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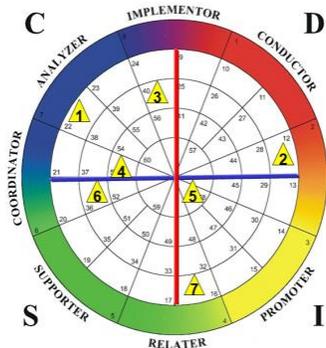
December 2014 LearningFlash

All is Calm, All is Bright

As we frantically multitask toward the end of 2014, I've been thinking about connection. I am convinced that the busier I am, the less I connect with others, in fact, the less I even see others. Even my philanthropic work is about 'checking things off' versus connecting with others. RMA has had a busy and exciting fall and I find myself in auto-pilot mode trying to shoulder through it all. I find that I am not totally present. Here are thoughts borrowed from smart people in my life that I have found to help me return to the brightness of my holidays.



Responsibility



D *Accountability* is a powerful word. We all agree we want others to have it. We don't all agree what that means. Recently, I've been challenged to replace *accountability* with *responsibility* in our project management and leadership work. To me, *accountability* means that someone else has assigned you a task and wants you to promise to do it. *Responsibility* is more powerful, meaning I myself have decided to be responsible and own a task. Think of the meetings that have wasted your time when the discussion is filled with "we" should do something, build that, remove that, etc. Nothing gets done because no one is responsible.

In a rush, we ask people to do things that lie outside of their strength set. If we use DISC to discover not only a person's strengths but also their blind spots, we can drive more

responsibility. In fact, the assessment clearly shows the gap between natural and adapted strengths. The bigger the gap, the more stress, the less responsibility. Not because they won't, but because they **can't**. Consider the team model above which has a lot of diverse strengths. This is great if they work well as a team and leverage each others strengths. This can also create a lot of conflict if they are not aware of the value of their differences.

[Request a free team model for up to five of your team members before December 19th.](#)

Barry Atland, in his LinkedIn article "[Is Our Otherliness Button Broken?](#)", asks a great question regarding our Responsibility. He writes:

"What choice could we make, every day, in every touch point, in every moment we encounter another person, to make their lives better, more joy-filled, in some small way? What could we do to place the needs, wants and desires of others ahead of our own? Or, is it that we have devolved to a place where we live in our own egocentric bubble, only caring about our own selfish wantonness, and all those around us be damned?"

He discovers with joy the many positive and simple choices people have made in his community. It's happening even if sometimes we rush past. Tina Fey shares [these rules for improv](#) that help us be responsible for connections, even in our busyness:

- Always say **yes** and... and finish with authentic points of agreement.
- Respect what the other have created.
- Contribute something.
- There are no mistakes, only opportunities.

What if we were responsible for spending an hour making someone else 'look good'? What could happen? Connection.

Clarity

Chip Neidigh from [Catalyst OC](#) provokes us to dig a little deeper. As he reflects on Hollaback's strategy to use a two-minute video of a women walking a gauntlet of less-than-courteous men to drive awareness and behavior change, he makes this point:

"A **clear vision of the future** requires a sharp contrast





between what is, and what could be. Much of the online conversation about the video has centered on which catcalling behaviors are inappropriate. This isn't a worthless conversation, but it muddles the point. By including both marginal (friendly greetings from strangers) and clearly inappropriate behaviors (invading her personal space for 5 minutes), the creators of the video lose control of the narrative. Here's a sticky headline we could use: *Catcalling is bullying. Real men treat women with dignity and respect.* This message increases the contrast between the current state and the desired future state. We could create an even sharper distinction by cutting out the marginal behaviors, leaving in the most inappropriate behaviors, and adding in examples of gentlemen treating Shoshana like a lady. A **meaningful call to action** clarifies the most desirable behaviors—the ones that will make the biggest difference in driving change."

Our realistic approach to Project Management drives *responsibility* through *clarity* using these project scheduling steps:

- Clearly and often, tell others what the purpose (ROI) is for the project. People connect when they know **why** they are needed.
- Stop guessing how long a task will take, especially for someone else's task. It's a big lie and disrespectful.
- Work back from the end date or forward from the start date and ask people if they can be responsible for hitting that date.
- A schedule contains all the work to be done simply: One Task, For One Person, Due on One Date.

[View the Project Scheduling webinar recording to drive your own project team clarity.](#)

Kevin Eikenberry, author of [Bud to Boss](#) (and other books), quotes [Richard Bach](#):

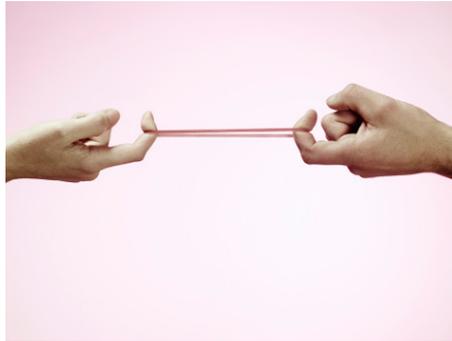
"If it's never your fault, you can't take responsibility for it. And if you can't take responsibility for it, you'll always be its victim."

Kevin continues with these suggestions to drive clarity:

1. When looking at any situation, determine what role you played in it.
2. Look for what you could do differently to improve the outcome next time.
3. Take responsibility and you will create better results.

