that the wrong holes were not visible unless given a very close examination. With the Quality Assurance and Inspection engineers busy with the clearance of engine assembly, Gowri Krishna hoped that the damage would go undetected. He then told his assistant, 'it looks like everything is O.K. now'.

They finished the drilling and reported to the metrology engineer that the job had been completed. The metrology engineer inspected the critical dimensions of the component and signed the inspection report. He did not detect the damage done to the component.

The problem had gone away. Gowri Krishna had covered up the damage so that it was not noticed by the metrology engineer who inspected and cleared the component. Gowri Krishna's hope was that the plugged holes would remain undetected long enough so that many higher ups would be associated with it and therefore, as far he is concerned, the matter was closed.

6.15 Cover up

The shop supervisor, in this case, approaches the situation in a Mr. Dull oriented way because rather than being frank with the metrology and his supervisor in charge after the wrong drilling of the holes, he invests energy and deceit in a cover up, which is the line of least resistance. With the assistant, Gowri Krishna proceeded on a 'less said, the better' basis rather than training the subordinate in shop floor skills.

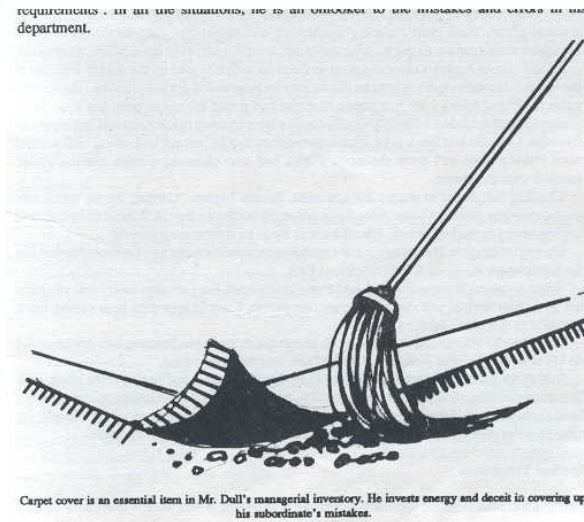
Mr. Dull oriented supervisors know how to ignore a mistake or an error, more or less on a , see no mistake...' basis. The only time a Mr. Dull might get stirred up about a mistake or an error is when it is evident that if the mistake could become known to those higher up,

he in the middle, is in trouble. Mr. Dull places responsibility in such a way as to be relieved from being accountable. The strategy is to pass responsibility to others.

6.16 Protecting Harbor

Mr. Dull tries to set up, in advance, excuses that serve as self-protection so that blames can be avoided for the big ones that might otherwise threaten his job. Mr. Dull's attitude is that, mistakes are more or less inevitable.' Since you can't do much about them, why worry?'. Mr. Dull may rationalise further and say, 'Oh, there is no way to train good workers any More. They are a new generation'.Mr. Dull is quick to pass the blame on to his subordinates, 'Even after cooling their heels here for so long they do not know which way to go.' He may say, 'these guys lack in experience'. He may brand his subordinates as 'poorly trained' or 'poorly selected'. Some times he may even turn philosophical and say, ' what more do you expect of them with the pay the poor fellows get'. The undercurrent of all these defences is 'what can I do?' This is a harbor that protects him from striving against unfavourable winds.

6.17 An Onlooker



A Mr. Dull oriented supervisor usually lives with his non-productivity by putting the blame for the situation on something or someone else. For example, he may say, 'rules have become too vague to conclude anything' , when the origin of the mistake comes from violation of rules. He may blame the 'onslaught of technology for bringing about a dehumanising way of life' , when error comes from mechanical malfunctioning or bad handling of equipment. He may point his finger at 'schedules-crazy management where results are the sole aim', when mistake originates from carelessness and haste of a

subordinate. He justifies indifference of a subordinate as an effect of 'vicious, competitive rat-race for promotions, that churns up people' or 'whimsical ways of giving promotions that cause heart burns'. He even goes as far as complaining about the universities which 'no longer provide education pertinent to today's requirements'. In all the situations, he is an onlooker to the mistakes and errors in his department.

6.18 Chiang Kai Shek

The approach of the Chinese Nationalist Leader, Chiang Kai Seik was in this orientation. He was just an onlooker to the dissent of his people which originated from the mistakes of his administration. He had also shown indifference to the erroneous acts of his

politically active wife, Soong Mai Ling. Eventually, the communist revolutionaries drove out his government from the main land of China to the island of Taiwan.

6.19 Misdirected Mail

Kuldeep Bhatia is an Administrative Officer in a large corporation, which enjoys government patronage and monopoly market. He is in charge of the Mail Section. All mail coming to the corporate office is received and recorded in his section. The letters are then segregated as per the working procedure and directed to the concerned departments for taking necessary action. Bhatia is a graduate in history and political science. He discontinued his studies due to financial constraints and family pressures. After graduation he joined the corporation as a Lower Division Clerk. During the last 18 years he has been in the organisation, he worked in different sections with interest and enthusiasm. Last year he was promoted to the Officer Cadre and posted as a supervisor in the Mail Section.

On three different occasions during the last month, correspondence was misrouted. Bhatia hangs up his phone, annoyed at the lecture he has just received from the Chief Administrative Officer about the inappropriate routing of important letters of the contract management and services group. Each error caused embarrassing and sometimes near-disastrous situation because contract payments got delayed and in one specific case, even the deadline was missed.

Bhatia shoves back his chair and goes to the outer office to take up the matter with one of the inward dispatch clerks, whom he thinks may be responsible for the problem. The Clerk's name is Ganpat Rastogi. He is a young man and had joined the corporation last year. He is unmarried and is having a torrid love affair with a stenographer in the Financial Management Division. Over the last few weeks, Bhatia has noticed that he had not looked too well and had been making more and more mistakes. Bhatia had also observed Ganpat making abrupt remarks over the phone.

Clearing his throat to attract his attention, Bhatia begins, 'Ganpat, let us watch this correspondence routing a little closer. I just got reprimanded by the CAO about three different routing errors in the last month. We all have to try to be a little more careful'.

Ganpat looks upset. He realises that the mistakes are committed by him but is confused about the happenings. He gives Bhatia a helpless look.

'I know you are doing a good job and trying really hard, but I am also aware that you have not been your normal self during the past one month. I would appreciate your paying more attention to this area', advises Bhatia.

Ganpat looks at him rather helplessly. He shrugs his shoulders and assures him that he would do his best. Bhatia turns around and walks back into the inner office.

During the tea break he sees Ganpat smoking alone in his seat and staring at the blank wall. 'It is a sad situation all around', he reflects. 'But, as a supervisor, I can't ignore mistakes either; I had to check him before things got much worse ', Bhatia thinks in order to justify himself. He turns to some paper work which do not involve calling Ganpat in for some time.

6.20 Surface Treatment

This is a Mr. Nice oriented approach in managing mistakes, in that, Bhatia gives only surface treatment to what evidently is a work problem being aggravated by a more deep-seated human problem. He does not make an effort to dig into the association between the misrouting and the personal troubles and simply concludes that Ganpat is the source of the problem. Instead, he 'speaks' to him 'about it', in a tentative way which he considers to be a reprimand. But by no means, he is contented. At least he has done his duty and has something positive to report to his supervisor, CAO in this case, if asked whether this issue has been followed upon.

6.21 Conformist

Mr. Nice knows that human nature being what it is, mistakes and errors are inevitable. They can never be totally eliminated and if you put people under pressure to do so, the tensions you create may only cause more mistakes. The goal then, in managing mistakes and errors, is to create a relaxed environment where they will not be likely to occur.

One can do this by facing the issue by staying on the subordinate's side and giving him the benefit of doubt, at least initially. Mr. Nice knows that the subordinates never intend to make mistakes and that people are embarrassed when they have to admit to having made even a single mistake.

Since mistakes and errors can sometimes be traced to insufficient or inadequate training, Mr. Nice encourages special courses that can help people do a job better. Mr. Nice also knows that mistakes and errors often happen because people take short-cuts. By encouraging subordinates to stick to traditions, precedents, and past practices, a supervisor can minimise mistakes. Adherence to operating regulations, manuals, and procedures also reduce errors. Mr. Nice motivates his subordinates to follow 'the book', at least to the degree that other people do. This may show productivity dip, but it is a good way to get mistakes and errors under control. Further Mr. Nice is as embarrassed as anyone would be if it becomes necessary to admit that mistakes are being made because of failure to follow prescribed rules and procedures. Hence as a matter of fact, the supervisor is likely to stick to the rules rigidly and will want subordinates to do the same. Then if a mistake occur, at least Mr. Nice will not be blamed for exercising too little control over performance deviations. A Mr. Nice oriented supervisor is more concerned about keeping himself blameless than about reducing errors and mistakes.

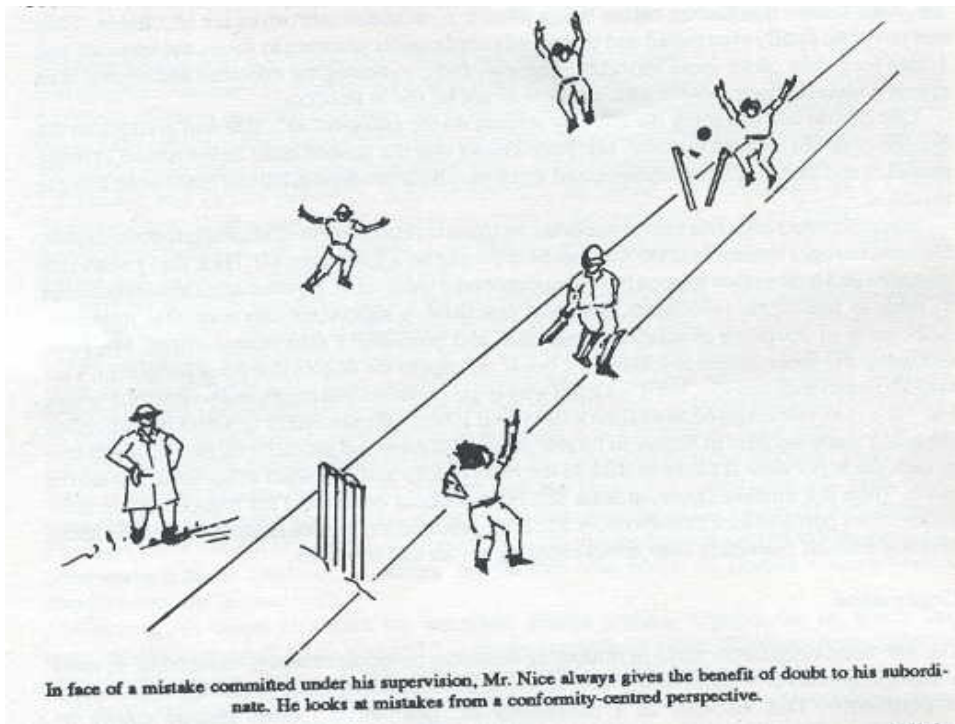
6.22 Gradualism

The Mr. Nice orientation stays in managing mistakes to 'confirmatory' leadership. It stays within the bounds of what everyone else is doing, as the ultimate criterion for appropriateness or pertinence. This amounts to a philosophy of 'gradualism'. Here, change comes by improvisation or by trial and error. The result is not chaotic, but it is not coherent also. Mistakes and errors are likely to be seen from a conformity-centred perspective and the remedies, to come out piece-meal and makeshift.

6.23 Sheikh Mujib

The founder leader of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman acted in this fashion. He had made the functioning of governments in stable democracies as the criterion of governance for his crisis-ridden nation. He took his errant army officials in the spirit of a reformist and tried to win them over, by improvisation of his policies. However, the antagonistic and hostile reaction to the earlier government reconciled after a brief human relations 'binge', the Sheikh was assassinated by some of his army officials.

6.24 Incorrect Inventory



Akbar Ali was three years old when the country got independence. His father refused to migrate with the rest of his family and settled alone in his motherland. His father's faith in the secular policies of the Indian Government remained intact.

His son got admitted to the best school around and was given all encouragement and help by the State. After graduating in Commerce, Akbar Ali applied for a Central Government' job and was selected as a Stores Clerk in the Canteen Stores Department of the Ministry of Defence. Since the last seventeen years, he has been there. Now he is a Stores Superintendent.

In this position, Akbar Ali has the responsibility for keeping an accurate inventory of all the stocked items. Some stocks must be kept at a constant level. But some things are kept on a seasonal basis. It is important that items in constant demand are always available, and items in seasonal demand are stored in quantities that do not carry over to the next season. This is possible by maintaining an updated inventory. Updating the inventory is an involved job. Daily Sales Accounts are entered into the item ledgers and stock levels are consolidated for economical forecasting. Several times recently, a number of customers have come to Akbar Ali, complaining that several 'year-round' items have been depleted from stock, with result that they have to wait for several weeks before buying these items. The customers complain that they are not only incurring financial losses by getting these items from the open market at higher prices, they are embarrassed to tell their wives they could not buy the items as per the instructions issued over the breakfast table. They could not see any valid reason for the non-availability of 'regular' items because these items are freely available in the open market. They wanted to know what Akbar Ali's problem is.

Akbar Ali lists down the items complained about. He checks the inventory stock levels and cross refers them to the ledgers. The values given in the inventory sheets are incorrect.

Ali calls Ramu Ojha into his office, the next day. Ramu Ojha is the Senior StoreKeeper. He prepares the inventory sheet which are used by the purchase section to plan the procurement of the items. 'Ojhaji, we need to discuss the mistakes in inventory sheets. They are causing problems to the management and are damaging customer relations', he says. He goes on to explain that the canteen turn-over has dropped in the last month because customers are not sure to get their items when they plan visit to the canteen. 'In your case, Ojha, it has come to a point where your colleagues at the counters are very frustrated at having to deal with irate customers because of your errors', Ali comment.

Ojha begins to fidget. 'I know these counter 'chaps' have been hostile to me lately, but I had not understood, why. I used to enjoy working with 'these people', but the way things are changing, it is adding to my other worries...', Ojha thought for a moment.

'Look, Sir, I shall tell it to you straight -I have a rather disorganised family situation sometimes, about which I won't go into detail, right now. I am going to try to make a real effort to get it sorted out, and you can watch how the records show here onwards', he tells Ali.

'Well, Ojha, I understand the effect of family tensions on performance in the office. Let us hope for the best I will talk to you after a week. I hope your family problem will settle down for good, by then', Ali says.

'O.K., Sir, I shall let you know if my family problem is not clearing up after a week. In case I fail in my efforts I may be requesting you for an inter-posting", Ojha suggests firmly.

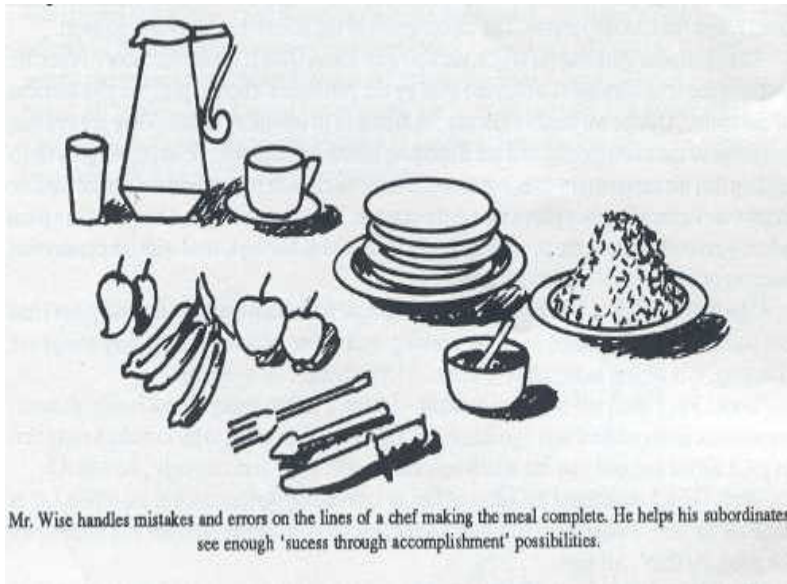
Ali smiles. 'Thank you very much for your commitment on this matter', he says. Both stood up. They shook hands and the interview ended.

6.25 Facts Clarified

This is the approach of Mr. Wise because it begins with Ali first stating the problem from the organisation's view point and then relating the same to the simultaneous 'people situation' in which Ojha's colleagues are becoming more and more irked by the ill feelings Ojha's mistakes have generated.

As the message registers with Ojha, the effect on him seems to have come first in the 'people area'. It is a spontaneous reaction-neither a pre-determined nor an inevitable one. It helped Ojha clarify what he had not previously grasped. (Why his colleagues are turning against him- the connection of non-office related worries.) Ali did not probe into these. Instead, he gave Ojha time to think and helped him in deciding the future course of his actions. Ojha took time to analyse the situation and came up with a commitment that he would work hard in clearing up the family-related problems that had been the deep seated cause of his errors. Ojha knows that there will be no heart-burn if Ali removes him from his present position.

6.26 The Third Dimension



Mr. Wise does not confine his thinking about the cause of mistakes and errors to insufficient knowledge and skill of the subordinate or faulty understanding at the direction stage. He recognises a third general source of boredom or worry. He checks whether a subordinate is being 'turned off' by a job which poses very little challenge. He makes efforts to know if his subordinates see

enough 'success-through-accomplishment' possibilities than they feel capable of responding to. He also checks if it might be that the performance of his subordinate is being adversely affected by problems about which he is presently unaware. Upon finding the facts, all that Mr. Wise needs is to get in touch with subordinates and work towards redesigning their jobs.

6.27 The Key

When mistakes and errors do appear, a Mr. Wise oriented supervisor looks for facts, data, and logic to manage them. As a result, answers to complete questions are likely to be approached from an attitude of fact-finding. Since finding the best solution is the objective of Mr. Wise, he has very little need to deny, distort, or defend his own position and therefore, he is always open to alternatives.

6.28 Mahatma Gandhi

No other leader in the contemporary history would have faced the mistakes and errors of his followers, as broadly as did Mahatma Gandhi. His followers committed a series of mistakes on political and social fronts. Mahatma Gandhi faced these mistakes with courage and determination. Not even once did he react to 'teach' any lessons to the errants. Every time a crisis came to his notice, he used to look for facts and always employed logic to defuse them. By his innovative approach to handling people's mistakes and errors, he could change their minds. Wherever communal violence broke out, he tried to go and talk to the people there. His extensive tours of riot-ridden areas of Bengal removed the communal madness from the minds of the people, once for all. The absence of any communal violence in these areas is a living testimony of the success of this approach of handling mistakes and errors.

6.29 Slow but Steady

Mistakes and errors can delay or prevent the proper achievement of organisation's objectives and personal goals. From that point of view, they are unproductive. Yet mistakes and errors can promote innovations, creativity, and the developments of new ideas which make organisational growth possible. From this point of view, mistakes and errors are useful. The issue then is not whether mistakes and errors are present. The Mr. Wise approach to manage mistakes and errors rests on the assumption that, although they are inevitable, they are manageable. The key is in how mistakes and errors are handled. The best way to approach mistakes and errors is to anticipate them and to take preventive measures. However, it is simpler stated than done. Each preventive measure triggers a reaction from the subordinates. They take up positions and freeze there itself. Instead of extending support and entering into an agreement, they complain. Our next chapter deals with the supervisory function of dealing with complaints.

Further Reading

Blake, R.R. and Mouton, J .S. The New Grid for Supervisory Effectiveness, Texas: Scientific Methods, Inc. 1986.

Laing, R.D. Self and Others, Middlesex : Penguin Books 1984.

Perls, Frederick, Hefferline, R.F., and Paul Goodman. Gestalt Therapy: Excitement and Growth in the Human personality, New York: Bantam Books, 1980.

7. The Ear: Dealing With Complaint

7.1 The Elements

Complaints are significant to any supervisor. Whenever subordinate come and make a complaint, they offer the boss a chance to deal with them 'where it matters'. Frustrations, reservations, doubts, and disagreements about 'what is going on that is not O.K. or less than O.K.' are the evidences of problems that need to be dealt with, if participation, involvement, and commitment are to be kept high.

Every work situation is formed by three basic elements. A place, a task and a cast of characters which includes the subordinate, the supervisors and the colleagues. Any dissatisfaction with any single element creates a problem and if not tackled promptly, can result in a complaint. The mechanism of complaints encompasses how they originate, how they are dealt with by the supervisors with different orientations, and where they lead to. To understand this mechanism, it is necessary to look into the various factors that affect the elements of a situation.

7.2 The Work Place

Besides being a building housing numerous machines, and the facilities surrounding them, the work place has a very complex relationship with the persons working there. As time passes by, a person gets more and more involved with the work place. This involvement produces some sort of possessive feelings in a person and ultimately results in a psychological inertia-a passion for status quo. Even a small change in the scenario is taken with an exaggerated sensitivity.

