



Yes

Thoughts on leadership

by Karl Pister



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I suppose that if there were recovery groups established for Type A - controlling individuals I might, at some point in my life, have been required to attend.

Now I don't throw fits when I don't get my way. However, I think, study, and read quite a bit and usually come to the table with a pretty good idea of what will work and generally am quite a big fan of my opinions.





I suspect that some of you might also fit that description a bit. And I want to emphasize that there is nothing wrong with that.

You just have make certain it is not creating walls....
You have to think about creating, as I heard recently, "an environment of yes" .

Let me explain with an example from the world of parenting.

Our daughter-in-law, Rebecca, mother of four-year-old Jack and two year old Dorothy is an amazing person. A civil engineer by training, she now dedicates her time and talents to these little ones. Jack has been known, during his relatively short little life span, to dig in his heels on a few topics.

Now my reaction to that can many times be rather strict and the word "no" is a way to put the brakes on what I consider to be not a good idea.



You can imagine what the first response back from Jack is?? Usually..."why?", or, if tiredness, hunger, or frustration are playing in, some more emotional reaction. After all, he is just four.

Rebecca, however, is so talented in creating that "yes" environment. I am not saying that she concedes just to make the peace. Not at all. What she does is not say "no" first. She says "yes", but with questions around it that slow the process down, helps the children to think, and then guides them in the direction that would be most productive. Sometimes that means going with the original idea of the children, and other times not.

What it ultimately has resulted in is the two children knowing they can bring up most anything and it will be, at least, entertained and considered.

Not too hard to see the parallels here?

If you come to the table, as a leader, having a very strong view of what route you need to take to accomplish a specific task, and others don't agree with your approach, it is very easy to have the "no" response hit. You might not say that word, but your verbal comments and non-verbal reactions will generally communicate well.

Good leaders, however, will set the "environment of yes" by expanding options and listening well.



They will encourage, and sometimes even require strong considerations of the other opinions.

Try a simple exercise. When you find yourself up against a situation when your whole soul is screaming "no", for reasons such as:

Truly a bad idea, at least through your filter.

A new idea that will require more work, at least through your filter.

An idea that has been considered before, but that you are not a supporter of....

...commit to take ten minutes to say 'yes'. You can start with a statement as simple as:

..I want to take a few minutes to consider every way possible to make this work...what would be your ideas?

And then, throughout the process, keep drilling down with as many questions as possible in order to keep this environment open.



Please note that I am not suggesting this approach to be politically correct, or have everyone like you, or to have consensus on everything. None of those are good leadership traits.

I suggest this solely because it unlocks the potential of your team, along with allowing you to consider your filters and create that 'yes' environment as a leader.





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