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Alpha Business Coaching Newsletter

"Self-Deception"

Dear Small Business Owner:

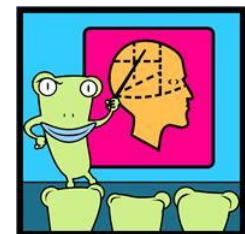
I was recently introduced to an interesting new concept that I think can help employees and owners work together better in a business. Too often it happens that we each live in our own box, seeing the world that might be if we were the only person who mattered. This isn't referring to being stuck in a creative box but being stuck in a box of self-deception that makes our own views, needs and perceptions seem to be "right."

Have you ever known you should apologize for something dumb you just said but didn't? Have you realized you should be helping out with a task but decided not to? Have you ever had information that could possibly help a co-worker but you decided not to get involved? We've all done this, taken an action contrary to what that voice in the back of our head urged us to do.



The problem is when you continually ignore this little voice, you start to see the world in a way that justifies your thinking. You decide another's action was so dumb that your comment was justified. Or you convince yourself others didn't really need your help anyway. Or you say you don't really have time to take on something that's not your job.

If you keep repeating this pattern, your reality will become distorted. You'll carry the view that people don't need your help, people always do dumb things, and others don't deserve your help. It creates a box where you just protect yourself. It can get pretty lonely and self-focused in that box.



The snowball effect is that these actions make others want to stay in their boxes too. They sense your attitude and decide if you can be that way, so can they. This could invite mutual mistreatment and mistrust inside a company. It makes people focus on self-preservation and in-my-box thinking.

Self-Deception

How can we move past this? A couple of ways:

1. Question your own "right-ness." Could you possibly be thinking too narrowly about the why of someone's actions?
2. Think of the humanity of those you're blaming. Question your own "virtue."
3. Remember there are 2 sides to every story and many perceptions about the best way to proceed.
4. Remember how you like to be treated especially when you aren't right.
5. As the blame game can be a downward spiral, the appreciating others game can spiral people up -- if you're willing to try.



We're all building a reputation. It takes a conscious effort to make it be one where you're thought of as generous to others. So next time, offer that empty seat where your briefcase is sitting to the next passenger versus hoping you can hog 2 seats!

Sincerely,
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Material taken from *Leadership and Self-Deception* by The Arbinger Institute