7.3 The Task

A supervisor has the authority to tell his subordinates to do things. But this will be done much better if he uses a little persuasion also. In our society no one likes to be ordered, History is full of instances where authority had been denied at the risk of life, and lives had been sacrificed for a nicely spoken word. It is much better to mix your instructions with words such as 'suggest', 'would you mind', 'how about doing this thing this way'. That is the best way to minimise the complaints about the nature, quantum, or time required for a given task. Most of such complaints are made because no one likes to be ordered or controlled. There are many different ways of asking subordinates to carry out tasks but the tasks will be performed without complaints if you demand the performance without giving an impression that it is being demanded.

Every task has an interesting side which gives the performer plenty to keep his mind occupied. If you want your subordinates to carry out the tasks without complaints you must get them interested in their work. Tell them what is all about and how the component they are making fits into the final product; how the account sheet they are preparing is going to make the budget figures; how the subroutine program they are writing is going to operate in the software package. A Draughtsman will not feel tired and

come up with all sorts of complaints in drafting a component drawing if he is already briefed about the importance of the mission of the system in which this component is going to be assembled. Same is the case with a turner machining the end dish of an automobile combustion chamber or the typist preparing the Design Review Report.

7.4 The People

Vast majority of the complaints stem from the transactions-how two persons react to each other. The transaction consists of a stimulus by one person and a response by another. This response in turn becomes a new stimulus for the other person to respond to. The kind or transaction that causes complaint is the 'cross transaction'. A cross transaction occurs when a person fails to receive the stimulus in its proper form and responds in a manner which is uncomplimentary in its nature.

Look at Bikram Basu telling his friend Naval Ghosh during the coffee break, 'I am fed up with the guys there in my division. I would like to work in your section', 'Come on Raja, all sections are same, here. You are saying it because you are not in my section,' responds Ghosh. If Basu takes this response in its proper perspective nothing can proceed further on this topic. However, Basu may enter into a cross-transaction complaining 'what do you think of your section? I know what type of persons are there. If you do not go well with them, it does not mean I will also be unhappy there'.

Prabhu Chopra heads a Carpentry Section. He is angry for some reasons. He tells Carpenter Balwant Bhattar, 'go and clear up your bench'. 'My bench may not be the best kept one in this 'bay' but why are you singling me out among all. In fact, my bench is better than any-body else's. Can't you see that?' Bhattar gives back. The transaction could end here. But Chopra complains, 'Do not tell me my job Bhattar. I am the boss here and that is it Behave properly, I say.'

Ramesh Nagpal goes to the Accounts Section and asks Pradeep Bhandari, 'Is my LTC claim ready?' 'It is in the queue', Bhandari answers. Nagpal gives him a hard look. 'Your claim is not the only thing pending here', Bhandari continues. It is enough for Nagpal, 'Red tape! red tap! red tape! can't you people work systematically?' he complains pounding the table.

Mohan Reddy is taking lunch in the Employees Canteen with Babu Rao. 'I hate this Sambar. I cannot eat it', he says in between the meal. 'Why don't you bring food from home,' Babu Rao suggests. 'It is your type of people only who are letting the things run this way. Why then are 'they' running this Canteen? Why don't they hire some better Cooks?' Reddy complains.

Bhanu Pant is waiting for the RTC bus with Devendra Nautiyal. It is half an hour since the Laboratory is closed. He tells Nautiyal, 'Transport Facility at VSSC is just superb'. Nautiyal is tired. He tells Pant sarcastically, 'Why don't we go to Trivandrum and join there?' Pant complains, 'don't involve me with your plans. Who are you to advise me about my job, by the way? Be in your limits while talking to me'. In all the above

situations a reasonable stimulus has turned into a bitter complaint because of a cross-transaction - an incorrect response. Many supervisors make, by their response, their subordinates complain in situations where there is no scope for complaint at all.

7.5 Whimsical

Many supervisors feel omnipotent in their seats. Every other day they get new whims. May be it is lovely to be a whimsical person in life but there must never be anything whimsical about the rules and regulations, when it comes to supervision. People must know where they stand. They must know that after so many years if they work reasonably well they will get that far. Let there be a real healthy respect for the rules and regulations that are laid down. As soon as a supervisor makes the slightest deviation a barrage of complaints open up. Don't imagine that such things can be kept secret. All sort of questions are then put. 'What about my own case?' No supervisor can afford to play about with such important matters. The only way to avoid personal complaints is to be sincere and honest. A good supervisor always anticipates the reaction to every change. An average subordinate is much smarter than what an average supervisor thinks of him. He sees through insincerity in no time. No supervisor should ever try to be clever with his subordinates.

7.6 Shear Force (SF) / Bending Moment (BM) Diagram

Dr. Deepak Sharma is an Associate Professor in an Institute of Technology. He is in his forties. He has guided four Masters and one Doctoral thesis and he has 37 research papers to his credit. He considers himself to be the most suitable person to head the department after Professor Bhasker Ganguli goes abroad for a two year deputation. For the last six months, Dr. Sharma is working on a consultancy project with his research associates and a newly recruited lecturer Tapan Kumar Biswas. Today they are going to present the feasibility report of a fifteen lakh research project before an expert panel of the sponsoring organisation. One of the reviewing experts in the panel is a good friend of Dr. Sharma.

Before the commencement of the open session of the presentation, Dr. Sharma's friend pointed out an anomaly in the SF/BM diagram of a flight structure. How can the aerodynamic lift force at the canard control surface be more than that at a much larger wing, he wondered. Dr. Sharma sees a point and feels upset. The SF/BM diagram is going to be presented by him in the post-lunch session. If this mistake opens out during the presentation it will be a severe blow to his reputation and it may cast a slur on his prospects of getting Professor Ganguli's post too.

Dr. Sharma calls Biswas and tells him the observation of the review member. He asks Biswas to look into the matter and rectify the mistake before it is too late. He also instructs Biswas to make a corrigendum and keep ten copies ready for distribution during his presentation.

During the tea break his friend in the review panel enquires about the soundness of his observation.

With no answer in hand, Dr. Sharma pages Biswas.

Biswas replies, 'The load estimation is done by Sam David. I asked him to check his calculations. He has been working on the problem since then and has not had any luck in resolving it.'

'And what are you doing?' Dr. Sharma questions Biswas in a creaky tone. 'Why aren't you with David supporting him', he laments.

Biswas replies, 'I am taking notes of the observations made by the review members during the technical presentation, and besides, I think David can handle the job best without my standing over him. He is in the computer centre and I feel he should be left alone with the 'package' for some time.'

Knowing the anomaly will come out in open in the next session, Dr. Sharma tells Biswas, 'go over to the computer centre right now, you are a faculty member and you must understand the gravity of such situations. Your performance will be noted by the Director if things go wrong. Get involved in the problem. I want a report in fifteen minutes'.

7.7 Ventilation

This was a Mr. Bull oriented reaction. Dr. Sharma gets increasingly impatient as the lift load estimation problem remains unresolved. He tries to get faster results by scaring Biswas. Rather than exploring with Biswas whether in fact the research associate needs extra support, he pins the blame on him, and gives him an ultimatum. He is treating Biswas as a 'problem " instead of focusing directly on getting the actual anomaly cleared up.

Any subordinate is going to occasionally have complaints. Subordinates of Mr. Bull are likely to complain-usually, not directly at first-and to ventilate their frustrations. Such complaints can be endless. 'My equipment broke down due to poor servicing after I had requested for the fourth time that it is to be fixed', says operator of universal Testing Machine. 'We have all got ulcers', complains a system analyst after failing to debug a snag in the 'package' for two days. 'I have worked on so many Sundays that my wife is asking whether I get any extra money for that', says one Accounts Officer in the month of March. 'How can one work without having a decent cup of tea served in the seat', complains a laboratory superintendent returning from an hour long gossip session in the Canteen. Numerous other complaints-electricity , water, transport, tiffin, office hours, income tax rates, law and order situation in the city, chaotic traffic or congested and catastrophic roads-are constantly brought up. Eventually, the supervisor hears rumblings.

7.8 A Reflector

How does Mr. Bull deal with complaints? The basic attitude is to see them as indication of laziness or weakness. How to deal with them? Either ignore them, belittle them, or bully the complainant so that complaint. is nipped at the bud.

To ignore a complaint, a supervisor might say, 'go, tell it to the Big Boss', or he may simply point it back on the subordinate and says', why are you weeping all the time. It is hard life for every body and you are no exception, I believe', He may bully his subordinate by saying 'when will you stop crying like a school boy. You are a young man. Grow up and be an adult. I am fed up with your nagging antics. Or, the supervisor simply over-whelms the complaining subordinate by saying, you have never had it so good if that is all you have got to complain about.

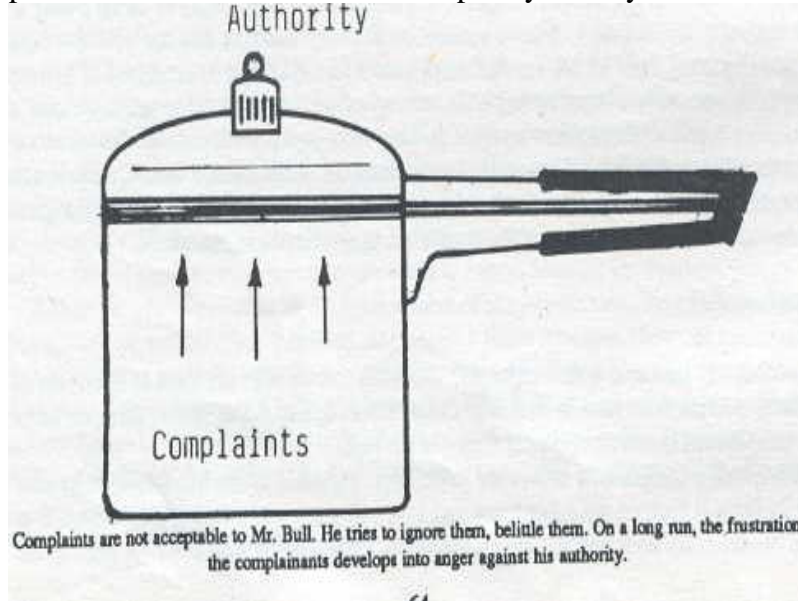
The attitude of Mr. Bull, in other words, is that if you listen to complaints, you will never end complaining. You become a consulting centre. Then you have no time to get the work out The best way to deal with complaints is to brush them aside. Ignore them. Make the complaints feel ashamed of wasting your time bringing up something of such little importance. Be a mirror and reflect back every beam falling on you in the form of a complaint, is the motto of Mr. Bull.

7.9 An Observer

A Mr. Bull oriented supervisor does not get the results which he generally expects. His greatest dread is to falter, to be beaten, to lose control, and to be defeated. When failure does happen, he blames it on his subordinates. He resolves, 'Next time I shall watch this 'chap more closely. The general conclusion from the assumption is that 'I am the cause of my successes; failures are from the actions of others' is likely to be 'never depend on your subordinates'. This psychology drives the supervisor to a point where he starts feeling that if he accepts assistance from his subordinates, heeds to the recommendations of his colleagues, or considers suggestions, it would be an indication of his weakness. He cuts himself off from his subordinates and looks at their complaints with contempt.

7.10 Reza Shah Pehlavi

Majority of monarchs, kings and dictators think on the lines of Mr. Bull while dealing with complaints of their subjects'. Reza Shah Pehlavi of Iran was one of the most powerful monarchs in the contemporary history .He introduced pragmatic policies and



brought out many social reforms. It did not work out well. His plans were not well received by his 'subjects'. Some of them complained. He bullied them. The complainants either ran away from the country or went underground.

The implementation of his plans led to a series of mistakes and errors at the social, educational and international fronts. The affected people complained and he ignored

them. He seemed to have felt 'I am the king. I have strength, I can impose my will regardless of resistance or oppositions.' He appears to have focussed on overcoming the outside source that triggered a complaint rather than studying the causes of the complaint. His dealing with complaints cost him his empire. Frustration of the complainants developed into anger. Over a period of time, the anger persisted and became more intense, even though the original causes changed, reduced, or even vanished. Then the people's surplus anger and hostility pushed him to a situation where he had to flee from his own country .

The analogy of the fall of Pehlavi empire to a small work centre may be a bit general but not out of context The effect of such actions on the organisational productivity can always be noticed.

7.11 One Hour Break

Plate meal is served during half an hour lunch break in the Employees Canteen of a Central Research Laboratory located in a South Indian State. The Laboratory employs around 900 personnel. More than 60% of the employees come under industrial labour cadre and are entitled for subsidised food during the working hours. The canteen building is located near the administrative complex. It is a bit too far away from the Material Analysis Division. It is rather difficult for a person to return to the Division after taking lunch at the Canteen, without being late.

Purushottam Patnaik heads the Material Analysis Division. He is a post graduate in analytical chemistry but his expertise gets limited to the raw material identification after being with this laboratory for fourteen years. He is religious and an orthodox person. He never starts an experiment without analysing the planetary transaction at that particular time and place.

During one of the monthly get togethers, one of the senior laboratory attendants B. Anjaiah, mentioned that he was becoming disenchanted with being unable to eat in the canteen and bring lunch from home. Others express the same complaint. The discussion continues for quite some time. Towards the end of the meeting, several employees requested a ruling from Patnaik on whether they could have an hour long lunch break.

Patnaik ponders for a while and starts slowly, 'Well, it is very unfortunate that the canteen is not more conveniently near'. Every one is attentive to Patnaik. He removes his glasses and says, 'But we do have a microwave oven in our laboratory. Why don't you make use of it You will find it convenient to bring food from your homes and warm the same here'.

'Well, some might, but with a working wife and school going children, I can't bring food from home and it is the same for many others too.' Anjaiah rejoins and looks around for support There are noddings and murmurs of agreement

Patnaik is ill at ease. 'Well, I am sure that is a bit difficult to manage. What about asking the canteen to provide lunch packets?' he proposes. The employees are not amused. He makes an attempt to laugh and says, 'I always buy lunch packets whenever I go on temporary duty, and find it quite convenient'

Several staff members react, 'I can't agree with your opinion, Sir. You may find the lunch packet convenient and good as a change but as a daily routine it is impractical,' says one member 'It may be okay with the North Indian preparations like fish-pakora, channa - bhatoora or samosa but to a South Indian, any food without Rasam and Sambhar is no food.' says another member. 'We have thought about all this, but it would not work, concludes Anjaiah.

Patnaik, obviously uncomfortable, says, 'Well, I will ask the Director about opening a satellite canteen in this area of the laboratory'.

'That will take an eternity to happen', comments one voice' who does not know the way our old man works. He will appoint a committee to study and comment on the need of a satellite canteen. Then he will ask for suggestions regarding the location of the canteen. He may even motivate his 'chaps' to create a controversy regarding the choice of canteen location. Then he will ask for cost estimates. This will be followed by a 'statement of case'. Then he will take the file personally to the Minister and will come back after meeting his PA. This being only a trivial issue the PA mayor may not put up the file before the Minister. Meanwhile either he will retire or expire', one member says. The members enjoy the narration and give their 'canned' laugh to this 'bald' story. 'No, sir we

can no more starve or get daily sermons for punctuality and discipline from the old man', says Anjaiah with a tone of finality.

Patnaik is visibly upset. He says, 'Well, I suppose it would be all right if we go to the canteen in batches. One batch can start around 1230 hours and come back latest by 1330 hours. Another batch may leave at 1300 hours and try to come back before 1400 hours. But please remember to hurry back as soon as you finish your lunch'.

A chorus of commending commitments rises. Some senior employees congratulate Patnaik for his wisdom and judgement. 'No other boss in the laboratory can match the big heart of our boss', they say. Patnaik blushes and signals that the meeting is over.

7.12 Fellow Sufferer

This is a Mr. Cute oriented response because even though the lunch time is well defined, Patnaik agrees for an hour long lunch break. Rather than risking becoming unpopular with his subordinates, he surrenders and takes the most comfortable position. Presence of half of the employees outside the stipulated lunch break, is ensured to give an impression of work. The impact on the work output, the production angle in this situation, is more or less ignored.

When Mr. Cute hears complaints from his subordinates, these are worrisome, and more so when the complaints are surely personal. Complaints about the situation, equipment, or the inevitable pressures in the system are not so distressing because Mr. Cute realises that the subordinates do not expect him to wave a wand and eliminate these sources of irritation. In responding to such complaints, Mr. Cute often joins in agreement with the complaint being expressed. This conveys to the subordinate that the supervisor is also with him as a fellow sufferer. It retrieves the supervisor because in this way the complaint does not create a distance between them.

7.13 Favour for the Hurt

However, the situation is different when the complaint is personal in the sense, something the supervisor should have been done and did not do, or did and should not have done.



Mr. Cute believes in providing Blotting Paper Relief when his subordinates come up with complaints. He joins in with the complainants telling that things are really bad and he is a fellow sufferer.

Bois Dushrath

The reaction is likely to be one of horror at something which might be seen objectively by others as no more than a storm in the teapot. When faced with such a situation, Mr. Cute does every thing within the realm of possibility to ease the

disturbed feelings within the employees. This might involve an apology, some times or might promise that it will not happen again. It might even involve doing some kind of an unexpected favour for the 'hurt' subordinate. In this way the supervisors can avoid rejection by letting subordinates know his sorry state of affairs and 'Let us have no hard feelings'. Such steps can take the sting out of any antagonism the subordinate might have felt and replace it with a sense of harmony, even though such approaches rarely restore mutual respect.

7.14 Raja Dushrath

Shades of Mr. Cute can be observed in Raja Dusbrath's dealing with the complaint of Kaikeyi. He exhibited marked need for affection and approval from Kaikeyi and a fear of rejection by the society. He was extremely compliant and agreeable to his wife. He went 'out of his heart' to please her. He got himself trapped in an 'untenable' situation. His inner conflict could not be resolved and led him ultimately to his premature death.

If a supervisor prefers to lean on his subordinates, who, he feels are stronger than himself it is neither acceptable to our society nor permissible in our system.

7.15 Make Shirt Inspectors

During a period of especially tight time schedule to meet the hardware requirements of a rocket launch trial in a space research agency, it was felt that manpower was not adequate in the Quality Control Department. to carry out the quality control checks. Directorate of Engineering found it difficult to subject the critical components to the complete test schedule. The quality control system consisted of a check list of 'routine' checks on the components at various points in the manufacturing process, and, on a less frequent basis, more thorough technical inspection by highly trained technicians. The great demand placed on the Directorate of Engineering had caused much of the routine quality control to be left undone.

Until such time additional manpower to carry out the routine quality control inspections would be arranged, the decision was taken to employ skilled technicians to perform certain aspects of the routine inspection in addition to their normal duties.

Ravindra Kumar Kaul heads the Quality Control Department. He is a graduate in Mechanical Engineering and has done some advanced courses in Metrology and Statistical Quality Control. He is a sober person with moderate skills and has been attending to his work with a religious monotony. He comes from a lower middle class urban family and is the only male child in the family of six kids. All his sisters are elder to him.

Kaul is about to convene a meeting to announce the decision about routine checks. He begins by saying, 'It is now Directorate's policy that the trained technicians should carry out some of the 'routine' quality control inspections in addition to the special inspection entrusted to them.'

Majority of the technicians in general, and Punyamurthy in particular, disagree with the new policy. Punyamurthy is a very vocal employee. He says that according to his job description he is not required to do lesser skilled work, such as routine inspections.

Kaul replies, 'this is a policy decision; there is nothing I can do about it. I have got no control over it'.

'But you have control over us to force us to undertake all sort of useless tasks', blasts Punyamurthy. 'Why don't you convey to the Director 'our' resentment in taking up 'motor garage jobs " he says sarcastically.

'See, I have conveyed you the decision taken by Director, Engineering. If you do not like it, go and shout at him. If he agrees with your suggestion, I will be too happy and will not bother you', Kaul tells Punyamurthy.

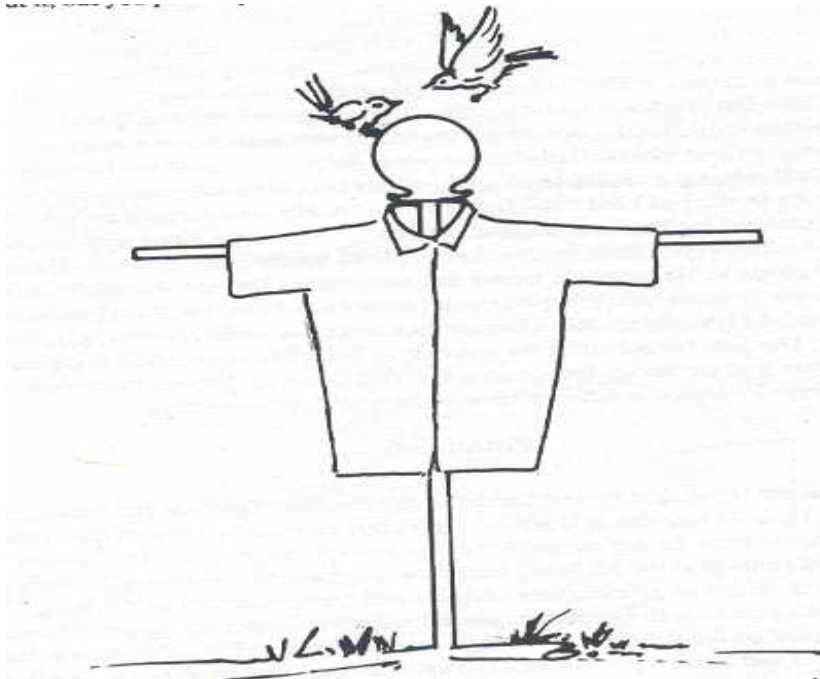
7.16 No Disagreements

The reply by Ravindra Kumar Kaul is in the orientation of Mr. Dull because he ignores Punyamurthy's disagreement with the policy, in effect saying it is not under his control. Then he does nothing to aid the technicians to understand the nature of the background situation, such as tight time schedules, demands on manufacturing personnel or the non-availability of trained and qualified personnel to do it. Nor does he ensure that the policy is carried out, in fact, he advised his subordinates to go and complain to his boss. Kaul merely passes down policy information without explaining the rationale behind the requirement.

