

Are You the Limiting Factor?

Yep. But read on, anyway.

It's a commonplace: change and other projects only have a chance if they are supported from the top of the hierarchy. At the latest when it comes to shifting power structures, letting go certain people, or spending a significant amount of money, the stability of support will be tested. And if you should be considering not to mention possible tough consequences to management for the time being, because otherwise you risk that your project won't be started at all: don't do it. Months later, when you have to answer the question „did you know this before?“, neither „yes“ nor „no“ is a good answer. You are then left with the choice whether you want to show yourself as incompetent or as manipulative...

There's a law that I postulate as follows: you will only get as far as your boss's personality will allow – variations will occur only downwards. Does this match your experience, or do you know exceptions?

Therefore: yes, if you're the boss, you are the limiting factor. You decide whether and what kind of tabus there will be, whether it's harmful to tell you bad news, whether you will let people grow (maybe even outgrow you), or you see that as a threat; how much you want to know and control in detail or you think you have to; how large your blind spots are or rather how strong your interest is that somebody indicates them to you, how much you care about the social, ethic and ecologic role of your company, what price you are prepared to pay to live up to those roles, what you value generally by investing time and money, how you want to distribute reward in your organisation, how dominantly you behave in your board and thus how much diversity and true dialogue you will allow – how long shall this list get?

And then of course there is, on the other hand, upsetting research data suggesting a correlation of not more than 0,3 between the success of a company and its CEO's quality – proposed by Daniel Kahneman, psychologist, and no less than nobel prize winner for economics. So if you are happy with being average, you don't have to care about this article, and can staff the CEO job with a chimpanzee, but at the top every percent will count, and in this light it does become highly significant.

If you look at the major economic scandals in recent times, you will hear or read the same words over and over again: blindness, greed for power, self-overestimation, loss of reality, addiction to fame and fortune, and so on. Sure there are other factors as well, and yet, time and time again, one thinks one might be in a classic tragedy, and one has to acknowledge with awe how much Sophokles, Shakespeare, and all the other old guys already knew.

And here comes my arduous thesis: the possibilities of your organisation will increase disproportionately to the amount of effort that you invest in growing your personality. And talking about investments I add the claim that this investment will have a return that will not easily be equalled in terms of impact and sustainability.

The higher you are in hierarchy, the bigger the effect. But no matter where your place is in your organisation: you have a substantial influence on what will be possible in the area you work in. And here is the really good news: personal growth is precious and profitable at all levels, professional and private, and it also takes place at all levels. Thus it must be in the interest of your organisation that you live a rich, fulfilling life. That's not bad, is it? Not bad at all.