[Read more from Kevin's blog.](#)

Clarity drives *responsibility* and creates connection



Indifference

Consider for a moment, the picture to the left of the stretched rubber bands. One hand represents the way things should be. The other represents what is actually happening right now. The farther apart, the more stress. Our perception of change and the stress it triggers comes from our own filters about what should be.

There is a strong addiction to control and checking things off. It's exhausting. We share a delusion that this behavior is temporary and some day everything will stop changing and settle down.

Kris Taylor, author of [The Leader's Guide to Turbulent Times](#) explains it well:

"Of course even in the distant past, nothing truly was stable or unchanging. But since the pace of change was slower, we could hold on to the illusion that it was... I think every one of us knows that these old notions of stability are fiction. That the pace of change is breakneck, coming so fast and furious that we can't assimilate and accommodate or make sense of it all... Love it or hate it – we need to reconcile that unrelenting change is the new normal. If that is the case, our striving for stability is futile; an exercise in denial. It is a Don Quixote exercise in tilting at windmills. We need to change our mental model and just admit that the world is in continual flux – and that includes just about all we touch: our careers, our communities, our social institutions, our economy and the world political environment."

[Read more from Kris Taylor.](#)

So how do we let go of one side of the rubber band? St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) taught about indifference and the art of spiritual direction:

"Ignatius... describes the idea that we must hold all earthly goods in balance before God and be willing to accept the coming and going of all limited goods. ... I suddenly understood that indifference is not about giving up or stoically renouncing God's good gifts, but rather about making room to be receptive to the new gifts that God constantly wishes to offer. Life is constantly changing; not only external goods and relationships but also our very selves change and do not remain wholly stable over the course of a lifetime. Loss remains difficult. Yet if we do not cling too tightly to the gifts (or hurts) of the past, we make ourselves more receptive to new graces: the beauty of fresh snowfall; the possibilities in a new yet unformed friendship; or the freedom to follow new pursuits to which God calls us." - [Read more.](#)

From a different direction, [James Redfield shares 'insights'](#) with similarities:

"The problem with fear is that it can be very subtle and sneak up on us quickly. A fear image is always about some outcome we do not want... Since fear and anger come from being concerns that we are going to lose something, the way to avoid these emotions is to be detached from all outcomes. To be detached is to realize that there is always a higher purpose that can be found in any event, in any outcome. The silver lining to every cloud."

Assessing your emotional intelligence gives you a baseline and strategy for improving your own awareness of disruptive and inappropriate emotions and regulation of these emotions when they occur. In our leadership programs, we combine this assessment with DISC (behaviors) and Workplace Motivators to create an integrated report with recommendations for your specific strengths and blind spots. Here are some other recommendations for overcoming your constant desire to control everything:

1. Watch your Self Talk - no one talks to you as mean as you do.
2. Step outside and watch your life as if it's a movie, and don't take it too seriously.
3. Remind yourself "It's Not a Big Deal".
4. When attacked by someone emotionally think "They think differently than I do." We all do.

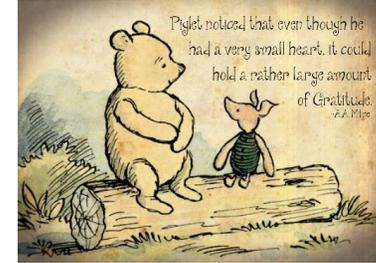
Indifference, which is very different than not caring, is another building block of connection.

[View a sample TriMetrix EQ report to see if it's something that might help you or your team.](#)

Gratitude

My sister just sent me a text that she was grateful for me. What a gift. Practicing and receiving *gratitude* is the secret sauce that makes *responsibility*, *clarity* and *indifference* easier. Here's a great list from Becky Reynolds', a hospital chaplain in Indianapolis, article "How to Adopt an Attitude of Gratitude" in the November 23, 2014 edition of the [IndyStar](#):

1. Take the best care of ourselves that we can.
2. Give attention to our vital relationships (she suggests scheduling these).
3. Give ourselves a "Sabbath" rest and practice contentment.
4. Practice self-denial (don't use acquisition of stuff to calm stress).
5. Remember our own faith and purpose.



Gratitude is a place of quiet in the chaos of change. It drives connections by calming you down. When things get crazy take a few minutes to watch this [YouTube video](#).

From all of us at RMA, have a blessed and joyful Holiday Season. We're looking forward to connecting in 2015.

Holiday Contest

This month the contest will be very easy. Connect and tell someone you are grateful for them. If you'd like, you can tell us who you are grateful for on my [LinkedIn page](#).

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What's New in 2015?

2015

Click on the links below to get more information about events or email bhelt@russellmartin.com

Dec 3 ATD Essentials of Agile Design | Online | [Register](#)

Dec 4 ATD Essentials of Emotional Intelligence | Online | [Register](#)

Dec 4 Delhaize Agile Workshop | Maine

Dec 8 ATD Project Management for Learning Professionals | Saudi Aramco | KSA

Dec 15 ATD Project Management for Learning Professionals | Alexandria | [Join Us](#)

Jan 9 TTI Success Insights Conference | Scottsdale

Jan 12 ATD Project Management for Learning Professionals | Las Vegas | [Register](#)

Jan 14 ATD TechKnowledge 2015 | Las Vegas | [Join Lou](#)



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