A Mr. Dull steers relationships with his subordinates along a complaint free path. He avoids being open to complaints. Yet he does not ignore them either. The easiest way to avoid getting involved is not to get down into some one else's problems. Once a complaint is raised, the strategy is to acknowledge it with a brief 'Hmm, that is bad', type of comment to imply further thought. Then, for all practical purposes it is either ignored or the response might be "Yes, I know. That is one of the big hang-ups around here. But 'they' will soon see you as a trouble maker if you try to do anything about it". The implication is to go along with it, for whatever it is worth. Neutrality makes it possible to live in a world where no one sees any disagreement, hear any disagreement and speak any disagreement Others are likely to become aware of the untouched surface of a deep lying apathy, only as time passes. 'Why tell at all? What is the use? No body will understand, nothing will happen'.

7.17 Vague Remarks

Some times, a subordinate may try to get Mr. Dull to do something specific about a complaint The subordinate persists even after the supervisor has said 'Sorry, but that is something I can do nothing about'. The subordinate begins to talk about 'through grievance channels', and the supervisor starts feeling uncomfortable. He shifts the conversation by indicating a readiness to consult his 'levels' within the organisation to get the answer. After a period of time, if the subordinate, who poses the question as to what has been discovered, the supervisor is likely to reply with vague remarks like, 'There doesn't seem to be a policy on that', or, 'they could not decide, so I guess they are going to take it up in the management board meeting'.



Mr. Dull is a non-responsive leader. He steers relations with his subordinates along a complaint-free path.

If the subordinate continues to press the complaint and asks what to do next, Mr. Dull is likely to say 'It is upto you', or, 'I would not want to influence your decision', or, 'well you are going to have your assessment for promotion next year, so

you might wait to go and see so-and-so', or, 'there are all kinds of pros and cons, and I am not an expert on this. Another typical response of Mr. Dull in an urgent situation is, 'Well, there are two ways you might. go about it, but you probably will have a better feel than me to choose the best'.

Characteristics of Mr. Dull are apparent. He is neither warm nor cold; neither responsive nor indifferent. What a supervisor he is without any of these characteristics ! The best answer for this is that, Mr. Dull is bland, soggy, opaque and plastic. You might picturise one of those show room window figures. He is one such thing wired for sound and posted to your department for supervising your work.

7.18 Emotional Pattern

The basic emotional pattern of Mr. Dull oriented supervisors appears, in our opinion, to have three major parts. The first part involves a childhood or adolescence marked with feelings of isolation. There is a sense that intense and meaningful relationships are dangerous and bring pain and rejection. The second part of the pattern is centred around the period during which a meaningful relationship is discovered, and the individual enjoys a sense of acceptance by others and find a meaning in his life. This acceptance need not be total. Even if a particular role is accepted by others, it works. The third aspect of this pattern comes to the fore when the loss of that central relationship occurs. Now there is a sense of utter despair, which is not only connected to the childhood isolation, but goes even beyond. In the third phase, the conviction that life holds no more hope becomes paramount and the person becomes indifferent to every thing around.

7.19 Tulsi Das

The emotional pattern of a Mr. Dull oriented personality can be traced in the life of the great poet, Tulsi Das. He had a lonely childhood. Marriage had come to him as a great relief to adolescent Tulsi Das. He poured out his heart to his wife. But she had a totally different perspective about life. On one occasion, when Tulsi Das went all the way to meet her at her father's house, she complained about the intensity of his infatuation and advised him to devote to the services of Lord Tulsi Das felt insulted. His love towards his wife was total. It was a passion for him, and not just pastime. His heart got filled with despair. He withdrew himself not only from his wife but from the whole existing social system from that moment onwards. He became a hermit and then created the epic Rama Charit Manas popularly known as Ramayana. Every one is not as lucky as Tulsi Das. Enlightenment does not come to every broken heart, that which, in fact comes, is cancer, tuberculosis, and premature death. Our idea behind citing the example of Tulsi Das is to highlight the fact that every cloud has a silver lining. Becoming a Mr. Dull is not an irreversible phenomenon. Withdrawal from a situation is different from withdrawal from everything.

7.20 Promotion

Wing Commander Naidu is a Project Leader in the National Research and Development Organisation. He is 43 year old. It is around eight years ago that he came to this organisation on deputation from the Indian Air Force. He initially was deputed for a period of 3 years but never returned to the Air Force since then. He found the new job interesting. The organisation also found an efficient administrator and creative person in the Wing Commander. About a year back he has been appointed as Project Leader for the development of a product required by the Air Force. He coordinates the project work in progress at different work centres and heads a project team of twelve officers, one of whom is Shashi Sanyal.

Wg. Cdr. Naidu is sitting at his desk when Sashi Sanyal comes in and stands perplexed, in a stiff posture. He is visibly angry.

'What is the matter, young man? I asks Wg. Cdr. Naidu.

'So he does not know, or may be pretending this way, that my name has not appeared in the promotion list this year again. He says he always considered my work as very good and should have ranked me the same way in my Annual Progress Reports. Then why such a thing happens to me', Sanyal thinks.

'Sit down Sanyal -I guess you have something in your mind. Tell me what's wrong? Wg. Cdr. Naidu asks.

Sanyal sits down, but he already feels Naidu has put him down with that flippant remark. Nonetheless, he is in the Project Director's Office to get justice-against all odds.

Shashi Sanyal narrates a long story .He has done all those things Naidu told him to do that would make him eligible for a raise in office hierarchy. He has voluntarily taken up a number of management training courses, as well as attended 'C'-language course in the Computer Centre that had been offered as an option. In addition, he has prepared four or five good technical reports and therefore, considers himself more than qualified for a mere promotion.

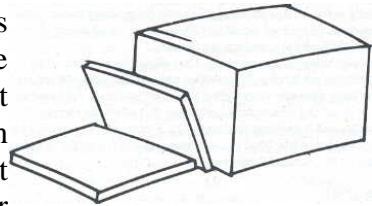
'You are a good and competent officer, Sanyal, one of the best I have known', Naidu replies. 'I would like to keep you with me till I am here in this project '.

'Is this the reason why you did not support me?' Sanyal interrupts furiously.

'Listen to me, Sanyal. Let us look at some realities. We are working in a national organisation. Promotion list is finalised in the Head Quarters. Based on the grades given by the interview board, they prepare, as a matter of procedure, a country wide merit list and then draw a cut-off line depending upon the available vacancies. Nobody knows who is in, till the line is drawn. More than a case of performance, it is the matter of chance. Some interview boards set higher standards while some go by the dress you wear and your hair style', Wg. Cdr. Naidu tries to ease the tension. But Sanyal remains tense.

, ...This is one of the reasons you might not have got the promotion, there might be others too'.

'What other reasons', asks Sanyal, 'Well, this promotion is gone now.. but perhaps you can consider preparing some good documents'. Naidu replies. He goes on to mention that better presentation before the selection board is also an important factor and that Shashi Sanyal has not achieved that in his last two interviews. Perhaps he would consider preparing for the interview a little harder and may try to get some recognition in the eyes of the Director General.



While Wg. Cdr. Naidu has been talking, he is watching Shashi Sanyal's face and general demeanour to see how each argument is going. But this was one of those days when he had no luck, whatsoever. Wg. Cdr. tries some more persuasive suggestions, but within a few minutes, Shashi Sanyal stands up and said flatly, 'You can't convince me, Sir. I have worked hard for you. The results are documented. I deserve better treatment than what you can bring yourself to recommend me for- I have wondered why, but now who cares?'

'See, you cool down and think, everything has to happen in a certain frame work of rules. Rules do not differentiate persons. You did a wonderful job for the project but unfortunately this line drawing procedure came at odds. I feel you have no reasons to be dismayed about. In fact, I am recommending your name for a Foreign Deputation. Forget about all this and let us see. if it comes through',says Naidu.

7.21 Open door policy

This is Mr. Nice's approach of dealing with complaints. Wg. Cdr. Naidu merely attempts to pacify Shashi Sanyal by suggesting 'accept the status quo and look to some other ways for improvement'. He tries to divert Shashi Sanyal's attention by giving him a hope of a foreign deputation. He does not get down to the facts, to determine what the real problem is.

Mr. Nice never fails to respond to complaints. He realises that failure to deal with them can have a bad effect on the steady, continuing productivity. Mr. Nice really believes in the 'open-door' policy. Every one has direct access for discussions in private, at any time and on any topic. In this way, Mr. Nice hopes subordinates are encouraged to get anything that is worrying them off their chests. When they come for discussion, then, he is in the best possible position to deal with whatever tensions have arisen and to prevent them from building up to a crisis.

When Mr. Nice cannot do that, however, the tendency is to move in a tentative way and say, 'let me take it up with the 'big boss' and see if anything can be done about it'. Then if he comes back with partial success, perhaps a concession can be offered to the subordinate. 'Half loaf is better than none' is the proverb frequently quoted by Mr. Nice, and he takes the credit for the 'half loaf'.

7.22 Bargaining

Another strategy for dealing with complaints is to bargain. The supervisor might say, 'Look, I am really sorry. That is something I cannot do anything about. However, there is something I can do that I believe, would be helpful, and I would like to do it as a personal way of solving the difficulty you are in at the moment'.

Mr. Nice is really sensitive to complaints. They disturb him because they signal troubles which his subordinates are having. The troubles can impede work and reduce his popularity. On the other hand, they can also result in the supervisor being criticised by his boss for being ineffective in solving subordinates' problems that affect the morale. By being available to subordinates and responding to a complaint if possible, or blunting its sharpness by compromising strategies, a Mr. Nice oriented supervisor is 'often but not always' able to create a 'live and let live' kind of atmosphere.

7.23 Mao Tse- Tung

This style of dealing with complaints could be seen in the days of Cultural Revolution in China, during mid-sixties. In the name of progressive and pragmatic policies, Mao's wife, Chiang Ch'ing as director of Cultural Revolution which aimed at ideological conformity of the party leaders, started a vicious campaign against her political opponents. The intelligentsia of China complained. But at no stage did Mao take a decisive stand. All along, he kept all options open. Although his wife became an extra constitutional centre of power in the later years of Mao, he died with honour and commanded respect from his

comrades till his last breath. Today while his widow is prosecuted and sentenced to imprisonment for her misdeeds during the Cultural Revolution, Mao continues to be worshiped as idol by the Chinese masses at large.

7.24 Frustrated Friend

Suresh Patel is a young man in his thirties. He works in a big oil processing plant He joined this organisation eighteen years ago as an impeller attendant when he discontinued his studies due to adverse financial conditions in his family. He worked very hard and never looked back since then. Last month, he had been promoted as a Supervisor of a large, skilled work force in the plant Like any other promotion, his selection had attracted a lot of comments and discussion among his colleagues. Patel had worked along with nearly all the people he is now supervising in the Saturation Section II. He knows them and their families on a first name basis. He had dined, seen movies, played cards, and 'boozed' with several of them.

This morning, he had an incident with Manohar Desai. Patel had asked Desai to go to Material Movement Control Division and check the arrival of hydrogen cylinders after refilling. Manohar Desai did so. It took him 30 minutes. On returning he told Patel, 'You really think you are something -a new boss, pushing persons around. What made you a superior person to me'? His face was red with contempt 'You yourself could have gone to MMCD and seen those cylinders', Desai complained.' In fact, you were doing that type of checking till 'they' made you the big boss here, isn't it?', he added.

Patel smiled and took Desai to his cabin and enquired if he needed water. Desai did need water but declined the offer. He knew all those supervisory 'gimmicks'. Patel went to the water filter and brought two glasses. Desai took the water.

He explained,' Look Desai, I have got promotion through an open competition. The decision was made by the Management on whatever grounds they had for finding me suitable to become a supervisor. Though it takes two, to make a relationship, I treat all people fairly'. Patel's voice is firm. 'I do the best job within my humble abilities and work to get the best job done by my team members', says Patel.

Desai is surprised at the directness of Patel. He did not expect Patel to talk fundamentals. Patel continues. 'We are here for over a decade now, could you tell me one instance, I questioned my supervisor whenever he had sent me to MMCD or elsewhere for a job I knew was mine;' he asks Desai. 'Now that I am responsible for the supervision of the work going on in SS II it will not be proper for me to leave the things around unattended and go to check the arrival of Hydrogen Cylinders', he says.

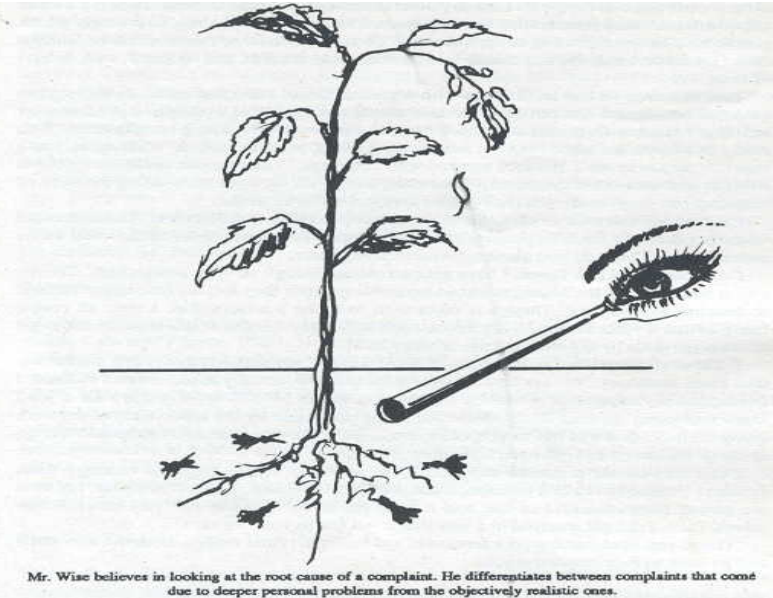
Desai reflects for a minute and then looks at Patel. 'Okay, I get the message Bhai. Frankly, I wanted to have a promotion last year and I still hope to get it this year. My eyes are getting photo-sensitive of late and it hurts me to move in the sun. But between ourselves, Patel, I did get annoyed in a way that is not fair to you', he says.

'Thank you Manohar for your frankness and honesty', Patel replies. Both the men smile and go back to their respective jobs.

7.25 Testing Reality

This is a Mr. Wise oriented action of Patel. He did not react kindly to Manohar Desai's frustration and of his feelings of being pushed around. Rather, he got to the core of the matter and brought out into open, Desai's feelings of being superseded which was brewing in him and causing him to misinterpret everyday activities.

When a subordinate comes to the boss to voice a complaint, and only two, the boss and the complainant, are present, there is seldom any immediate access to evidence 'outside' the person himself. Mr. Wise is careful to recognise when a complaint is purely private, in the sense, it can't be put up for a team discussion. Giving his high concern both for work and the worker, however, Mr. Wise does not accept without question as 'private' a complaint that involves himself and/or other team members. Mr. Wise says, 'Look. let neither of us be personally over sensitive about this issue, for there may be a problem here that is better to be placed on the table where everyone can take a look at it'. 'Why don't we discuss it with the other team members?' Mr. Wise asks.



This is testing the reality of a complaint. When the complaint is put up to the supervisor, it might be altogether different from what the subordinate, on one hand, is feeling from inside and what, on the other hand, the boss is pretending from outside. It is possible for both persons to thrash out the problem in the 'supervisor -subordinate interview'. The option is for either one of them to bring it up for the team discussion if the problem might be re-solved better, there.

7.26 Subjective & Objective

The real problem for Mr. Wise may not be the particular words a subordinate is using, but some parts of it certainly have to do with the present feelings. One such step in identifying the problem is to help this person bring out his emotions. Those complaints that are caused by deeper existing problems of communication can be attended to by

providing the needed clarification. Other complaints can be alleviated by a problem solving session between supervisor and the subordinate who made the complaint and perhaps, some other team members. Complaints that are more 'objectively' realistic-that is, ones which clearly connect the malfunctions produced by technical and other procedures-can be resolved by the supervisor by removing the causes responsible for them. Alternatively, the supervisor can initiate corrective actions with the 'next higher boss' for those changes needing approval, before taking necessary action.

In summary, then, a Mr. Wise oriented supervisor does not treat a complaint as 'just bitching' or as 'something to be soothed or ignored', to put on file for a 'cooling off' period. The complaint is a reality because it means that one or more subordinates are concerned about what is going on, which, they feel, is wrong. A Mr. Wise first draws out underlying feelings and then probe the factual aspects of the complaint, all along seeking to aid the subordinate to join in the process of examining what has been put on the table. This is how the entire problem can get cleared so that it no longer stands in the way of committed effort.

7.27 Maharshi Dayanand

The founder of Arya Samaja Maharishi Dayanand dealt with the complaints of the traditionalists in this manner. His criticism of the outdated customs and meaningless rituals was seen with contempt by the contemporary intelligentsia. Maharishi argued with them on sheer facts. He never allowed convictions coming in between the evidence. Maharishi Dayanand first identified the traditions that were deterrent to the individual and social growth. He then discovered the underlying feelings behind these traditions. It was then that he put forth the factual aspects before the masses. The masses got his message in pure and 'unpainted' form. Complaints were replaced with commendation. Many became his followers and formed Arya Samaja. Others gave him the respect of a social reformer and took his teachings within the framework of their own ideologies. Since Maharishi Dayanand reacted to the complaints in a factual fashion - he avoided hostilities commonly associated with socio-religious reforms. But what about others? Let us move to the supervisory function of confronting hostile feelings.

Further Reading

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8. The Face: In Front of Hostile Feelings

8.1 Aggression

The expression of anger and aggression serves to relieve tension or for cathartic purposes. Don't we emit an insulting word upon stepping barefoot on a needle that dropped out of 'Madam's' sewing box. But most of the time, hostile feelings originate from inter-personal frustration rather than the influence of the situation. Frustration forces an employee to 'do his supervisor in'. In pursuance of this, a subordinate turns aggressive. He starts a quarrel with the supervisor, attacks with hurting phrases, demonstrates an offensive action or encroachment and finally violates, by force, the rights of his supervisor. This is active or overt aggression. The aggression may also be passive. This is an indirect, covert and camouflaged hostility. This type of hostile attitude reduces supervisor-subordinate intimacy and increases alienation more destructively than overt dirty fighting.

8.2 Anger

Aggression is unfortunately often confused with anger. Anger is an emotional reaction aroused by feeling injured, interfered with, rejected, being put-down, humiliated, unfairly criticised, taken advantage of, manipulated or exploited. Anger has a wide range of verbal and non-verbal expressions. These include raised voice, facial grimaces, gesticulations. Its intensity varies from mild annoyance to uncontrollable rage. Most often, anger is not irrational. A good supervisor differentiates between anger and hostile feelings among his sub-ordinates when they demand or resist change. A hostile feeling is a thought or action which involves inflicting hurts, injury, punitive damages, or elimination.

8.3 Fights

Over a period of time a supervisor and his subordinates develop, understand and tolerate (if not enjoy) round robins of familiar and repetitive expressions of old insults, complaints and fulminations of displaced aggression. It goes on as a part of life. No questions are asked and no notice is taken. Such rituals contain no new information and produce no change. In fact they act as catharsis-a normal, healthy, non-instrumental release of hurt feelings towards displaced targets (persons, things, or ideas). It is a 'blowing off the steam' without attempting any change or improvement. In fact, such catharsis enhances intimacy between a supervisor and his subordinates by providing entertainment or serving as a 'tolerance reminder'. Before we go into the supervisory function of reacting to hostile feelings, it will be interesting to examine some of the identified hostile subordinates.

8.4 Fighters

Naresh Chawla works in Signal Processing Division of a large electronics laboratory. He is a loner and lives in isolation. Nobody knows much about him. Perhaps his family exists in background, but his contact with parents, siblings, or cousins is sporadic, superficial, and conflict-ridden. Chawla talks with co-workers, shop keepers, and store

clerks, but beyond that there is literally no one. The longer such individuals continue this pattern, there likely source of hostile feelings they inflict within the working group.

Dilip Duttatreya is a bachelor in his thirties. He gets into periodic intense relationships with women. These relationships do not work out for long. Each places demands on the other that are impossible for them to meet. Either Dilip's lady friends are also 'singles' or have their own women-social network. Loner friends merely perpetuate the isolation they suffer. And in the women-social networks, he feels as an outsider. Finally when relationship breaks off, he is back where he had started. Each break turns him more hostile towards working colleagues and his supervisor.

