LEADING TRANSFORMATION #64:

FORCING CHANGE

There are two notable motivations for radical change. The first is INSPIRATION. Inspiration comes directly from God’s enlightening work in our hearts and minds. The second motivation for radical change is PHILOSOPHICAL CONFLICTS, resulting from “mind boggling” or “worldview shattering” experiences. This occurs when our assumptions and persuasions are shattered; our worldviews fail to reasonably accommodate situations or experiences; and conventional responses to situations no longer work. When this happens, change becomes inevitable.

MIKE TYSON, former world heavyweight champion, made this famous statement:

EVERYBODY HAS A PLAN UNTIL THEY GET PUNCHED IN THE MOUTH.

This is from the field of boxing, but it applies to leadership. When you are “punched in the mouth,” your assumptions are shattered, and your normal line of thinking gets confused. But you are in the ring, and the fight is still on. You can get punched in the mouth again. You are forced to think quickly on your feet and come up with a new plan. You also have to execute on your plan quickly to avoid other devastating punches, whilst throwing your own counter punches. This accelerated process of rethinking, re-strategizing, and re-acting is Radical Change that is FORCED by the shattering of plans, underlying presuppositions, and prejudices.

The recent experiences with COVID-19 is an example of a “punch in the mouth.” It is a punch in the mouth for government leaders, health workers, educators, religious leaders and almost all other sectors of human society. For instance, we can no longer do business by being face to face at small gatherings or large conventions. We are all re-thinking, re-strategizing, re-tooling, and re-acting. We will have to discover new ways of doing life, leadership and service. Those who choose not to change have to close their businesses. Those who think fast on their feet and come up with new innovative ways of pursuing their mission can remain in business.

Transforming Leaders see crises as opportunities for learning new ways of doing business that accelerate with higher momentum the realization of institutional goals. They accept and prepare for a necessary or coming “new normal” instead of simply waiting and wishing for the “good old times” to come back.

Sometimes the only way forward is for Change Leaders to design and initiate “punch in the mouth” experiences in order to move people and institutions to new ways of thinking, and higher levels of performance. Once change is initiated, necessary support needs to be provided generously by Change Leaders in order to ensure that the change is conclusive and constructive rather than destructive.

Philosophical Conflicts through critical experiences that are worldview shattering are therefore necessary catalysts for radical change.

REMEMBER: NICE GUYS DON’T CHANGE THE WORLD!!!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What philosophical conflicts can you utilize to accelerate a necessary radical change?

2. What support will be needed once the change is initiated to ensure that it is constructive rather than destructive?