



Things Are Not As They Seem



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Ours is a visual and sometimes a superficial world. We can be quite convinced that, that¹ which we see, tells the whole story and the only story. This temporary blindness often prevents us from getting to the heart of the matter – which can affect us seriously. Let us start with a few examples.

- My son, Donny, as a teenage running back in football, was a fabulous blocker. He would clear out tackler after tackler allowing his fullback to make long runs and pile up many yards – and many football awards. Given the chance to run the ball himself, Donny set his own mark. I remember in one game, he was given the ball very deep in his own zone and he ran it for 5 or 6 yards. With this success, the quarterback gave the ball to Donny again – and yes, 5 or 6 yards each time. On the theory that if it works, you might as well keep trying it, the quarterback had Donny marched this way the full length of the field towards the opposing team’s goal line. This was remarkable because every player on the opposing team now expected the ball to be given to Donny – and every spectator in the stadium knew as well. Once Donny had reached the opposing team’s 5-yard line, the star fullback was called in to punch the ball over for the touchdown – much to the bittersweet disappointment (and happiness for the touchdown) of a hyped-up of school audience. Things are not as they seem and so the glory went to the fullback².
- I visited a prospect company who became a client, not of the full CCCC system, but took very small pieces of what we had to offer. A winner of “Best-Managed Companies in Canada” for many years, I entered their hallways almost in awe of this organization. Highly profitable, the company could afford the best technology, the latest furniture and of course the best management philosophy, namely the CCCC methodology – except that they never chose to use the CCCC methodology, but took only a ‘few crumbs’ from our repertoire now and then. Working with the firm over several months it was clear to us that the company was not well managed at all, but, in fact, was very poorly managed. The smart managers within the firm, with whom we developed confidences, were quick to agree with our analysis. This company had a monopoly in its very exclusive market, a beneficiary of some unusual legislation – and no one could impinge upon the company’s territory. Therefore, it made huge profits and hence, continuously, won the accolade of “Best Managed”. Things were not as they seemed.

¹ If two ‘that’ words in a row seems confusing, how about an old high school exercise showing five ‘that’ words in a row in a plausible sentence: “He said that that that, that that man used was the wrong that.”

² In later years, Donny became a perennial all-star football player.

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- While running a subsidiary of CCCC, we worked with employees who, by their own admission, were ‘bad’ employees. They felt terrible about losing their jobs or having been engaged in job searches without success for one or two years. “Nobody wants me based on my lousy employment record.” Their self-esteem was abysmally low.

We say that: “No employee sets out to be a bad employee”. So that raised the question: “Why, apparently are there so many work failures?” We presented the alternate idea that these people were in the wrong jobs. After more than 200 successes of placing such people into long-term profitable careers, we made our point: things are not as they seem.

- Galileo spotted two moons around Jupiter with his telescope, which others in the scientific community at the time were able to repeat and verify his findings. However, the world according to the church centered on humankind and thus, the earth was believed to be the centre of the universe. When Galileo offered to have the churchmen view through his telescope they refused because ‘the earth was obviously the centre of the universe’; besides ‘I would not stoop to play these games’ and ‘I know that Galileo’s telescope is fixed.’ Galileo was persecuted by the church till he died. Later discoveries revealed that things were not as they seemed³.

I can list dozens more ideas (that have turned around past erroneous beliefs) such as birds are clearly evolved from dinosaurs; the earth was hit by a crater 100 million years ago and twisted it on its axis, destroying flora and fauna in a single moment, etc.

The gist of this message is to advise you not to allow public opinion or peer pressure to sway your intellect – and thus lead you astray. Check and investigate. Be curious. Ask questions and seek honest, clear (and usually very simple) answers. Trust your own senses. Just because somebody says it is so (and especially if your own intellect finds it not plausible), things are not always as they seem.

Good luck,

Bill

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³The church apologized to Galileo 400 years later.