Chanchal Bhatteejee is a Telephone Operator in the Road Transport Corporation. He is 21 years old and this is his first job. Chatterjee studied in a missionary school which had a very strict code of conduct. His father was very brutal with him. Since he joined the present job, he got rid of the rigidity of his school and the ruthlessness of his father. All these years the only way to preserve life for Chatterjee was to 'shut off all 'always guiding' forces. Now that he is an independent person, he psychologically excludes 'the teachers and the father'. Now he does not have any feeling of shame, remorse, embarrassment, or guilt. He is ready to give any body 'a hand', any time.

Prem Munjijal works in a nationalised bank. He seems to be open and honest, generally appropriate, often extrovert. But his seeming assertiveness hides a basic lack of apparent honesty. He says, 'It is good to see you, I have been thinking about you for days', when he couldn't care less, and the other person knows it. He is one of those 'baby-kissing politicians' who appears on TV every night. His colleagues, however, know the reality. They offer him a cold shoulder and do not respond in the way they are expected to, by Munjijal. He complains of indifference from his colleagues and has a general lack of satisfaction in life. Nothing turns Munjijal on in routine. And when he gets an opportunity, he blows off his fuse.

Gangadhar Parikh is a religious person, in his forties. He teaches in a college managed by a charitable trust. Not knowledgeable about the realities of social relations, he says what he thinks is the right at the wrong time. He may be open and honest, but the naive and immature way in which Gandadhar Parikh speaks up usually leads to numerous interpersonal difficulties, creating a distance from his colleagues rather than closeness. His inappropriateness produces dissension and disruption at work. By saying wrong thing at the wrong time leaves himself open to exploitation. Not aware about the causation of this exploitation and hurt, he turns hostile.

8.5 Games

Origin of hostile feelings can also be searched in the 'games' people play with their fellow workers and their supervisors. Unlike other games known for the pastime, these games are not funny. They are defences one builds to protect himself from greater or lesser degrees of pain growing from his 'not so okay' position. Most of these games cause

trouble. They are the relationship wreckers and the misery producers. They act as a nucleus for the crystal of hostile feelings to form.

One of the very commonly played game between a supervisor and his subordinate is 'Now I have got you, you son of a bitch'. In the course of their working together both the supervisor and his subordinate have come to recognise each other's potentials. The supervisor makes his provocative move when he casually asks the subordinate to do something, he knows, will be a little difficult for him to carry out. Since the subordinate knows about the complexity involved, the supervisor is clearly in the wrong. The subordinate now feels justified in venting off rage against his supervisor. Instead of merely negotiating in a dignified way that benefit the work standards that are set between him and the supervisor, perhaps with a little innocent annoyance, the subordinate takes the opportunity to make extensive criticisms of supervisor's whole way of living. On the surface their argument remains a legitimate work dispute over a 'given but not taken' job. At the psychological level it becomes a game. The subordinate exploits his trivial but socially defensible objection to vent the 'pent-up' furies of many years, on his supervisor. He is secretly delighted about supervisor's asking him to perform something not to his liking.

8.6 The Victimiser

On the other hand, there are supervisors who often believe that people who work for them automatically give up their human rights and become chattels. So a subordinate may feel manipulated on the job and intimidated by the supervisor.

Then there is an institutional machinery. This is a giant victimiser in our country. Most institutions do not treat their people very well but use them in a highly de-personalised way. Particularly abusive are 'money spinning' organisations in the private sector. Institutions under government control or in public sector are complex and multitentacled with endless forms, departments, red tape, and supervisors who don't give a damn. All these victimisers contribute, day in and day out, to the hostile feelings in an individual. Employees turn into living, walking, talking volcanoes. Very often they erupt on provocations which might definitely do not warrant an explosive reaction. Look at the following incidents.

8.7 Conjunctivitis

The recent outbreak of vital conjunctivitis has severely affected the Engineering Design Department in an establishment dealing with the development of pressure vessels. Several Draughtsman have already come down with the infection. Others are feeling tired and preoccupied as they wait for their own symptoms to appear. There is an increasing number of drawings needing completion. Most draughtsmen being asked to work overtime. Increasing gaps in the ranks have to be filled in by the Draughtsmen temporarily posted from the other departments in order to help the Engineering Design Department in meeting PDCs.

Subhas Potdar works in the Structural Engineering Division. This being an analysis oriented work centre, could not offer much Draughting work to Potdar. Over a period of time, Potdar has become used to a relaxed pace of work. Due to manpower shortage in the Engineering Design Division he has been asked to report there for a period of one month.

Pressure filled atmosphere of the new work place is not something Potdar will be pleased to work in. Having come in for a month's time here, he is not much concerned about what Head, EDD thinks about his performance. Since last three evenings, he is staying late on overtime. Today, he has already done one hour overtime. He has a headache and is worried about his wife who is waiting to go out with him to consult a gynaecologist. Potdar has no children. In fact, his wife has had two abortions in the last three years. Potdar is taking all the precautions during the current pregnancy of his wife. Filled with thoughts of consultations with the doctor and feeling the need for a cup of hot tea and some fresh air, Potdar approaches Vikram Natesan, the Chief Draughtsman in his own section. 'How long do you think I have to work before I get a little relief ', he asks.

'You are not the only one needing relief here. Everyone is slogging to meet the schedules replies Natesan. Potdar is hurt.

'You people are blood suckers. You enjoy the comforts of lean days and run away at the time of crisis. Why do you people fall sick on particular occasions only? Let the current load ease out and all of your great persons will come back to enjoy their lives', Potdar bursts out.

Natesan gives Potdar an extended look. 'Look man, you are not working here in helping me out in my daughter's wedding reception. This is a crisis situation and you are here on the orders from the 'upstairs'. So, stop crying and go to your board. Your drawing has got to be done today', he adds.

8.8 The Backbone

This is a reaction with the orientation of Mr. Bull. Natesan makes no effort to resolve the hostile feelings of Potdar. He has not even explained why he could not respond to Potdar's needs. It is unlikely that Potdar will return to work with high morale or likely to help in future.

As already emphasised in the earlier chapters, for a Mr. Bull oriented supervisor, it is the production first and everything else later. Anything that might work against getting results is a barrier to be swept aside. Hostile feelings must be disposed off promptly. There is no place for hostile feelings in the work. Under the supervision of Mr. Bull, authority is the back bone for achieving the production through people. Hostile feelings undermine the supervisor's capacity for exercising authority. They have a bad effect on production, and thus can't be tolerated in the work situation. If they persist, Mr. Bull's worst fears are likely to be realised, that is, system break down.

8.9 Suppression

Mr. Bull's approach to hostile feelings is to try to seal them off. The fundamental rule of the game is 'suppression' when Mr. Bull is the target of hostile feelings. He is likely to say, 'Cut it out', or 'that is enough', or; 'stop it, I say'. If that is not adequate, threats such as a warning letter in the personal file, conversion of overtime allowance into compensatory off, or whatever the organisation permits, are used to control 'challenges to his authority'. If hostile feelings or behaviour persist Mr. Bull arranges a transfer in order to get the subordinate out of his way.

Subordinates often get frustrated when they work day after day under Mr. Bull. Some subordinates are likely to tell him what do they think of the situation. Then Mr. Bull goes into a 'win-lose' argument, 'you or me' tussle or an open fight.

When people disagree over cold technical facts, discussion can be calm and the problem can get resolved. But when hostile feelings are the cause of win-lose arguments and fights, they tend to persist and become chronic. Every time the supervisor says, 'calm down', in a gruffy way, the subordinate says, 'go to hell', if not verbally, through gestures. These hostile feelings crop up in a thousand different ways.

8.10 Powerlessness

A consequence for the subordinates under a Mr. Bull oriented supervision that is complete and continuous, is a sense of powerlessness. A common reaction is of righteous indignation and a readiness to rebel against the system that is dehumanising and demanding. The most extreme form of rebellion is to leave the system. However, this being very difficult in majority of the cases, a subordinate wants to help solve the problem and therefore, proposes actions for consideration by his supervisor. The subordinate does not give up even though the supervisor disagrees. We know that the supervisor's strategy is to cut off the conflict, and he attempts to do so. The subordinate sees the supervisor as over bearing and domineering. He wants to influence the outcome so that he can feel competent and successful. Denial of his desires to participate, results in frustration. This in turn, produces biological reactions of aggression and he wants to fight it back. He, thus, becomes angry and defiant and turns hostile.

Open hostility in our organisations is more or less out of question. Thus antagonism takes the form of feelings of dislike and even of rage. These are expressed in a subordinate's finding something wrong whenever an occasion arises as well as in complaining, back biting, ridiculing and so on. Subordinates may deliberately withhold the information to prevent a boss from looking good, or, may distort it to cause him to appear inept, and respond in other ways that reveal frustration and aggression but avoid open battles. The more intense the frustration is the more likely is a subordinate going to strike back by fair or foul means.

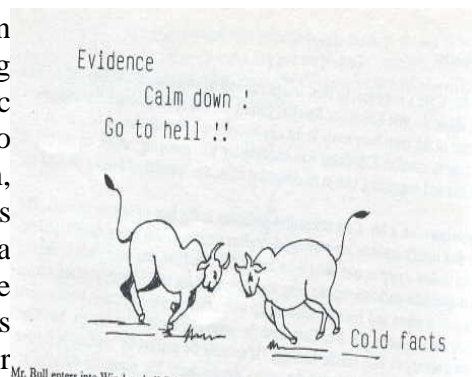
8.11 Aurangazeb

This way of reacting to hostile feelings can be seen during the regime of Mughal emperor, Aurangazeb. People in his empire who found themselves ignored or offended by arbitrary treatment and who were unable to redress what they regarded as injustices or wrongs, pursued other more militant ways of correcting the problems. Every time Aurangazeb demolished a temple or levied a tax on religious grounds, people recognised their individual helplessness joined together to force upon him their common strength. It did not take long for Aurangazeb's empire to fall, soon after his death. None of his successors could pacify the hostile feelings generated during his rule.

8.12 Inadequate

Naturally, hostile feelings are distasteful to the supervisor. They are unacceptable and insubordinate to him. If the subordinate fails to receive the signal and forgets the feelings the next very day, he is considered as disconted and a trouble maker who should either be straightened or eased out.

Living with this impulse of 'attack and destroy' can be one of the most frustrating and fatiguing experience for a supervisor in a government, public or large organisation. Most of the time, he has to suppress this kind of impulse while seeking to win, dominate, or control his subordinates. The tensions that would have been relieved by attacking a subordinate, are bound up and lived with. They have no place to go. Slowly, the hostility was felt towards others is turned against one's self and the supervisor feels inadequate.



8.13 Sweet Talk

Kaleshwer Rao is a Foreman in the General Machine Shop of an Aeronautical Development Establishment. He is a man in his forties and has completed almost 25 years in this establishment. He has an athletic body and moves around with energy and vigour. Now a days, he is working as Wet Canteen Incharge. This is a position filled in by persons from the different sections of the establishment on rotation basis. Ro will be in the Wet Canteen for two more months. Then he will go back to the GMS.

He has to go for a special cash purchase in the office van. He is to buy sweets for the afternoon party organized to mark the visit of Scientific Adviser to Raksha Mantri for inaugurating the new cafeteria building in the establishment. He is already late. He asks the service driver to park the van outside the hotel Kamat. This is a semi deluxe hotel on the cross roads of the City Centre. More than 10 vehicles pass on this road every minute. The parking place is very small in the City Centre. The nearest parking 'lane' is about half a kilometer from hotel Kamat. He dashes inside to buy the sweets. He is there for seven

or eight minutes, but as he returns hugging the sweet packages, he notices a traffic police officer handing over a sheet of paper to the driver.

Kaleshwar Rao places the sweet packets on the back seat and asks the driver about the paper. The driver passes the paper. It is a traffic challan for illegal parking. Physically very uncomfortable, having missed his breakfast and at present getting late for the lunch, as well as experiencing the heat of this summer day, he squeezes the challan paper and asks the driver to rush back.

On returning, Kaleshwar Rao storms into the Reception Officer's room. He slams the challan on Reception Officer Durga Pal's desk bursting out, 'look at this -I just got this challan for wrong parking while I was buying sweets for 'your' great man's party'.

Durga Pal, bewildered by the sudden attack, says, 'Sit down Kalesh, I am sorry to learn all about that I can see why it makes you feel bad. It is so undeserved of you. I can hardly believe the police would have dared to challan a 'vehicle'. I am going to take this up to the Chief Administrative Officer and see what can be done about it Meanwhile, why don't you sit down and taste some of the sweets. You are already late for your lunch '.

8.14 Path to Disaster

This is a Mr. Cute's response, in that, Durga Pal had no concern for the fact-if he had found out about it-that Kaleshwar Rao had parked the van opposite hotel Kamat, almost blocking one of the most busy roads in the city in order to speed up the job he was on. Instead he tries to comfort Kaleshwar Rao condemning the 'annoying' action of the traffic police officer and suggesting him to sit down and relax, the opposite of getting on with the job.

A supervisor with a Mr. Cute orientation collapses in the face of hostile feelings. The reason is that hostile feelings are only a few degrees removed from active dislike, and active dislike is only a step or two away from hatred. For Mr. Cute, this path leads to disaster because it gets into undermining the very foundations of his main security which comes from being in a warm and friendly relationship with other people. Hostility, conflict, and antagonism are emotions that Mr. Cute does the utmost to avoid. This means, Mr. Cute simply does not try to face hostile feelings. He reduces the tension by 'making it believe that everything is fine', even though the causes remain there. The continued focus of efforts, of course, is to try, by warm and friendly behaviour, to ensure that hostile feelings are not generated at all.

8.15 Harmony

There are many ways a supervisor with this orientation, attempts to reestablish harmony. People can be cajoled and coaxed into looking at how 'good' things are relative to how 'bad' they might be. He says, 'It may be a dog's life, man! and like you I can hardly stand it at times, but after all, we have got job security. We work for the 'President' and look at the work to wage ratio! Where else will you find such a moderate value?' In this way a

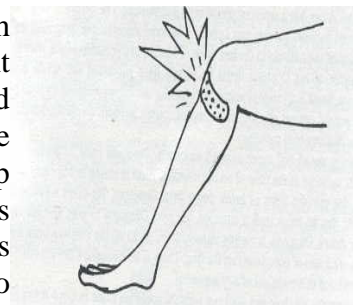
supervisor can get people to pay attention to what is positive and to turn their minds away from the negatives that are having a tension-producing effect. The mental attitude seems to be 'every day in every way we are getting better and better'.

This kind of warm, generous acceptance towards the person who is feeling hostile, even though it does not focus on and relieve the hostility itself, can often turn the situation around. Harmony replaces the hostility previously felt. This is partly so because when Mr. Cute reacts in this 'hurt' or sympathetic manner, wanting to make amends and get back into a warm relationship, it is difficult for a hostile subordinate to maintain his hostility. The subordinate is more likely to say, 'All right, let us forget it', and moves on to another topic or matter where good feelings can be restored.

8.16 Preventive Measures

There are at least three situations in which this style of reaction to hostile feelings may become an organisational way of life. One is, where an organisation is operating on a 'over heads plan' basis. Many of our public sector units fall under this category. Another is a situation where the product is in the sellers market that profits are inevitable. Here competition does not force the organisation to operate effectively. As a result, it becomes unattractive for a supervisor to make 'efficiency moves' because these might spread anxiety among his subordinates, which lead to dissatisfaction and make the supervisor appear unappreciative. So supervisors in such organisations take the easy way in face of the hostile feelings. They let things go their way and work to cool down the hostile subordinates.

A third situation occurs in Government Organisations. Such actions as efficiency moves, which call for layoffs, tight controls, transfer, suspension, punishment, etc., that would disrupt the feelings of the people and may generate hostile feelings, needed to be taken up here. These organisations keep on expanding and are primarily concerned with what is believed to be good human relationship. Preventive measures in the form of welfare schemes are regularly undertaken to avoid hostile feelings.



8.17 Tughluq

A dramatic example of a Mr. Cute oriented reaction to hostile feelings is contained in the history. It happened in the times of king Muhammad Bin Tughluq. To avoid the displeasure of some of his family members and close friends, he decided to shift his capital to Agra. This proved to be very inconvenient for the people who were forced to move out from Delhi with their families and assets. This turned them hostile. Tughluq got scared and reversed his decision. This resulted in further inconvenience to everybody and by the time Tughluq came back home most of his army had already been disintegrated.

Decisions of people like Tughluq are motivated by a desire to maintain personal security even at the cost of productive purpose of the organisation which may be a family, a department, a business, or an empire. While such decisions seem to favour the development or maintenance of good relationships, they are not sound in any basic sense. They are weak and contain the seeds of self destruction.

8.18 The CPU Technician

Biswajit Dasgupta works in a computer company. This company runs a big computer centre and develops special software packages for its clients. Dasgupta is a system analyst. He did his post graduation in System Engineering at a business school in America but had to come back to India due to some unavoidable circumstances in his family. He works very hard, has an objective outlook towards life and is very sensitive with regard to the qualities and functioning of the equipment.

Gopi Arora is a CPU Technician in Dasgupta's company. His job is to maintain the computer and he is expected to keep the system at peak performance. Gopi Arora joined this company after serving in a firm, marketing imported data processing machines in the country. He is a sincere and hard working person. Whatever may be his shift he reports for work in time and attends to his work without complaints.

While the data processing supervisors, programmers, or operators tend to be completely happy with the system when it is in its optimum condition, they rarely have the time or the thought to compliment Gopi Arora. However, if the system malfunctions or breaks down completely, Gopi Arora has a series of phone calls and visitors. The callers to Gopi Arora on such occasions include; Lalvani and Lalvani Chartered Accountants, preparing the Income Tax returns of their clients in the last week of March; Madhusudan Mitra, writing the concluding chapter of his Doctoral thesis he should have submitted last week; Sanghi brothers from the Stock Exchange clearing payments for the money remitted by their overseas clients as per the current currency rates, and of course, Biswajit Dasgupta working on a report due for delivery next morning.

With lightening speed and super charged emotions, Dasgupta calls on Ramesh Birla who is the shift incharge at the time of an interruption. Birla is sitting in his cabin in a relaxed fashion. He gets the news of break down from Dasgupta. He gives a sympathetic glance and tells that he hates such a situation. He asks Dasgupta to wait and get on the phone to Gopi Arora. Dasgupta is getting impatient. He picks up the receiver from Birla's hand and showers a rain of complaints on the line. There is no response from the other end. Gopi Arora preferred to remain out of any argument

Dasgupta bangs the receiver and goes out with the speed he came in. Gopi Arora hangs the receiver slowly. His anger is rising. From where the call had come, he had heard only the things that are said when the system is down. 'Why the hell they don't look at the good things, when aided by his careful attention the CPU performs at its peak for long periods', he thinks. Eventually this lack of appreciation gets on to him. He decides to go to Ramesh Birla to discuss it after the shift is over.

Birla is closing his brief case to leave. Totally frustrated by the end of a very busy shift, Gopi Arora enters his office. Birla sits back reluctantly and listens. Gopi Arora complains loud and long. Birla allows him to finish without interruptions. Then he says. 'Oh, don't worry about such things. And don't pay any attention to those callers, it is just the way they are'. 'They have nothing but to complain about something, you know', he says after a pause. 'What could anyone do about it anyway?' he says standing up. Gopi Arora sighs. Both of them go to the bus stop.

8.19 The Game

This is the supervision of Mr. Dull because the supervisor clearly adopted a 'do nothing' attitude and offered no constructive comments, much less proposing anything about getting better rapport with either Dasgupta or Gopi Arora. The assumption is that these feelings would eventually disappear.

A Mr. Dull oriented supervisor reacts to the hostile feelings by not acting as a supervisor. Since he has no intention of being drawn in, the supervisor can keep cool. Getting a polite but 'poker face' reaction or no reply at all, the subordinate is likely to say, either aloud or to himself, 'Oh, Just forget it', and walks away.

Some Mr. Dull oriented supervisors wear down their subordinates' hostile feelings much in the same way as a skillful fish catcher plays a fish until it is played out. The supervisor might listen silently to his subordinates tirade. Whenever the subordinate ceases, the supervisor waits. The supervisor might even be skillful enough to act as though he is about to interrupt the subordinate but then quickly 'yields the floor' and the subordinate starts up again. In this way, the supervisor prompts the subordinate, again and again, to vent the anger until eventually, the subordinate has nothing more to say. No harm has been done. They might even walk away together.

8.20 Sound-proof Walls

It is quicker to describe a Mr. Dull oriented supervisor's way of reacting to hostile feelings by describing what it is 'not'. A Mr. Dull does not actively seek to become aware of hostile feelings that may have been brought about by the character of his supervision and neither does he make an effort to run away from them. In a certain sense, the Mr. Dull oriented supervisor accepts the expressions of hostile feelings like the 'walls of a sound-proof room'. Yet the subordinate who expresses them, gains little satisfaction from having done so. While the subordinate doesn't get punished or criticised, he knows deep down that having made the effort did not change much. The same old situation will be around tomorrow, the next day, and next year.



