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Self-Management

From the Editor

Everyday it seems like we are bombarded with new ideas, innovations, and change. Organizations and the people within them are redefining their roles, norms, and strategies.

As the hubbub of life increases, it becomes even more important for individuals, teams, and organizations to be working toward the same goals. They have to have a shared value system and a common focus on the present and the future. This is needed to establish a clear vision of where they want to go and how they are going to get there.

Charting this new territory has to be done with precision and care.

At LIVE Consultants, we help organizations develop new plans and strategies to maintain focus and vision in this changing world. Through our management education programs, participants are challenged to question their current notions, to explore new information, and to test out and practise what they have learned.

Marilyn Baetz, editor

About the Author and the Article

I remember sitting on my parents' lap listening to stories of far-away places, princes, and paupers. I was charmed. I thought about possibilities and how to make them come true. I dreamed. I imagined. I learned.

When I moved from lap to laptop, I became very orderly about how I learned. Point 1. Point 2. Point 3.

This article takes us back to the magic world of the lap with a whimsical tale about self-awareness. Stephen's hunch is that before you can lead a change outside, you have to manage inside.

Stephen Baetz is a principal of LIVE Consultants Inc., the organization who sponsors this publication.



Stephen Baetz

Once Upon A Future

There is a story about life that starts like this.

It had been a long journey but the King and Queen of Hearts now understood what they knew and what they didn't know. And so, after a brief rest, they asked their most trusted advisors — the Sage and the Jester — to join them in the Council Chambers.

"The future is not like it was," the Queen began, "and the past is not what will be."

The Jester smiled; the Sage was amused; they both understood.

She continued. "We will only have a tomorrow if we stop doing what we did yesterday." And then, without even a moment's hesitation, the Queen and her King defined the new world they had discovered.

It was a world in which enterprise was driven by the needs of the buyer, quality defined the nature of goods and even time itself, and excess no longer defined success. This new world, they said, demanded that more be done with less, insisted that products and services be customized to individual needs, and required everyone to learn the skills of collaboration, tolerance, and kindness.

"Now that you have seen what you have seen," the Jester teased, "what do you *understand*?"

The King and Queen were puzzled; this Jester spoke in riddles.

"What you see is not what you understand," the Sage clarified, "and what you understand is not always seen." Once again, the King and Queen recognized that a wise person and a fool often speak the same language. But no one spoke to lessen the importance of the question.

Finally the King summoned his thoughts to voice. "We understand that if we are to have a future we must be new pioneers who have the courage to step outside of the territories we have settled." He was finding his feet. "We understand that while our tools are important, they are not an advantage in the long-run. Instead, our advantage is with the people who use the tools ... in their ability to think, to make improvements, to innovate, to change."

And now, as if by some magic, the King and Queen came to the same conclusion at the same time. "We understand that change can not happen by us making a decree. Each person has to decide they want to change. Real change happens from the inside out."

The Sage and Jester knew they had met their match.

"This is where we need you," the Queen continued. "We know that learning to govern the resources of *Self* is by far the most important thing to do ... a necessary imperative to governing the kingdom. Change won't happen in the kingdom if it can't happen in *Self*. Return to us, good Jester and wise Sage with wit and wisdom on how to govern the kingdom of *Self*."

With a flourish that only a King and Queen can know, they left the Council Chambers.

The Jester and the Sage looked at one another, paused for two beats, started to talk, stopped, motioned for the other to begin, and started talking again like two children trying to pass through a door at the same time. They caught themselves and smiled. They both knew it was easier to tell than listen and they both wanted to do what was easiest.

Quiet had its moment and then the Sage began. "I think we need to be very profound and map out all the complexities that life is. Such a question should not be treated in a trivial way. After all, this business of governing *Self* is an intricate lattice work of complexity."

"But if we do that, no one will use it. I say we should be straightforward. Deliver the punch line with simple ease." The Jester said no more, recognizing that more words would diminish the point.

"We both know that if the message is seen as too simple it will be dismissed as shallow and therefore won't be used," countered the Sage.

The argument continued until they recognized they were agreeing ... no idea would ever be perfect to those who really didn't want to govern *Self*. There would always be an

opportunity to criticize an idea as either too simple or too complex. After much to-ing and fro-ing, they concluded that truth was probably standing in the middle of their debate: anything they came up with had to be *profoundly simple* so it could be used.

That afternoon seemed as long as a week while at the same time being as brief as an instant. As much as they gave, they got. The Jester would play hunches and use intuition; the Sage measured the ideas with logic and rationality. Each was a balance for the other. They played; they worked. They brainstormed; they analyzed. They used heart and head. They created and they borrowed from others.

When the moon had transformed itself to sun and was no longer the reflector but the source, they returned to the King and Queen of Hearts.

“What do you know about how to govern *Self* that we should understand?” the King asked.

“If we really have wisdom,” the Jester ventured, “then each of these statements will stand by itself. They should provoke a response in those who hear and not in myself or my friend, the Sage.” The Queen and King nodded, recognizing the test of wisdom.

With this the Jester began. “These are the truths that we must all understand.

There is never free cheese in the mousetrap.

Only worry if it helps.

Never try to catch two frogs with one hand.

If you want a rainbow, you have to put up with rain.

Making a living is important but making a difference is more important.

One person can't whistle a symphony.

You will never get stronger by pushing at air.

Practise as hard as you play.

Never blame the mirror for what you see.

Grow to the light.

What you give is what you get.

Question answers.”

And with that, the Jester paused. The Sage, for the first time in a long while, relaxed. “I love it!” roared the King. And now the Queen, for the first time in a long while, giggled with delight. “To govern *Self*,” the King went on, “you have to take responsibility for how you think, for how you feel, for what you do. There is no blaming *them* — whoever they is.”

It was at this moment that the Queen stopped giggling and became very serious. The Sage glanced at the Jester and then at the King.

“Was it something we said?” asked the Jester.

“Not at all. It is something you didn't say.”

With this the Sage furrowed her brow, the Jester flopped back into the chair, and the King repositioned his crown, not at all sure where the Queen was headed. All eyes were on her Majesty.

“Purpose,” the Queen began, “purpose is what we are missing on the list. It is not possible to govern *Self*, unless you know what your purpose is ... you can't make a change unless you know what you are trying to achieve ... you can't lead others unless you know your purpose ... what you want to achieve ... that sort of thing.” With that she let silence speak.

A full hour passed with the Queen, the King, the Sage, and the Jester doing nothing but thinking. Thought was followed by chatter, chatter by action. The room then bulged with excitement.

No one was sure if it was magic or not — these things are all hard to know — but scrawled on the paper in front of them, at the very moment they knew they were done, were the words, *Live like your life depended on it!*

Education Plan

There are two major challenges facing training and development professionals:

- ensuring buy-in from both senior management and program participants, and
- focusing the available resources.

Meet those challenges and everything else seems easy!

Our education planning process is built on the premise that there must be buy-in from all levels of the organization to be successful.

The starting point is a series of interviews with the leadership of the organization to identify the current and emerging goals, strategies, and values as well as the skills, abilities, and knowledges they feel people will need in the future.

This data is coupled with results from a training and development needs analysis of the participants themselves. Both pieces of input form the foundation for planning.

The result is a plan which targets where and how development dollars should be spent. Best of all, a plan that has commitment.

For more information about our services, contact us at (519) 664-2213.