In the snake charmer way of tackling hostilities, Mr. Dull plays his angry subordinate out until he is played out.

Under this kind of supervision, the supervisor does not consider the subordinate's angry and hostile feelings, which have built up over a period of time. He makes no effort to aid his subordinate to put his reactions into proper perspective either.

8.21 Man Singh

Raja Man Singh preferred to join hands with Emperor Akbar for reasons historians can explain better. However, he appeared to have been committed neither to give his people a better life nor to being loved or appreciated by them. He had chosen the path of retreat and resignation, but within the system. On the face of the Mughal hostilities, Man Singh went through the expected motions of diplomacy, frequently following rules of conduct in much the same way as other kings of his times. Yet he did this, not as a conformist and without responding either positively or negatively, but to avoid being conspicuous in the eyes of a more powerful enemy. While facing the hostile feelings of the Rajput Kings, he did not take sides. He appeared to have lacked convictions and failed to apprehend those, held by his fellow Rajputs.

8.22 Silk Saree

Prem Kumar is a probationary salesman in the state run super bazaar. He is a graduate in English Literature but joined the super bazaar after trying to get a job appropriate for his education for two years in vain. His mother died when he was in the primary school. His father remarried when he completed his eighth standard. Since then he has been living a neglected life. He could never establish relations with his two step-brothers and a step-sister, on equal terms. As soon as he got this job he moved out of his 'so called' home. He now lives alone in a one room 'portion'.

Prem Kumar is seldom comfortable with ladies. When he came to the counter keeping ladies' garments on a rotation basis, he did not like it. However, as per the rules of the super bazaar each sales person has to attend all counters as per a roster. He has to sell garments to ladies for six months.

One day he burst into the inner office through the door from the show room with a silk saree clutched in both hands. His face is red with contempt. He shook the saree several

times and then threw it on the floor. His supervisor, Ganga Prasad turned, startled at the outburst. He walked over and picked up the saree. 'What is the matter?' he inquired.

Prem Kumar began spluttering, 'That crude, sarcastic, stupid lady. .'. He is too upset to tell the exact incident.

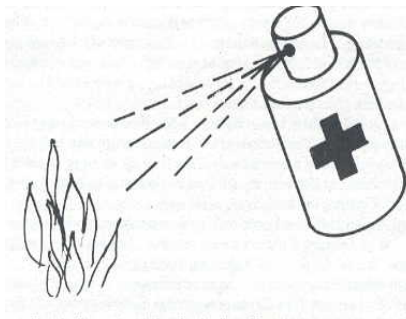
'Did she give you a bad time?' Ganga Prasad asks. He goes on, 'You really must find a different way to 'blow off steam ' after a difficult customer. They are just part of the game. Look at this saree now; the way you have squeezed it, it will have to be sold only at a reduced price now. Do you know that the Manager maintains an account of the sales at each counter ? He also takes note of the items sent for clearance sale from each counter. You are here on probation. How will you feel being fired?'

Prem Kumar cools down. He takes water from the 'filter' kept in the inner office. 'You are right, Boss. It is stupid of me to get so much upset, but at the same time ...sa'b you should have heard that character 'needling' me and putting me down. I stayed polite even after she had asked me to show the fifty-eighth saree after passing all sort of stupid comments on the sarees I had shown to her. At last, when I persuaded her to buy at least one saree, she asked me as to how much commission would I make out of it. I was boiling inside. She asked me to pack this saree and then went off after second thoughts, without taking it. Now, tell me, Sir, what to do with such customers. In fact, I was feeling like throwing this saree on the face of that 'bitch' .Prem Kumar finishes his Story .

Ganga Prasad gave Prem Kumar a sympathetic look. After waiting for him to finish, Ganga Prasad said 'Let us go back to the counter, Prem'. As they left the stock room, Ganga Prasad reached a cup-board, took out another saree and handed it over to Prem Kumar, saying, 'why don't you see if you can stop yourself from damaging expensive items. I am not taking any action this time. Please don't repeat this. I shall not be able to help you again'.

8.23 Not Next Time

This is a Mr. Nice oriented reaction to hostile feelings because the supervisor takes a 'balancing' approach. Ganga Prasad has not found the kind of solution possible from investigation of the problems cause. He has not particularly focussed on getting on to the roots of Prem Kumar's feelings and, on the other hand, less than fully interested in taking action in response to an obvious violation of good practices regarding merchandise. After Prem Kumar's destructive outburst, Ganga Prasad begins by bringing up the 'disciplinary sanctions' aspect A little later, he balances this off by giving Prem Kumar a second chance, that is, by emphasising that ,although he 'could' institute immediate action, it will not be taken this time-on the condition that Prem Kumar tries not to mishandle merchandise in the future. It is managed on a 'forgive you this time' basis.



8.24 Splitting Technique

Hostile feelings worry a Mr. Nice oriented supervisor. They make way for anxiety. The supervisor does not think well under the emotional pressure that is involved. One reason for this is that to balance work and worker's concerns, the supervisor feels the need for conditions to be stable. When hostility erupts, it is as though the ground beneath his equilibrium scales is trembling, threatening to put him off balance.

Given these circumstances, how does a Mr. Nice oriented supervisor react when a subordinate expresses hostile feelings? The supervisor may do anyone or more of the several alternatives. The first attempt may be to keep the conversation fairly superficial so that the subordinate does not become extremely upset. The supervisor attempts to focus the conversation on operational matters, which are easier to discuss. Secondly, the supervisor does his best to avoid expressing hostile feelings towards the subordinate. The reason is that, were this to happen, the situation might degenerate into win-lose, and that kind of battle is definitely something that a Mr. Nice oriented supervisor wishes to avoid. Thirdly if a subordinate is very angry, the supervisor might make a move to create a cooling -off period during which it is possible to think over what's to be done. This might be possible by saying, 'I very much appreciate your telling me these things. They are important to me, but rather than giving you a quick reaction, I would like an opportunity to ponder these matters and turn them over in my mind. I wonder if we could get together next Monday': By using this strategy the supervisor not only gains time to think, but also the chances are good that the subordinate will cool off during the interim period. Thus, when they get back together, the fury may have died away, or if it has not, at least the supervisor is in a position to offer the subordinate alternative ways of thinking about the problem which has aroused these hostile feelings. This is really a splitting technique. It has in it much of the same basic thinking as in other Mr. Nice oriented supervisory techniques that involve compromise, adjustment, and accommodation.

8.25 In Administrative Ways

A Mr. Nice oriented supervisor acknowledges the existence of his subordinates' hostile feelings and treats them as important. His goal is to try to relieve the hostile tensions in purely administrative ways, rather than by getting to the core of the problem, or helping the frustrated person gain genuine insight, if the problem is one over which no one has control. A subordinate of Mr. Nice is unlikely to feel he is on a 'full and open exchange-of-views basis' with his supervisor. Nonetheless, he is aware of having been listened to, and his hostile feelings have been given due consideration.

When two subordinates share hostile feelings, a Mr. Nice oriented supervisor talks to each one of them separately. Then he tries to find points on which they both can agree. He suggests his proposal to each one, separately. This is likely to result in some basis for agreement which, both can live with, though they may continue to dislike one another. If this fails then other splitting mechanisms are relied upon.

Physical separation can remove hostile feelings even though it may not resolve basic issues. This is done by arranging a transfer for the one who 'does not fit'. An assignment in another location 'solves' the problem. Redrawing the organisational chart is still another tactic. Reporting lines of disagreeing parties can be redrawn so that they no longer have to report to the same supervisor. Thus they have no need to maintain mutual relations and the hostility is brought to an end.

In certain situations, where what the supervisor wants and what his subordinates would be willing to go along with are two separate things, the solution can't be had by opting for one or the other. Because of the protocol of hierarchy that says 'you don't bring three levels together', he becomes a 'go between' manager - running between his boss and his subordinates, testing a course of action; first from one side and then from the other. 'This allows a position to finally emerge through a series of approximations that is more or less acceptable to everyone.'

8.26 Henry Kissinger

The man who acted as a living, walking, talking Mr. Nice in the contemporary history is the 1923 born former US Secretary of State and Chief Foreign Affairs Adviser to President Nixon, Henry A. Kissinger. He was asked to intervene in almost any conflict that arose in the US Government during his tenure. What Kissinger did was not often what was the best, but what was politically safe, saleable, or workable. He invented 'shuttle' diplomacy in situations involving fierce international hostilities. He had arranged expedient actions, many a times at the expense of a sounder way that might have exposed differences which needed to be resolved. Kissinger brought to light a new way of reacting to international hostilities. Here the diplomat keeps himself under no particular ethical compulsions beyond 'to do what everybody else felt like done'. A diplomat separates his actions from his personal judgements of right or wrong. And probably that is how Kissinger could manage so many face-saving resolutions in very complicated situations. This was called by his critics diplomacy in the form of a patch work of contradictions, reversals, starts and stops. However, it worked and worked to the interest of his government.

8.27 Extra Work Allotment

Hariharan is a Foreman in the Precision Machine Shop of a public sector watch company. He is thirty five years old and is waiting in vain for his promotion as Shop Supervisor for the last three years. Osman Pasha is the shop supervisor in PMS. Pasha is an orthodox person and lives an ascetic life. Once out of the factory, he gets involved in some creative pastime. He is a frequent visitor to the city library and draws books on psychology for in-depth study during week ends. The PMS has a strength of seventy eight with forty two technicians, eleven assistant foremen, seven foremen, two deputy shop supervisor and the shop supervisor. Besides, Pasha and Hariharan, Jaya Kumar also has a role in the episode we are going to discuss now. Jaya Kumar is an Assistant Foreman working under Hariharan. He is a young man in his late twenties and enjoys very nice rapport with the technicians working under him.

During peak production periods some technicians are required to stay on overtime. This gets them a good sum of money as extra work allowance in addition to their regular wages. The technicians are selected for the extra work on the basis of their performance level during regular hours. Based on the report of assistant foreman who is in direct touch with the technicians and foreman in charge, the shop supervisor selects persons for extra work. However, Bhandari, who works on a horizontal boring machine as technician, thinks otherwise. He sees nepotism and favouritism in extra time work allocation. Since he was never asked to stay back for overtime, he filed a grievance with Osman Pasha.

Hariharan rushes into Pasha's office and yells, 'What do you think of yourself? Being a shop supervisor does not make you the managing director of this company. You have made a fool of me in front of my people and that assistant foreman Jaya Kumar'.

'What did I do, Hari?' Pasha is surprised by the sudden outburst. He has never seen Hariharan in such a frustrated state before, but he does not feel indignant about it. He indicates the chair by his desk, and Hariharan sits down there, still fuming.

'You have taken Jaya Kumar's side and reversed me on that Bhandari affair -why?' he asks.

'I have got the papers right here and a meeting is scheduled with the Assistant Foreman at eleven to go over to the case. I have made no decision, one way or the other, much less, announcing it any thing without letting you know before it reached Bhandari ', Pasha says.

'But, then why is Jaya Kumar saying that he has already won extra work allocation for Bhandari? Just now I saw him laughing with Bhandari at the tiffin counter', Hariharan asks.

'If he is saying so he is 'jumping the gun'. The grievance is still on the table between deputy shop supervisor Khanna and me, and we shall start discussing it in a couple of hours' time'. Pasha tells Hariharan.

'You have let him go over my head and I don't like it, Sa'b, to be very frank with you', Hariharan says.

'No Hariharan, as Assistant Foreman supervising Bhandari, Jaya Kumar has exercised one of his options and independently passed it on to Khanna to handle with me. I was going to talk to you before the meeting, so that now you are here, why don't we take a look at Bhandari's grievance', Pasha proposes.

'What is there to look at I don't understand. Everybody knows about the water Bhandari carries in his bladder. As I have told them also, the grievance is baseless and ridiculous', Hariharan says.

'That is one way of responding to a grievance-do you think this is the best', Pasha asks. 'come on Sa'b, you know why these fellows are doing all this grievance drama. Next month is the Union's elections. Since Bhandari carries influence over many workers, Jaya Kumar is making trouble to build up his image. Khanna too seems to have joined hands with them. In fact you should be very careful in dealing with such characters', Hariharan turns sympathetic.

'Well I don't know much about the games going on around. What I 'do' know is that under our agreed upon procedure, the foreman and the assistant foreman are first required to carry out a joint investigation of the facts and then try to agree on a solution. If they can't reach a joint decision, at least they can agree to disagree. Then, they should put their facts and points of disagreement down in writing and refer it up as a 'joint submission' to Khanna and me'.

Pasha paused for awhile, then added, 'Now that has not happened in the Bhandari's case, Hari, and from the tone of your 'it's ridiculous' remark it is not surprising that Jaya Kumar seems to have concluded that no joint investigation is feasible. Anyway, there has only been one referral by Jaya Kumar, and as usual, Khanna is likely to come to this 11:00 a.m. meeting very well briefed to argue Bhandari's case. So far, all I have got is your single comment: 'Bhandari's performance does not warrant any extra work benefit'.

Hariharan fidgeted. ' All right, sorry , I am no good at writing things out, but I shall tell you all you need as proof to send Khanna packing'.

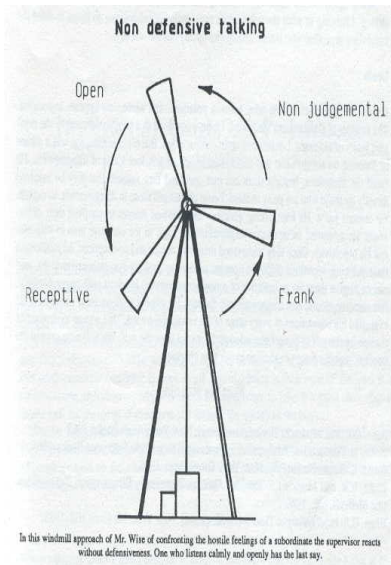
Pasha smiles. 'I would be better prepared if I could see Bhandari's grievance from more than one angle-you know, Hari, the kind of pros and cons that ought to get set out in a joint foreman assistant foreman submission. Why don't we do something to make it up for that missing joint investigation? Pasha calls his office assistant for Bhandari's personnel file and output records, and announces 'I am going to be Bhandari's advocate for a little while, as we look into his grievance and search for a truly just solution. Come on Hari, what are the facts? show me!,'

8.28 Open and Objective

The handling of Hariharan's reaction is in the orientation of Mr. Wise. Pasha finds out what the problem is and its causes, makes Hariharan aware of how he has ignored departmental level grievance handling, then, in a timely fashion, innovates a training experience for the prejudiced foreman as well as securing information that he, i.e., Pasha, needs for the incoming grievance session with assistant foreman. In addition, Hariharan is made aware that better grievance investigation and settlement at the departmental level on his part can help prevent unnecessary 'summit conferences' such as this one.

A Mr. Wise oriented supervisor like Osman Pasha recognises that hostile feelings are a symptom that something is not O.K. This means that the supervisor does not see the subordinate as 'bad' or 'no good' just because he has hostile feelings. The first desire is to know what it is. That is, producing these reactions. One approach for finding it out is to

be open with subordinates. This means, the supervisor communicates to the subordinate to establish that he really wants to understand the causes behind the friction. It also means the subordinate can talk freely because the supervisor is not going to pick up the subordinate for the first negative thing that was said. The supervisor's goal is to avoid being 'judgemental'. This is not being neutral, as in Mr. Dull oriented way, but rather trying to stay as objective as possible within what is a highly provoking emotional atmosphere when the subordinate complains in a hostile fashion.



Staying open and 'non-judgemental' aids the subordinate to want to talk about his tensions. When the supervisor can keep from feeling threatened by hostile feelings, it is possible to listen to what is being said. He does not turn a deaf ear. Neither does he adopt the attitude of, 'As soon as he has had his say, I shall point out where he is wrong'.

8.29 The Aspects

There are few occasions for a subordinate to feel hostile, once the supervisor-subordinate relationship gets on a Mr. Wise oriented footing. When a supervisor and subordinate are interacting in an open-minded basis, and continue to do so, then tension that might have expanded into hostile feelings get resolved at each point along the way. They have little opportunity to build up.

Hostile feelings still can arise, however, particularly when the supervisor somehow gets seen, whether more or less accurately, as not being entirely honest, according to identified concerns for the work and the worker. These must be dealt with.

Here are aspects of how a Mr. Wise oriented supervisor reacts to hostile feelings. The concept is that hostile feelings are important because they exist. Because they are important, they need to be dealt with in a sound manner. If the supervisor is ready to

change those aspects of behaviour that may contradict a Mr. Wise orientation, supervisor-subordinate relationship can be strengthened with two main resulting benefits. One is better productivity. The other one is a subordinate who is ready to participate more actively and to give his involvement and commitment.

Being open, invites openness. Reacting without defensiveness invites non defensive talking. Listening to what the subordinate says, invites a subordinate to listen to what the supervisor says. One who listens calmly and openly has the last say.

8.30 Lenin

Sometimes, positions people take, become polarised, and agreement appears impossible. The founder of Bolshevism, Vladimir I. Lenin was placed in a similar situation by the arrogant rulers of his times. Lenin stood up in confrontation. But his confrontation was a means of focusing on antagonisms that are created by strong win-lose kinds of disagreement. He faced the disparities, brought them out into open and then insisted that they be resolved directly by those who are party to them. Lenin challenged those in disagreement, to explain the reasons for it. He kept asking questions that allowed masses to confront their differences. He presented facts, counter-arguments, and logic to the common man to help him test his objectivity. Once they understood their own values and assumptions, he challenged their thinking regarding different courses of action, probing for reasons, motives, and causes to give them the perspective of a new social system. He dealt with anger, hostility, fear, anxiety, doubt, and disappointment directly. He got his strength from directness. He evaluated his convictions at every stage of the revolution he led. This was an evaluation of the self by the self to extract upgraded performance from the self. We will now expand the concept of performance evaluation in our next chapter.

Further Reading

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9. The Eyes: An Insight into Performance Evaluation

9.1 The Task

The most difficult task of a supervisor is to evaluate the performance of his subordinates. Any evaluation of a performance always comprises two things—a standard of performance and a way of measurement of the performance. And as a supervisor you know better how complex are these two tasks to perform.

It is rather difficult to establish standards for performance in all the work situations. A standard performance could be anything. It depends on the angle from which we look at it. For some supervisors, coming to work on all days and being in their seats all the time, is a commendable performance, while for some finishing work in time is a good show. Some others look for the speed of execution and some at the quality of the work.

Similar complications are involved in the measurement of these standards. They may vary from situation to situation, subordinate to subordinate, and from time to time. Without elaborating much on the surface anomalies of work standards and measurement matters, we shall try to look into the reasons behind these anomalies.

9.2 Deception

When a person looks into himself, he is likely to misjudge what he finds. He looks at his intentions. Most people have good intentions and hence conclude that whatever they are doing is all good. An individual is unlikely to see his own behavior which may be, and often is, contradictory to his good intentions. A large majority of the employees in an organisation come to work with the intention of doing it. Many of them do their work in the manner they find convenient and leave for home in the evening with pride and contentment. They do not evaluate their performance. They merely evaluate their intentions. And since the intentions were to work, they feel fully satisfied of earning their bread. Ask one person about the slippage he had caused in the schedules due to his leisurely pace of doing the jobs and he will react with hostility. Not because he wants to defend himself from a possible ridicule or victimisation but because he worked with a good intention of finishing it in time. If delays had occurred they were due to reasons beyond his control. He did not contribute towards the slippage. And if delay did happen due to some of his actions, they were unintentional. Could you punish him or condemn him or even criticise him for some unintentional actions? A good supervisor analyses his subordinate actions and helps him clear deception about his performance before he starts evaluating it.

9.3 Inference

In our own experience, most of the persons in our society do not share the experiences of others, or otherwise. They go by the actions of others as experience by them. From this perspective of 'self' observing 'others' inferences are often made.

Many of us, as supervisors, infer the experiences of our subordinates, the way an adult infers what a baby experiences. The baby is not in a position to communicate with the adult. The adult infers from the baby's behaviour that the baby's experience of a situation common to both of them, is the same or as different from his own experience of the 'same' situation. Now the baby does not tell the adult what does he feel, because he can't speak the language understood by the adult. But a subordinate is capable of expressing his feelings and given a chance, can enrich the experience of his supervisors.

However, very few supervisors realise it and they would prefer to infer than to learn. 'What is the point in asking him about his frequent late comings? I know, he has a troubled family'. 'Don't tell me he makes mistake due to equipment malfunction; I know, he does it to create problems for me'. 'If I ask him to stay back on OT he will shout at me. I know how important it is for him to play Bridge in the evening'. 'These workers want to exploit the organisation by demanding more money for less work'. 'His performance will never improve till I write a note in his assessment file'.

There is no effort to learn, understand or communicate. Straight away, inferences are made and judgement given. A good supervisor makes effort to participate in his subordinates' performance while evaluating it, or atleast he observes his (subordinate's) approach in carrying out the task.

9.4 Pretence

Next time you go out for a tiffin or a meal in any restaurant. watch the waiter there. Notice his movements, which are quick-a little too precise, a little too rapid. He comes towards the patrons with a step, little too quick. He bends forward a little too eagerly; his voice, his eyes express an interest which is a little too solicitous for the order of the customer. Then he returns. His walk is very smooth. He carries his tray with the recklessness of a tight rope walker by putting it in a perpetually unstable, unending broken equilibrium which he himself re-establishes by a light movement of the one or both of his arms. When he finally keeps the plates on your table, you feel a sort of relief. You are impressed by the efforts made by him in order to serve your order.

This is how you perceive a 'reality'. Now, let us look at him a little more deeply. Notice that his movements are not free. He is applying himself to chaining his movements as they are mechanisms-one regulating the other. Notice his gestures. They are not spontaneous. He is giving himself a quickness and pitiless rapidity of things. His voice is also not the natural one. He is whispering in order to make you feel big and powerful. His entire performance is a game. He is playing. He is amusing himself. But what is he playing? You need not watch long before you can explain it: he is playing at being a

waiter in the restaurant. Now, how would you rate the efforts made by the waiter? Were they genuine or fake? What you perceive earlier was unreal -a false chain of hospitality , a false show of respect, a make believe that you are the most important person in the entire restaurant at that particular moment of time. A good supervisor differentiates between genuine and pretentious actions of his subordinate while evaluating his performance.

9.5 Collusion

Can you give an undistorted account of any of your subordinates without giving an account of his relations with your other subordinates? Isn't it difficult? Whatever you see, others are also there. Not even one of your subordinates is acting in an absolutely singular fashion. Each one in fact, is acting upon others. Each one is acted upon, by others. None acts or experiences in a vacuum. The subordinate whom you wish to evaluate is not the only agent in 'his world'. His performance in your supervision is not an isolated action in accordance with your specific direction. How can he perceive and act towards his other colleagues; how they perceive and act towards him; how does he perceive them as perceiving himself; how they perceive him as perceiving themselves, are all aspects of 'the situation'. They are all pertinent to the understanding of one person's participation in it The performance comes from participation. A good supervisor first understands the situation, then he assesses the environment available to a subordinate for participation and then only attempts to evaluate his performance.

9.6 Attributes

The attributes a supervisor ascribes to a subordinate define him and put him in a particular position. By assigning him to a particular position, attributions 'put him in his place'. Sometimes, these attributions are 'global' in nature, 'you are worthless'; 'you are good', 'you are non-cooperative'; 'you are indifferent'; 'you are my man'. There is no way the recipient subordinate of such attributions from the supervisor can disconfirm them himself. What does his supervisor attribute to him, implicitly or otherwise, necessarily plays a decisive part in forming a subordinate's sense of his own identity. When a subordinate's own intentions do not match with those attributed to him by his supervisor, issues of secrecy, deception of the supervisor, or deception of oneself, or lying, comes into play, in a prominent way. The performance of a subordinate has to be understood in terms of such discrepancies.

The present of a pair of swimming shorts sent to a management trainee in National Industrial Development Centre, Madhutosh Mukherjee, by his father from Dubai on his twentieth birthday had interesting characteristics. It was at least two sizes big for Madhutosh. It was not the sort of shorts Madhutosh would have chosen for himself. It was very plain. It did not have any zipper. It was very expensive and costed more than the amount any of Madhutosh's friends could afford. One might expect Madhutosh to be disappointed or angry. Instead, he felt ashamed and guilty. He did not know what to do with himself because he was not the right size for the shorts. He felt he ought to have fitted the shorts not the shorts fit him. He ought to have been able to like it He ought to

have fitted his father's idea of how big he was; confronting ambiguous and confusing attributions, even after two years when he grew-'big', Madhutosh never wore these shorts. A good supervisor always avoids ambiguous or confusing attributions. He always maintains compatibility between the behavioural fit he expects from his subordinates and his own pattern of conduct. Supervisors who are easy going but expect their subordinates to be perfectionists put them in a 'double blind' situation. They are expected to be blind to the performance of their supervisor. The supervisor pretends blindness if the subordinate emulates his own style.

A good supervisor is very careful in assessing the capabilities of his subordinates and the expression of it. A task given beyond a subordinate's capabilities in a casual manner may have far reaching consequences on his own growth potential. A single careless attribution made by a supervisor, after a performance, can turn a subordinate frozen and confused.

He receives the injunction that he performs poorly, when his supervisor relies on his capabilities and assigns him 'important tasks'.

Different supervisory styles have different ways of evaluating the performance of the subordinates. The orientation of Mr. Bull with his unrelenting emphasis on results at any cost, cause a supervisor to 'rush' people in order to get the job done. This supervisor is quick to place blame but slow to praise good work and it becomes hard, weary, and resentment- loaded struggle to maintain one's personal stability under this kind of supervision. Subordinates of Mr. Bull receive a perpetual message, 'you are always wrong, you are too stupid to do 'the job right; all you do is wasting time and making mistakes'. Exactly opposite is the way of Mr. Cute to evaluate a subordinate's performance. Since Mr. Cute is very conscious of subordinate's feelings, he always strives to make sure his subordinates are content after a performance evaluation. Subordinates of a Mr. Dull start with thinking that the supervisor is an easy person who 'lets us think for ourselves'. Soon they find themselves in a difficult situation produced by their supervisor's negligence. The performance evaluation is done by the next higher supervisor on a 'by-pass' basis. The situation becomes one of indifference to any real contribution. Under the supervision of Mr. Nice, subordinates perform taking their 'tempo' from the supervisor and assume that they are doing as well as can be done under the circumstances. Persons become content with mediocrity. However, Mr. Wise sets high standards for excellence in performance and helps subordinates get there. Here 'critique' is used to analyse performance. If the performance is good it is acknowledged. If it is not up to the mark, causes of poor show are identified and dealt with. Let us go through some performance evaluation situations to learn more about this art.

9.7 Mediocre Employees

Dipankar Dave works in an Electronic equipment development establishment. He is an Electronics Engineer and works in the area of Millimetric waves under the supervision of Kedar Nath who heads the Electromagnetic Division. Dave is new to the field. He joined Kedar Nath's Division about a year ago and tried to learn the job with his utmost sincerity and dedication. Today, he is summoned by Kedar Nath to discuss about his

performance in the last year. This type of a discussion is seldom done in Kedar Nath's Division. Since the time he came to this place, his performance was never discussed with him by Kedar Nath, either formally or informally. He is, therefore, unable to understand the reasons when he was informed about this kind of a discussion.

Kedar Nath is in his early fifties. He had a heart attack last year but had not allowed it to cast a shadow on his efficiency in the office. He has been maintaining his get-ahead motivation. Any activity, not directly enhancing progress on his plans, irritates him. Reflections of a lazy and irresponsible attitude in performance of his subordinates are unacceptable to Kedar Nath. He says 'wasting time is a sin' and feels it is his duty to punish the 'sinners'. He feels uneasy without some definite plan of action which bears the promise of paying off in concrete results.

Dave arrives in the conference room, where he is notified to appear at 3.00 p.m. There is no body present in the room. Dave waits, sitting casually on a chair. He is drumming the table with his finger tips in a bid to ease out his anxiety. Kedar Nath walks in about ten minutes after the appointed time. Standing across the table he slides some sheets towards Dave and says, 'So, here is your evaluation report. You go through it and countersign before I forward it for the consideration of Recruitment and Assessment Board. It has been typed in the final form'. Kedar Nath has even signed it.

Dave scans the pages. He notices that all the Kedar Nath's check marks follow a straight line down the 'satisfactory' column. Dave very well knows, 'satisfactory' in his organisation's evaluation language is a polite way of saying 'mediocre'.

Dave gazes up at Kedar Nath, aghast. Kedar Nath stares back. 'Would you mind, Sir? I would like to discuss with you', Dave says trying to ask for help. Kedar Nath remains erect and says, 'what is there to discuss? That is the way I see your performance-just about adequate, but nothing to write higher-ups about. Of course you are new here and that I have taken fully into account.

Dave protests saying, 'This is not fair, Sir, I have carried out with sincerity whatever task had been assigned to me during the last year. I never had an adverse comment about my performance, from you or from any other senior, during any single occasion. If this is inadequate, I should have been told about it in the beginning itself. Either I would have improved to 'your level' or quit the work.

'I have not gone to your house requesting you to come and work for me here. You are here for the reasons better known to you. Do you expect me to talk 'Chandamama' with every body working here? I have better jobs than telling a person that he should improve here, he should be attentive there. Don't talk like a primary school pupil', Kedar Nath says, getting impatient.

Dave does not give it up. He knows he will be considered for the next promotion one year later than his other colleagues with the type of evaluation Kedar Nath has carried out for him. 'you see, Sir, I work with my, utmost efficiency. Even if it is not fitting at

outstanding' level at your scale, it should not be mediocre either. With the evaluation you have made I will be condemned to lose promotion, he tells Kedar Nath, in a grieved state.

'Look man, don't waste my time with your corporate talking. Either you countersign the evaluation or take the case upto the ' Appeal Board' .I won't stop you from going to an appeal, it is you who have to judge the consequences. From my side, I wish you all the luck you will be needing there', says Kedar Nath signaling the end of the meeting.

9.8 All Stick no Carrot

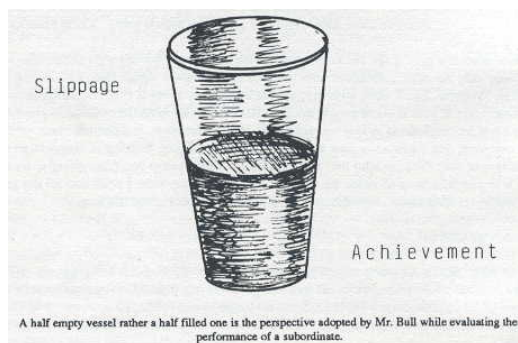
This is a Mr. Bull's approach of performance evaluation. Kedar Nath has made no efforts to monitor Dave's performance in the last one year. He has pointed out no mistakes or the method of his improvements. He has offered no suggestions. In fact, he has never met Dave on the 'bench' .He is now passing his 'final judgement ' on Dave and expects him to take it calmly.

How these judgements are made? A Mr. Bull oriented supervisor sets performance standards for a subordinate by what is to be accomplished for the next year. Most of the time, the subordinate is not in a position to assess the quantum of the work involved to meet the targets the supervisor has already set for him. Under the influence of 'business like' narration of the supervisor he nods. Once the subordinate agrees to what is expected, he is then forced in reaching that goal. At the end of the period, the supervisor sits down and reviews with the subordinate how the work is being evaluated, using the measurement of the results as established by him the year before.

This kind of performance review is, many a times, rough. Unless the subordinate is a genius, such measures will be used to show how he has fallen short. Failure to a Mr. Bull oriented supervisor is, 'You didn't get 100% on that', or 'you really fell down on this one, and I can only give you 'does not come up to standards'. Mr. Bull, in' other words uses 'negative motivation', all stick and no carrot.

9.9 Biased Vision

This approach of performance evaluation is not confined to the annual assessments only. But whenever a Mr. Bull oriented person is forced into a situation where he has to tell a



subordinate how does he feel about the performance, he correlates it with the Annual Review. 'Well, that is alright, but you have to make it up for the last 'lean' months? 'You have really slumped the schedules on this, I am going to find it hard to recommend you for the promotion'. 'Yes, that is OK, Why don't you do it consistently?. 'Pull your self together'. 'You had better improve from now on. Shape up or take the consequences'. If a subordinate questions supervisor's evaluation of his performance Mr.

Bull takes it as a challenge to his wisdom. 'I have all the evidence, man -don't try to do my job'. 'When I told you to do it you nodded in agreement. Now, you are seeing all sorts of complications after spoiling the whole thing'. 'How long do you feel I should treat you as a trainee. Is it a coaching institute or a rehabilitation centre?' It is very unlikely that a subordinate's performance will change under this kind of performance evaluation, except possibly for the worse.

9.10 Intimidation

While evaluating performance, Mr. Bull oriented supervisor projects a false image of an absolute power and authority. The strategy is to appear tough before the subordinate when the real reason to back up the image may be lacking. This kind of intimidation is of high value to a supervisor in getting what he wants from his subordinates. When it comes to disagreement this supervisor brings 'principles' to bear on his side of the evaluation even if actually no matter of true principle is involved,. On deeper examinations, such 'principles' often turn out to be a dogma converted into an 'absolute' by the burning feeling of self-righteousness. This supervisor criticises his subordinates as a habit, assigns blame for performance deviations and imposes corrective actions which are not required most of the time.

9.11 Ravana

All the personality traits required for any supervisor to carry out performance evaluation on these lines can be seen in the character of Ravana. His evaluation of his sister Shurpanakha and brother Vibhishana, is a classic example of 'blind self righteousness' which is the crux of performance evaluation in this kind of supervision. Ravana committed mistakes after mistakes in order to uphold his evaluation. His boasting of principles behind his actions is noteworthy. Ravana first criticised Vibhishana for having a different opinion about his evaluation. Later he blamed Vibhishana for taking the side of his enemy and finally throws him out of his country as a corrective measures.

9.12 The Sales Representative

Ranjan Saxena is a Marketing Manager in a Textile Corporation. His job involves forecasting of demands and allocation of supplies in the carefully defined sales regions. He is a commerce graduate and is working in the marketing field for last eight years. He has fourteen sales representatives working under him. Each representative looks after one territory and undertakes regular and extensive travels in the region of his responsibility .One such representative is Ashwani Kaul.

Ashwani Kaul is a young post graduate in economics. He tried to register for a doctorate in a university but partly because of his moderate ranking in the Masters and partly because of the pressing economic considerations, he gave it up and opted for his present employment.

Just like many other sales representatives, he maintains a flamboyant outfit. His sales returns are good. He gets along with the clients very smoothly. One way of his eliciting the favourable attention from them is to support their opinions. Most of the times, these opinions are of little value and revolves around the topics of no-consequences. He supports the market prediction of his client, cites some scenes from some movies of his client's favourite heroine, cries when his favourite batsman got out in the first ball. It is not that he does not have his own opinions or judgements, he is more informed and at home on almost all the matters his clients discuss in between their business talks, but he always hides his personal convictions. The payoff comes when a client considers placement of an order during the next 'season'. He remembers the man who thinks on his lines and approves his inclinations. He books his order with the man who thinks 'correctly!'

Ranjan Saxena understands Kaul 's method of working more than Kaul himself realises. He knows Kaul's cliques and their pursuits. He is aware that Kaul is not merely promoting the business of his employer but also promoting his own interests. He feels that by having a thorough understanding of the company's clients, Kaul is tapping into the grape vine at strategic points of business information. This information is not passed on to him or to any other official in the company for arriving at good business decisions. In fact, Kaul is using it to his personal advantage. He is exerting unrecognised control on other members of the company who are forced to follow his lead.

Kaul has returned from a hectic tour of South Western Uttar Pradesh. He has furnished the supply order requisitions to Saxena. Like few earlier occasions, there is no increase in the business. In fact there appears to be a stagnation or some time even fall in the business volume. Saxena is concerned Kaul is working contrary to the business interests of the company. He calls Kaul for a discussion on 'sales strategy' in the forth coming festival season.

Saxena opens up the conversation by enquiring about the English movies Kaul had seen during the last tour. He is feeling quite uneasy. He is in a dilemma. He is disturbed by the tactics of Kaul in face of the pressures from the above to achieve profit targets. If he does not check Kaul; he will be disregarding the MD's wishes and this will risk hurt his relationship with those higher ups. If he pulls up Kaul, it might be at the risk of losing the acceptance of a smart subordinate. He starts cautiously.

'Look Kaul, of late your sales volume is not expanding. The MD is very concerned about it. Why don't you put a little pressure on the dealers', Saxena says. Kaul listens quietly. Saxena feels secure. He goes on reinterpreting sales targets given by the MD and gently persuades Kaul to work on them. He sugar-coats MD's warning of a transfer to some 'dry' sector with the promises for implied favours in return for the support from Kaul. He tries to side-step 'negative emotions' about Kaul's way of working in his efforts to move him in a wanted direction. He ends up with an apologetic request for paying more attention towards the company's interests. He has a lot to say but refrains himself so that Kaul does not get upset. A little bit at a time never feels like much, whereas, putting it all out at once might produce an explosion', he thinks.

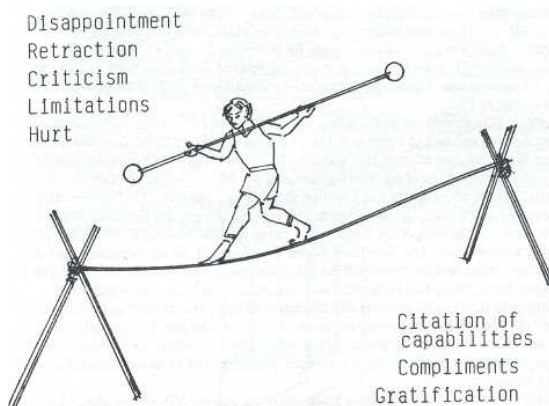
9.13 Land-mined Road

This is performance evaluation 'a la' Mr. Cute. For a supervisor with this orientation, performance evaluation is similar to driving down a road that has been land-mined by terrorists. The reason is the fear that any remark, no matter how well intended, may be taken by a subordinate as a criticism or as a sign of the subordinate's weakness. When this is so, the subordinate is likely to react defensively. Then the supervisor with Mr. Cute orientation is in trouble, being expected to break up what has been said, or else suffering the embarrassment of retraction, and wishing to avoid both.

For these reasons, a Mr. Cute oriented supervisor deals very 'gingerly' with the task of performance evaluation. The goal, of course, is to keep the discussion on the positive side. The supervisor is likely to operate on the proposition that people improve by putting additional efforts in further strengthening their strong points rather than trying to eliminate their defects. In this way, the supervisor can talk to the subordinates about their positive capabilities and therefore, is relieved of the need to talk about defects, deficiencies, weaknesses, or limitations. This means that the conversation is positive. Mr. Cute believes that each identified skill pointed out to a subordinate is equivalent to paying a compliment. Since deficiencies do not have to be mentioned, Mr. Cute is not placed in what would be an untenable position -that of pointing to deficiencies which, from his angle, are equivalent to presenting a criticism and inviting rejection from the subordinate.

Here, the supervisor has an overwhelming concern for neither hurting personal feelings nor disappointing the subordinate about his performance. He would always prefer to maintain an atmosphere of warmth and affection than to risk exposing his real thoughts, even though the latter might truly be valuable for his subordinate to know.

9.14 A Dangerous Spark



Mr. Cute is a Rope walker in a performance evaluation interview with a subordinate. He prefers to maintain an atmosphere of warmth to risk exposing the critical thoughts.

Sometimes Mr. Cute gets caught in a situation where differences are unavoidable with the subordinate, particularly on the standard of the performance. Disappointing results may be painfully self-evident when a contradiction appears between earlier encouraging reports and actual performance. Then, the supervisor seeks to reduce the risk of rejection through profuse apologies and promises of 'It will never happen again'. To relieve his fear of rejection, he may even ask for additional assignments and in this way, hopes to regain acceptance that was

jeopardised.

Mr. Cute's firm belief is that criticism of a sub-standard performance diminishes the performance potential of a subordinate in the long run. He says, 'Even though the supervisor feels critical, and criticism is, in fact, justified, it must be avoided'. In his opinion, when a supervisor is dealing with his subordinates, he should remember that he is not dealing with creatures of logic. He is dealing with the creatures of emotions; creatures bristling with prejudices and motivated by pride and vanity. To Mr. Cute, criticism is like a dangerous spark that is likely to cause an explosion in the powder keg of pride.

9.15 Raja Dhritharashtra

The attitude of Raja Dhritharashtra in the saga of Mahabharata towards the performance evaluation of his sons, is on these lines. Although, realising the cleverness of Kauravas and aware of its consequences, Dhritharashtra refrained from commenting. Had he decided to take on his sons for their wrongful deeds and not withheld his assessment of the things, it might have proved instructive and useful to them. All along, Kauravas were misled into believing by their father's silence that all they were doing was well when it actually was not.

9.16 Probationary Photographer

Rajan Phillip is a programme producer in the Doordarshan Kendra. He is in his forty plus of age. He came to Doordarshan on deputation from Ministry of Agriculture, where he was working as Head, Information Extension Centre. In Doordarshan, Philip is associated with the News Service and makes filler strips by visiting the sites of important happenings.

Tarun Kumar Majumdar is a free lance camera-man. Majumdar is a diploma holder in cinematography from the Film Institute, Pune. After coming out from the Institute, he tried in vain, his luck in the film industry for about three years. Now, he works for Doordarshan on contract basis and plans his career here. He is looking forward to a regular job in Doordarshan which will make him able to enjoy the relaxed work conditions enjoyed by the other TV camera-men. Majumdar's chances of regularisation rests on his performance ratings as given by Philip.

Today, Philip arrived late to the office. This is the third time in this week that he missed his regular bus and had to come to office changing two buses at the crowded terminals. One of his colleagues informs him about a call for him from the personnel department. Philip pours a large glass of tea from his flask and sits down to relax. The call comes again. He tells, ' He is about to start and will be there in two minutes.' He finishes his glass, washes it off in the basin, lights a cigarette and goes out towards the Personnel Department.

The clerk tells him about the performance rating form of Majumdar, which has not yet reached to their end. The Selection Board is scheduled to sit tomorrow and since

Majumdar's name will be considered for regularisation, it is absolutely necessary that before lunch break, Philip fills in the form and submits it to the Personnel Department.

Philip asks the clerk to give him one blank performance ratings form as he is not sure if he has with him the one sent earlier to him, a couple of weeks ago. He hurriedly fills in the form and goes to the Editing Room, where Majumdar is working on a footage on Child welfare programme launched by the Minister yesterday and is to be included in the 9 o'clock news cast.

Philip says, 'Why don't you take a break and come into the office?' He adds, 'I want to talk to you about your performance ratings.' Once in the office, he hands over the ratings form to Majumdar. It reflects only an 'Average' performance in all the columns. The conduct of Majumdar is further judged as 'satisfactory'. For future assignments, Philip felt Majumdar 'promising'.

Majumdar, unprepared to discuss his work as a hired cameraman and not having had any interaction with Philip regarding his performance in the past, says in a feeble voice, 'Ratings of other camera-men on contract are better than his ratings.'

Philip replies, 'Well, I don't know how other producers have rated their cameramen's work. In my opinion, ratings system has been revised in all the Kendras, resulting in what seems to be a lower ratings'.

Majumdar is not satisfied with the conversation, and becomes more and more upset about the situation. He says, 'That may be true, but I certainly think that my performance deserves more discussion and a better ratings,' 'What do you mean by 'average performance? Can you cite one single frame wrongly taken by me? You know very well 'satisfactory' is a euphemism for 'not recommended for regularisation' here. If you feel that I am promising for the future assignments, why don't you clearly write your recommendations instead of making a vague remark like this?', he asks.

Philip responds, 'Well, you see, eighty percent of the probationary photographers are retained for at least two years duration before they are appointed against regular vacancies. I was regularised after three years. Now, things are much more liberal than those prevailed in the earlier times, I say'.

Looking at his watch Philip says, 'Look; it's almost lunch time. I must rush to the Personnel Department I better give your ratings form before they finalise comparative statement of the performance. If you want to talk about this matter further, you can see the station Director', he suggests.

9.17 Reluctant Talking

This was a Mr. Dull oriented approach. Philip obviously takes scant interest in whether the ratings are based on objective appraisal of Majumdar's last seven months performance or of the feelings Majumdar carries about the ratings. Yet, he tries to let Majumdar get



For Mr. Dull all fingers are equal in a hand. His performance evaluation reports are often vague, abstract and provisional. They have very little communication value.

the impression that 'everyone is treated alike'. In this way, Mr. Dull is not often called upon to explain or justify distinctions drawn between subordinates. As an additional benefit, he might also build a reputation of being 'fair' to all the subordinates. If called upon to write an evaluative description, such a supervisor has learned, long ago, how to write these in ways that make them acceptable without their having much communication value. This is done by keeping the remarks vague, abstract, and provisional, often implying a positive attitude but rarely being in specific areas of the involvement. His supervisor can put just about any interpretation of what is wanted. Performance evaluation is easy for a Mr. Dull oriented supervisor. With low standards for what is expected of others, performance evaluation is tackled reluctantly and any review is conducted in a very superficial manner.

9.18 The Evaluation Authority

In a situation like this, it is natural for any subordinate to feel frustrated. What should he do to survive under this type of leadership? Since, in most of the situations in our organisations, performance evaluation does not end up between two individuals, but goes invariably beyond in the 'group'. The group authority consists of two sectors, the leadership and the group cannon. These fit together so that a member can appeal against the leader's decision to the cannon, from the judge's verdict to the body of laws; or he can appeal from the cannon to the leader, from the legal punishment to the President's pardon.

Under the leadership of Mr. Dull, the course of the group work is regulated by the cannon that the organisation has established. The cannon consists of three parts; the service rules, the conduct rules based on the service rules and the culture. Although, each organisation has a 'mother' canon, each group develops its own peculiar departures from the 'mother' canon. It is these deviations which distinguish the variation in the standards of acceptable performance of one department from that of another in the same organisation.

A subordinate of Mr. Dull must understand clearly that an employee's performance is divided into three different segments-technical performance, group etiquette, and group character, If an employee meets and maintains the performance standards acceptable to the 'mother' cannon, he must then challenge the leadership of Mr. Dull. It should be, however, noted that the culture does not change with the individual, but only with the group. For example, a husband may be quite unrestrained toward his wife at home, but he must treat her differently at a social gathering. When exposed to the 'mother' cannon, Mr. Dull is likely to improve in performance\ evaluation.

9.19 Bahadur Shah Zafar

The last emperor of the Great Mughuls, Bahadur Shah Zafar was a leader with the type of orientation described above. Although, he was regarded by virtue of being crowned at Delhi, a leader even by several principalities and kingdoms in the country , he failed to

consolidate the revolution which broke out in year 1857 in their freedom struggle against the British Raj imposed on them by the East India Company. He was indifferent in his handling of the internal group processes. The whole efforts to fight the British, as a united force, got miserably defeated due to his inept evaluation of the events.

9.20 The Supply Clerk

Bulchand Rathor is an Area Officer in a Cane Cooperative Society. He comes from an agricultural family and did his graduation in agricultural Economics. He is in the 'co-op' for the past six years and, by his sincere and organised work, he has become a key employee in the organisation. He knows several cooperative members on family basis and offers them good advice on 'stock' matters.

Laxmi Bhushan works as a supply clerk with Rathor. His job description requires that record of cane transfer to Sugar Mills be maintained accurately and on time. Laxmi Bhushan is also required to give Rathor a weekly report of stock position. This gives Rathor necessary inputs to plan society's investments.

Laxmi Bhushan continually makes errors and in this way, he fails to keep records up to date. His inventory management is also unsatisfactory. Rathor has brought the deficiencies to Laxmi Bhushan's notice on several occasions. Rathor also made suggestions as to what might be done to bring his performance up to a more acceptable level. Rathor asked Laxmi Bhushan to see him the next Monday afternoon with all the records. Laxmi Bhushan arrives at Rathor's office with a bunch of files, promptly. The meeting commences.

Rathor begins by telling Laxmi Bhushan, 'Your performance as a whole, is satisfactory but it still needs some improvements. Perhaps, you need to pay more attention in making the record entries. Let us work on improving this area. If a 'co-op' member loses money due to an incorrect information from you, he will be fully justified in demanding the termination of your services. Don't put in such a situation. You know very well that the Management Board is composed of these members, and such lapses can cause you harm beyond repair.

If any 'loser' sees you during your promotion interview he will get you by your 'neck'.

Laxmi Bhushan replies, 'I have been doing my best but I don't think if I can improve more. No one can be one hundred percent accurate. I know, I have made mistakes and caused some loss to some members sometimes but you know 'only a maid servant breaks the crockery'.

Rathor responds, 'Well, I see your point man! But let us try to make 'some' improvements. I agree with you, it might not be possible to attain perfection.

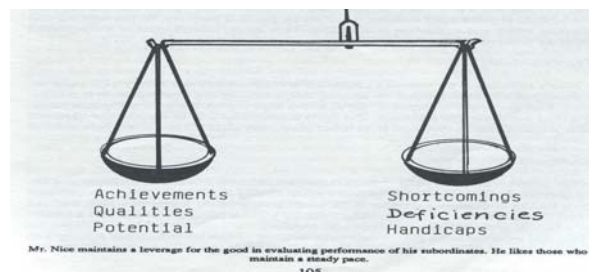
9.21 Alternations

This is a performance evaluation in the manner done by Mr. Nice. The attitude is of the sort 'let us see if it works'. The approach is of the type 'half a loaf is better than none'. Rathor is indirect, both in getting to the performance evaluation to be discussed and in pointing it out that the improvements were needed. Also, he starts in the typical Mr. Nice's alternation between 'In this way you are quite good -but in another area, you might 'consider' improving'.

The underlying theme of this kind of performance evaluation is that the supervisor tries indirect ways to bring the subordinate's attention to the matters of relevance for the sake of improvements. The 'indirect' aspect is meant to maintain the supervisor's popularity and to prevent the relationship, between the supervisor and the subordinate, from becoming polarised in a way that would produce antagonism and win-lose disagreements. Any performance deficiencies not identified in this manner are likely to be passed over. Mr. Nice does not try to get them into the discussion on the rationalisation that 'we have already covered a lot and dug into several significant issues'. He works on the premise that 'a person can only tolerate a certain amount of criticism, and going beyond that limit is not a sound thing to do'. He wonders if he asks his subordinate to consider all that 'other' aspects of his behaviour, would it not be too much for a discussion. Every time he sits in with his subordinates he leaves certain things for future consideration.

9.22 Samosa Technique

This approach to performance review and evaluation can well be called the 'samosa technique'. Here a little good is thrown in with a little bad, plus a cover of few improvement steps, so that the whole thing is more or less acceptable to the subordinate.



What this means is that the supervisor prepares in advance, for the performance review and then, having clearly in mind what to say particularly those aspects which are of negative character-proceeds in the following manner.

The initial evaluation begins with a positive aspect of the subordinate's performance. Then the supervisor brings it up a negative point stated in the best possible way. Even if tensions are aroused, the supervisor quickly moves to another area where, hopefully, it is possible to insert another complimentary evaluation. In this approach, each negative remark is mixed up with two positive ones and wrapped under the cover of concern for the good of the subordinate. The thought is that, since due to 'business reasons', it is

imperative to give negative' stuff, let it be taken care of by the 'plusses' of encouragement and warmth.

9.23 In Retrospect

A second aspect of this approach towards performance evaluation is to invite the subordinate to offer a self evaluation of his performance. When the subordinate mentions the deficiencies in his efforts to give a 'fair' account, the supervisor nods but offer no critical reactions. Having confessed the 'sins' and not 'crucified', the subordinate takes his supervisor's suggestions in a spirit of gratitude. The supervisor's reaction is less harsh than the subordinate might have feared. One may even feel good about the supervisor who, rather than 'criticising', permits a person to undertake improvement steps under one's own initiative. But when the subordinate thinks it all over later, the feeling may be that, since very little of a negative sort was emphasised, he needs attach little or no weight to the self-criticism.

On some other occasions, Mr. Nice walks his subordinate back into the past to a situation that contained the negative aspects of the behaviour that he wants the, subordinate to recognise. Then, many a times, the supervisor finds the subordinate acknowledging that. 'Okay Sir, that was a problem I did not handle very well'. The subordinate has not been asked outright to make a self evaluation, but for all practical purposes, he has been led into a situation where self-evaluation is inevitable. Here again, the criticism is accomplished without the supervisor being put in the role of a critic.

9.24 On an Even Keel

Mr. Nice's approach to performance evaluation is based on safe and widely used set of assumptions and related techniques for keeping things moving at a steady pace. It is safe because it does get people to 'perform ' not to a very high degree, but in an acceptable range, and it does avoid the true problems. It is fairly a successful way of keeping the work and worker requirements on even keel if, as belief has it, 'too much' of one means 'too little' of the other.

9.25 Mountbatten

The last British Viceroy in India Admiral Louis Mountbatten is a classic example of a Mr. Nice orientation. Mountbatten employed a revolutionary tactics, for his negotiations with India's leaders to determine whether India would be spared the horror of a civil war. For the first time in the modern history, India's destiny was not being decided around a conference table, but in the intimacy of private conversations.

They had spent the better part of their lives agitating against the British and arguing with each other. All of them were past middle age. They were lawyers who had first 'honed' their forensic skills in London's Inns of Courts. For each of them, negotiation with Mountbatten was an argument of, in a sense, their life times. They had prepared for such an evaluation for a quarter of a century.

With his candour, the Admiral told each of the leaders present there that he had been given an 'appalling' responsibility and he intended to approach the Indian problem in a 'mood' of stark realism. He gave each leader an opportunity to talk out his heart without any fear of 'cross examination'. As they spoke the four men rapidly agreed that, to avoid a blood bath, the division of India was essential. The mission of the colonists got completed.

9.26 The Personal Secretary

Anadi Bhatt is Director of Information in a large organisation dealing with consumer products. His job involves maintenance of information, flow between the market and the Marketing Management Group. In view of the cut-throat competition in consumer goods market. Bhatt's office has to play a very important role. They conduct market surveys and carry out professionally designed experiments to decide about the production volume, rate and preference for any given product their organisation markets. Bhatt has to meet many people and his office receives reasonably large volume of mail every day.

Tribhuvan Prakash Tripathi is the Personal Secretary to Anadi Bhatt. He is in his late thirties. Unlike his supervisor, who hails from a distant place, Tripathi is a 'local'. In view of the large number of persons meeting Bhatt. structuring appointments for him is a very important activity. Tripathi has been entrusted by Bhatt, the responsibility of fixing appointments as per his business judgement. In addition, Tripathi also disposes routine correspondence.

The post of PS to Director of Information, is filled by the most promising office superintendent among those working in any of the twenty seven departments in the organisation. Director of Information, reviews the performance of his PS and in case he is not fully satisfied the PS is replaced by another office superintendent.

Bhatt is in his office, contemplating the scheduled annual review with Tripathi, which is to take place today, after the office hours. He discussed this with Tripathi, two weeks ago and they had chosen this particular date and time for review his past year's performance. Bhatt has to decide after the review whether a replacement is required for Tripathi or he can be given one year extension as his Personal Secretary.

Bhatt is well prepared for the interview. He is confident, not only about the accuracy of his reactions but also of his and Tripathi's well established and mostly common knowledge of the grounds on which these evaluations are to be made. During the past one year they had talked about Tripathi's performance, five or six times. At one point, Bhatt told Tripathi, citing evidence, that Tripathi was spending too much time in private conversations on office telephone. This, not only blocks the availability of the telephone for business use but also loses time that should be otherwise devoted to work assignments. Another time Bhatt had been dissatisfied with Tripathi's spellings. Having discussed both of these improvement areas with Tripathi, they had agreed upon a set of standards they both agreed to be attainable. Since then, Tripathi had made substantial

progress, particularly on the telephone problem. Additional work on spellings area is need.

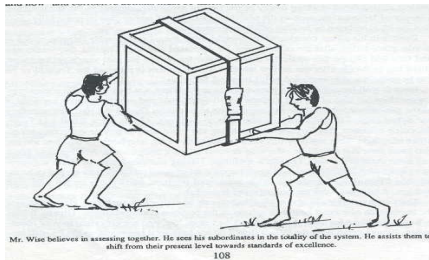
Bhatt conveys Tripathi about his observations on Tripathi's spellings. He emphasises the importance of correct language written in the business correspondence. Tripathi listens to Bhatt. He thinks for several minutes and then says, 'Sir, you are very right in your observation. Having come from the 'Hindi Belt' I do not have total command on the English language. Besides, in a few additional areas, I feel I need improvement I have prepared a list of some points which I think can be improved upon with your help'.

They then look at the list Tripathi has prepared. Bhatt is impressed with the suggestions for improved filing techniques and how Bhatt's own method of dictation could be improved. These are discussed and agreed upon.

9.27 Here and Now

If the supervisor-subordinate relationship is a cordial one, and is free from hostile feelings, a performance evaluation interview as carried out by Bhatt is possible. Since both the supervisor and the subordinate understand each other, the interview goes without road blocks and barriers that are otherwise likely to exist in the situation.

When supervision is carried out through goals and objectives that are being achieved by individuals, within a Mr. Wise oriented team action, it becomes possible to deal with performance evaluation by the supervisor and subordinate studying together the strengths and weaknesses that enable goals and objectives to be reached, or that prevent them from being met. In the latter case, proper steps can be taken to avoid this. Mr. Wise's performance review checks, the pros and cons of any change in the light of 'here and now'.



The accomplishment may be judged as excellent, even though it fails to meet the objectives previously set. On the other hand, it may turn out that the goals and objectives set were so low that the subordinate was not adequately challenged to 'stretch'. This says that the subordinate's performance was judged to be of a high quality, but that future goals should aim at higher accomplishments. Sometimes goals and objectives are realistically high, and a number of reasons are responsible for their not being reached. Again, reasons can be from many sources. Whatever the causes, it is important that they be identified 'here and now' and corrective actions must be taken immediately.

9.28 The Cast

A few examples given here, can indicate the direction of the thinking of a subordinate. One is that the subordinate has slumped to be a Mr. Dull. Under these conditions, the private strategy is to do the minimum necessary to get over. The subordinate avoids

getting involved and shirks away from any commitments because he just doesn't want to be bothered. Or, it may be that the subordinate functions in a Mr. Nice style. Rather than being prepared to set high goals of excellence, the subordinate gives them a little more than 'lip service'. The 'tempo' is taken from those around or from others outside the department. Then, what does the subordinate do is the same as everyone else. Such a standard in many organisations is nothing less than a mediocre. Alternatively, the subordinate's attitude might be in the orientation of Mr. Bull -'No one can criticise me', or Mr. Cute's orientation of 'I have failed to measure up to your expectations.'

9.29 The Possibilities

What a supervisor does in any performance evaluation, depends on the orientation with which the subordinate approaches the situation. The supervisor's task is to talk to the subordinate in terms of his orientation and give him feed back to enable him to see his performance out side his own 'beam width'. Then the subordinate can evaluate his behavior in terms of what he might not have paid attention to, previously. If the supervisor is skillful, much can be done to aid a subordinate to modify his working style, not only by pointing out to him what the problem is, but by working on a fairly daily basis and assisting the shift from a 'natural' style to an approach based on standards of excellence.

The problem might be a matter of knowledge or skill. That means that the subordinate is being called upon to do things he is not prepared to undertake. Then, the supervisor's task is to help design a personal study project to give further on- the-job coaching, or to depute the subordinate in special training courses that would permit deficiencies to be overcome.

Still another possibility is that the subordinate is over his head, attempting to do a job for which he does not have the capability or skill and where knowledge enrichment would not help either. Then the supervisor talks with the subordinate in terms of reassigning to an activity which will create less pressure and permit a better quality of job to be performed. There are other possibilities also, but the above gives the trend of his thinking.

9.30 Lord Krishna

Performance evaluation of Pandavas and Kauravas by Lord Krishna is a classic example of evaluation on an objective operational basis. Lord Krishna helped all the brothers see to an excellent level to be reached. He made them fully aware of the means to achieve this level. He cautioned them about the reasons for missing it. He counselled them to stimulate better performance whenever they were faced with true problems. He motivated them to try again, whenever their competence proved inadequate. Pandavas listened to the Lord but Kauravas did not care, Based on a non-judgemental analysis, Lord Krishna supported Pandavas ' cause. In the battle field of Kurukshetra, Arjuna was troubled by tile indecision and the uncertainty whether to fight the war or not. Faced with the great dilemma, he was frozen, unable to move forward or backward, right or left Lord Krishna

knew that such indecision arose as a result of insufficient data. He provided him this data, in the form of Gita. His catalytic intervention motivated Arjuna to reinterpret his perceptions as to how and what things were. Arjuna could arrive at a better awareness of the problems through the supportive counselling of Lord Krishna and went ahead to perform his actions to fight and eventually won the holy war.

Further Reading

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10. The Move: Dynamics of Supervision

10.1 The Leadership

Having gone through the preceding chapters on different aspects of the supervision, supervisory functions, and styles of supervision, you may be wondering as to what leadership is all about and how a supervisor should act as an effective leader. Just discuss this issue with your fellow supervisors and you will find a substantial disagreement. Does it come from the 'level' or 'position'? Or, is it a certain innate quality? Or, can it be developed in a person? Or, is it a kind of behaviour? You will feel that, defining leadership in many ways can result in increased confusion as to what forms a leader in reality.

10.2 A Process

We define leadership in organisations as a process in which, one person successfully exerts influence over others to reach desired objectives. A person who has the 'ability' to influence the behaviour of others and who 'uses' this influence to alter their behaviour, is a leader. A leader meets the general needs and expectations of his followers and in return receives status, esteem, and increased influence from the people he leads. Thus leadership is a process of mutual influence and reward. It reflects a situation in which leaders lead on the consent of the governed. From this point of view, the title you get to supervise others may be a gift of higher echelons, but your title to lead your subordinates comes as a gift from them. As a supervisor, you have to have this gift from your subordinates, then only will they come together to perform specific formal duties as assigned by you and accomplish organisational objectives.

10.3 The Forces

In our earlier chapter on styles of supervision, we have briefly mentioned about a system of forces that result in a productive performance from an employee. We have said that a subordinate makes efforts to perform a task in the presence of certain interacting variables, which cause to develop a type of pressure within the system. We have grouped these pressures into, at least, four sets. One set is the pressure that comes from the leadership approach of the supervisor. If this approach is 'crossed', it is counter-productive. Another is the pressure which originates from the needs of the subordinate. A third pressure comes from the nature of the subordinate and finally there is the pressure exerted by the resistance to change. If the resultant of these forces motivate a subordinate to make efforts, he performs to contribute. Now we will try to establish a model to understand the dynamics of these forces. And before we make such an attempt, it will be interesting to observe the action pattern of these forces.

10.4 The Approach of the Supervisor

Different supervisors have different approaches to supervision. They develop their own supervisory skills that lead to the attainment of organisational goals. To accomplish such skills, supervisors must understand these different approaches so that effective supervisory behaviours may be attained. In this regard, we will discuss three approaches to supervision about which we have substantial evidence. These approaches are the trait approach, the task approach, and the situational approach. The trait approach tends to emphasis on the personal attributes. It works on the premise that a supervisor is more intelligent than his subordinates. The supervisor identifies subordinates possessing 'positive' traits and assigns the task rather than leading them. There is little emphasis on developing supervisory skills or attributes.

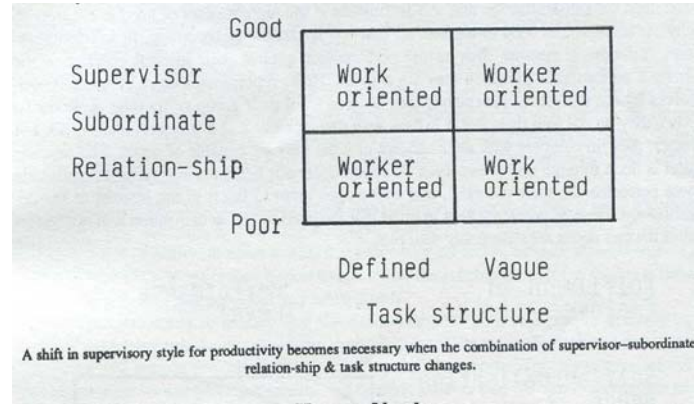
The task orientation of the supervision focuses on the degree to which a supervisor plans the method of work. He also develops methods for measuring or monitoring work output or job performance. The performance standards are decided on the basis of their desirability in terms of task accomplishment and work group morale.

The situational approach to leadership focuses an effective supervisory behaviour as a function of the supervisors' personality , the needs and expectations of the subordinates, and the environment in which the supervisor and subordinates perform their work. By simultaneously taking these three variables into account, the situational supervision approach is able to help point out an appropriate style in a given situation.

The situational supervision approach theory provides an interesting explanation for the sequence of supervisory styles that may be needed in the various stages of a development. For example, a research and development project becomes structured over a period of time. During the planning phase, the project is more tentative and unstructured, but it becomes more structured and programmed once the design is agreed upon and fabrication begins. In the initial stages, it is appropriate for the supervisor to play a More 'permissive' and 'democratic' role as planning proceeds. But as the project progresses and the procedure for completing the task becomes more programmed or well known, it is more appropriate for the supervisor to become more autocratic or directive. In this later phase, control is more necessary .Thus, the supervisor should change the supervision style to meet the requirements of the situation. Here, it is note worthy that while the situational approach to supervision provides much promise as a practical tool for the supervisors, it requires a supervisor who is able to analyse situation effectively and change his behaviour to fit the requirements of a situation.

While trying to correlate productivity with the supervisory style and working group situation. We have noticed that a shift from the concern for the work to concern for the worker is required to maintain productivity when the 'supervisor -subordinate relationship and task structure' combination, changes.

10.5 Needs of the Subordinates



In attempting to understand why individuals behave as they often do in organisations, it becomes necessary to make some basic assumptions about the needs of the people. Eminent psychologist. A.H. Maslov, has noted that people seem to be motivated by the need to achieve, to increase their competence, and to grow and develop as individuals. He believed that the basic nature of human beings was such that they would strive towards the goals when given an opportunity to do so. Given the basic nature of man, the problem became one of the supervising to create the type of environment under which this inherent inclination of human beings could be nurtured and stimulated for the mutual benefit of the employee and the employer. To understand this aspect of supervision let us have a look at the hierarchy of human needs.

10.6 Human Needs

Individuals are changing beings. If an individual is motivated to act and if his behaviour is rational and purposeful, then that action must have been stimulated by an attempt to achieve some desired goal or end result.

Maslov directed his attention towards those specific needs, wants, or drives that stimulate an individual to act. He conceptualises a set of universal needs arranged in ascending order from the most basic physiological needs, through safety needs, social needs, egoistic needs to the highest self-actualisation needs. An individual is thought to move successively up this need 'hierarchy' in such a manner that each higher level of need is activated only after the needs below it are, reasonably well satisfied. It is assumed that a satisfied need does not remain a motivating force for an individual to perform. Since most of our organisations meets physiological needs of their employees, jobs are more or less secured every where, and the Indian Society is among the most contented ones in the world, we will focus our attention to the ego needs and self actualisation needs here.

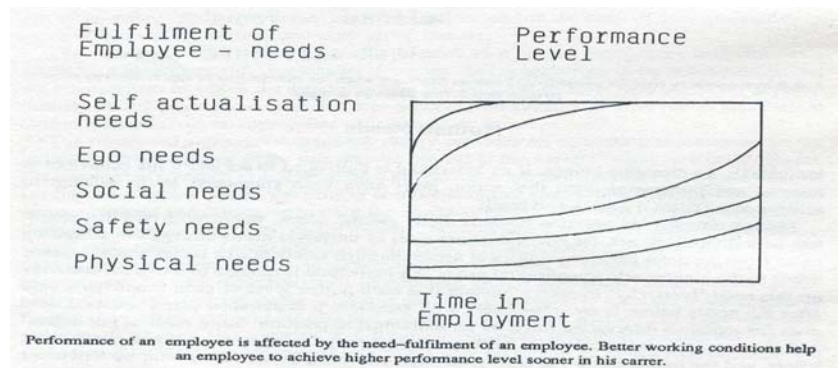
10.7 The Egoists

A subordinate wishes not only to be accepted by his supervisor and colleagues, but also to be recognised as someone special or different. These ego or esteem needs, include the need for recognition, status, achievement, competence, and self respect such needs are concerned more with subordinate's need to establish his unique identity among his colleagues.

While the ego needs may be strongly felt, they typically remain unsatisfied for many people in different organisations. Many a time, their jobs do not offer to them the opportunity to attain a sense of self-worth, achievement, or competence. However, if the job is well designed, failure of the supervisor in satisfying the ego needs of his subordinates through recognition of work well done and provision for the type of feedback indicate to them that they are needed and that they are achieving.

10.8 From Your Own Eyes Only

The need for self-realisation and self-fulfillment is the highest order of need in the 'hierarchy'. It refers to the need to become all that one is capable of becoming. In self-actualisation, individuals measure their actual performance against their internal



concept of the greatest performance of which they are capable. Here, subordinates do not measure themselves by the amount of acceptance they receive from their group or by their supervisors. Also, they do not find their worth in how well they achieve and distinguish themselves, but rather, they do compare with their concept of what they are capable of doing. The supervision is done through one's own eyes. A good supervisor helps his subordinates realise his own performance, their potential, and encourages them to tap it to the interest of the organisation. Here, it should be kept in mind that the need of self-actualisation will not be felt until the ego needs are reasonably well met.

On examining the effect of fulfillment of an employee's needs on the level of his performance, we noticed that when the physiological, safety and social needs of the employee remain unfulfilled for a long time, they never give performance of the highest level. The earliest the ego needs of a subordinate are met he starts feeling self actualisation needs and given proper stimulation he performs to the best of his ability.

10.9 Subordinate's Nature

There may be two contrasting sets of assumptions about the nature of a subordinate. Psychologist, Douglas Mc Gregor, postulated two polar positions along a continuum of possible sets of assumptions about the basic nature of the people in work situations. These assumptions are important for a supervisor to know because the set to which a supervisor subscribes in great measures, determines how he will supervise his subordinates.

One supervisor feels that his subordinates have an inherent dislike for work and avoid it if they can. 'Since it is a human characteristic to dislike work, most subordinates must be coerced, controlled, directed, and threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate efforts towards the achievement of organisational objectives,' he says. In his opinion, 'an average subordinate prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibilities has relatively little ambition, and wants security above all.

Another supervisor feels that an average subordinate not only accepts but also seeks responsibilities. He believes that the capacity to exercise a high degree of imagination, ingenuity, and creativity in the solution of work related problems, is not restricted to the supervisors alone. It is widely, and not narrowly, distributed in the employee 'population'. In his opinion, under the conditions of modern industrial life, the intellectual potentialities of an average employee are only partially utilised.

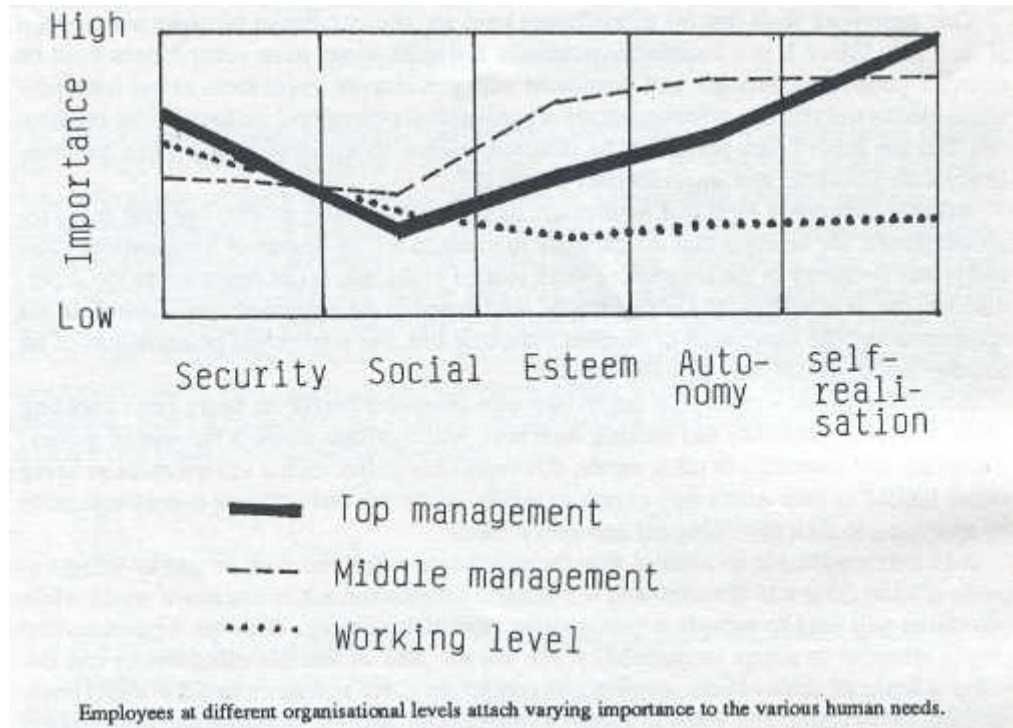
According to Mc Gregor, the supervisor who perceives people as being lazy, avoiding work, requiring coercion, and seeking direction, will motivate through the use of money, discipline, and authority. In other words, this supervisor perceives his subordinates as being rather limited in their needs they expect to satisfy on the job and attempts to motivate them by appealing to their physiological and safety needs.

It is also reasonable to assume that the supervisor who perceives people as being capable of exercising self-direction and self-control towards the achievements of worth while objectives will tend to provide a participative type of leadership. With his support, an employee attempts to accept responsibility. He designs jobs so that his subordinates can develop a sense of achievement, growth and competency. He maintains healthy social environment in his group and tends to appeal to the egoistic and self-actualisation needs of his subordinates.

10.10 The Variance

Whose assumption about the subordinates is correct; 'the first supervisor or the second? In some instances, the first supervisor may, be correct. for we all know that some employees do not like work, require close supervision, have little ambition, and seek only security. In other instances, the second supervisor might be correct. as there are many people who are energetic, enjoy work, and are self actualising in their basic orientation. Furthermore, there are employees whose basic need- orientation has changed as a result of changes in their life and career .

The assumptions of the first supervisor are appealing to many first generation supervisors in our country. The attitude of the British rulers towards the Indian subordinates was carried over by many supervisors in the post-independence India. But it is not consistent with our democratic ideal. We are no more ruled by others. Our Government functions



on the principles of participation and consultation. The individual freedom is no more negotiable. The assumption of the second supervisor, therefore, holds strong appeal as it emphasises the concept of growth, competency, self reliance and self -actualisation. we carry out the assumptions of the first supervisor, we would deny our people the types of experiences that would enable them to learn how to solve problems, make decisions, develop self confidence, and improve their mental and physical capabilities. Unfortunately, most supervisors of the present generation make the assumptions of the second supervisor about their own behaviour, but make the first supervisor's assumptions about their subordinates' behaviour. They do talk about autonomy and esteem, but restrict it to their own self. When it comes to the autonomy and esteem of others, they either completely back out or seek second thoughts.

We tried to develop a representative idea about the importance attached to the human needs by employees at three organisation levels. Those who are at the 'working-level' seek job security, do not bother about social pressures and esteem requirements, ask for a little autonomy and live a contented life thereafter. People in the middle have more or less secure jobs, they are status conscious, have exaggerated esteems, thrive for autonomy and are ambitious persons at the top have pressures on their positions. The 'rat race' in the corridors- of power, forces them to limit their social needs, they have moderate esteem, seek moderate autonomy but burn their midnight oil for self-realisation.

10.11 Managing Change

The fourth prominent pressure on an employee's effort is the resistance to change. A good supervisor knows to overcome this resistance. He understands why people resist change. He is capable of predicting and managing resistance to change. He knows how to use ideas of others to obtain desired changes and understands how participation, communication, needs and anxieties of employees affect successful changes. Before we develop any strategy for the management of change, let us understand the phenomenon of change first.

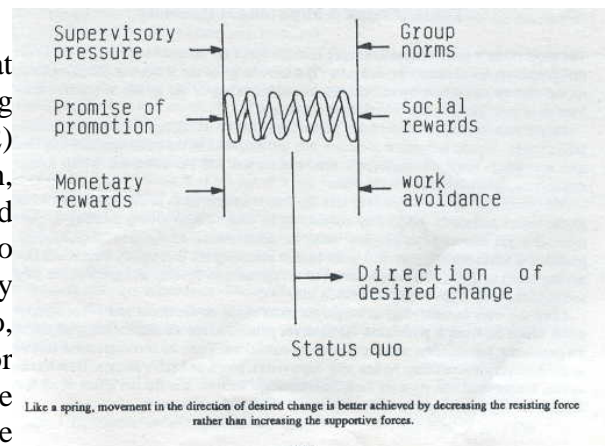
10.12 The Change

In organisations, change results in the alteration of what people think and do. 'Change' is the shifting of values, attitudes, perceptions, or behaviours to new modes. Ultimately, it can require people to adopt a new self identity-to become something different. Because supervisors spend considerable effort to get employees to act or think differently, the term supervision refers to the change process to a large degree. It is essential, therefore, that the employees think in terms of increased motivation, improved morale, and higher production rates. Since change is more or less inevitable, understanding and overcoming resistance to change become a crucial skill for supervisors.

Change is resisted for many and varied reasons. The list of the sources of resistance to change is long. We identify some common sources as (1) perceived fear of loss (2) sense of being manipulated or forced to accept change (3) Habit of doing things in a familiar way and (4) possible violation of group production norms.

For a number of employees, changes may be resisted because the reasons for such changes have not been made explicit. Stated simply, the employee may feel that, 'There is nothing in it for me'. From a subordinate's view point, a change that results in an increase in efforts or time should result in substantial benefits. Marginal benefits are not sufficient to make a change acceptable. Often, both the positive and negative aspects of a change are almost equal, and therefore, most employees resist such changes which have potential benefits of merely matching the expected expenditure of time and efforts.

A good supervisor analyses in what fashion or to what extent an impending change would affect (1) what people do (2) whom would they talk and associate with, and (3) the resulting feelings and emotional reaction they would have to new work and interpersonal patterns. By focusing on what people actually do, questions of changes in skin, efforts or responsibility come to the surface. If the change is one that results in more positive



feelings or beliefs, little resistance may be expected. By contrast, if changes in what individuals do and whom they interact with, have negative implications, the resulting feelings can be predictive of substantial change resistance.

10.13 The Spring Analogy

We have observed an analogy between a force field equilibrium and resistance to change in organisations. A change is considered as a coiled spring in a field of opposing forces such that some forces are supporting change and the others are resisting it. By increasing the supportive forces such as supervisory pressure, promise of a promotion and monetary rewards or decreasing the resisting forces such as group norms, social rewards, and work avoidance, the situation can move towards the desired outcome for a short time or only upto a certain extent. Afterwards, the resisting forces, squeeze back by the more supporting forces as in a coiled spring, the resisting forces push back with even greater force as they are squeezed even more tightly. A better approach could then be to decrease the resisting force with no increase in the supporting forces. In this case, less energy will be needed to bring about and maintain change.

10.14 The Dynamics

The resultant of the forces discussed in the preceeding paragraphs is, motive. It is a force which is internal to the individual and forms the basis of his behaviour in the work environment. In our culture, most people possess a strong inner drive for growth, competence, and self actualisation. The whole problem however, is that there is a lack of work environment that stimulates and permits individuals to give full expressions of these drives.

Supervisors can contribute most, perhaps to a very high productivity level, by providing the appropriate organisational structure and job design, and by rewarding workers in exchange for their hard work. How can it be done? Let us explore the role that a supervisor can play in bringing about a positive change in the work environment.

10.15 The Supervisor's Motivational Inventory

The supervisor's motivational inventory is made up of (1) an understanding of the needs that people expect to satisfy in their jobs (2) a knowledge of the effect that job design has, on the motivation of employees, and (3) an understanding of the power of positive reinforcement in influencing the behaviour of the people.

People seek to satisfy, at their work places most of their social, egoistic, and self actualisation needs: A good supervisor identifies two different sets of the environmental features. One set, which helps an employee's need satisfaction and the other set, which causes employee's dissatisfaction with his work.

We have observed that employees look for those characteristics in their work that relate to the values and goals which they consider to be important in giving meaning to their

lives. If a job meets the employees' need for achievement, recognition, responsibility, growth and advancement, they will work hard to achieve goals and satisfy their needs that are important to them. After all, for most of us, the need to develop and grow in our jobs and careers is one of the strongest needs in life.

Once the work is satisfying, an employee looks at the environment and circumstances under which the work is performed. He observes policies of the administration, qualities of his supervisor, job security, status and working conditions. Then, he correlates these factors to the interpersonal relations he has with supervisors, peers, and subordinates. Then he examines his personal life vis-a-vis these 'maintenance' factors. It is the net effect of all that decides the degree and quality of an employee's effort and performance.

Job design also affects motivation, to a great extent. Behavioral scientist, Frederick Herzberg has identified at least six job characteristics that are motivational. These are (1) the opportunity to feel personally responsible for performing meaningful work (2) the opportunity to experience a feeling of achievement (3) the opportunity to feel that a job is inherently useful and that the results are worthwhile (4) the opportunity to experience feelings of autonomy (5) the opportunity to perform a variety of important tasks utilising different skills, and (6) the opportunity to obtain feed back about what has been accomplished and how it can be done? We feel it is possible through 'participative leadership philosophy' and 'positive reinforcement of desired behaviour'. However, we all know that not all workers are motivated by the opportunity to satisfy their self esteem and self actualisation needs. For them, the supervisor should provide equitable monetary benefits and appropriate amount of the maintenance factors. Nevertheless, the performance of such an employee may, at the most, be expected as adequate and never superior.

10.16 Putting it Together

We have discussed the trends that are occurring in our organisations, in our society, in our lives and tried to establish how they would affect the supervisor's job. We conclude with a self study, which will enable you to assess your performance as a supervisor.

What kind of leader am I? How do my subordinates react to my supervisory style? How well do I understand their work? Am I sufficiently sensitive to their reactions to what I do and say? Do I use an appropriate balance between encouragement and pressure? Do I simulate their initiative? Do I promote their creativity'?

Where from do I get my information? How do I get my information? Do I tend to act before I obtain enough information? Or, do I wait so long for 'all' information, that opportunities pass on to me? Do I know how to make most of the written communication? Do I rely more on face-to-face communication? Do I seek feedback? Do I adjust my behaviour appropriately, based upon the feed back I receive?

Do my subordinates consider me approachable? Do I listen to their views with empathy? Do I take appropriate actions on their complaints? Am I willing to permit them to take

their complaints to the higher authority even though I may disagree with their position? If my subordinates belong to a union, am I able to work with their leaders? Do I understand the various regulations that apply to me as a supervisor? Do I protect the reasonable interests of my subordinates when a change occurs?

Have I given adequate attention to the type of life I wish to lead? Have I considered my career goals? Have I thought about my next job in this organisation or do I plan to join some other organisation? Where do I hope to be, five years from now? Ten years from now? What am I doing to prepare myself for my career objectives?

The list of questions is long. The book is designed to trigger your thought process. Answers to these questions will sharpen your awareness and clear your vision. We are sure, having gone through the preceding pages, you will appreciate the tediousness of the journey towards effective supervision. The number of these questions and complexity of their answers is indicative of the distance to be covered. We hope to make our readers, realise the importance of effective supervision to any organisation, to the supervisor and to the subordinates.

Further Reading

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