

Deming – What Detracts From His Message?

Humble, brilliant, evolving student and servant -
Whose message has not yet been absorbed

AGENDA

- Some Myths about Dr. Deming
- Is his message heard?
- Eight Points that hurt his message
- What is next?

Some Warnings!

We are going to discuss some topics that may be unsettling to disciples of Dr. Deming. Like all great thinkers, he was not perfect, nor was he complete and sometimes he was not clear.

1. What he taught in Japan, although there is overlap, was NOT his major message in the US. In Japan he taught them how to use quality as a competitive weapon Japanese management followed his advice to the letter, and it worked, in the US he was trying to activate the management.
2. He was a practical expert in the subjects he taught in Japan; not so regarding his message to Western managers
3. His methodology has some flaws, structural and logical. However, they only intellectually distract from his message, not practically.
4. **One of his greatest strengths was one of his blinding weaknesses (his belief in the goodness of mankind)**
5. His SoPK is an “unfinished work” and is only a start

Regardless, I consider him to be one of the great revolutionary thinkers of our time and believe his overall philosophy is a formula we need to adopt....**and improve upon**...he would appreciate that.

He was not the typical Western guru, he never sought worshippers, he sought students, willing workers.

Some Myths

- 1. He worked extensively at Bell Labs**
- 2. He was mentored at Bell Labs by Walter Shewhart**
- 3. He went to Japan to teach quality at the request of the Japanese**
- 4. He taught the Japanese how to manage**
- 5. He taught the Japanese his 14 Obligations of Management**
- 6. He alone is responsible for the Japanese Miracle**

Is His Message Heard?

Successes Using His 14 Points

- Not many but there are some. Writings of Peter Scholtes, Mary Walton and some examples at Deming.org
- But, in my opinion there are not nearly as many as there should be ... HIS MESSAGE IS PURE GOLD
- The most quoted - and least followed - brilliant man I can think of and the chief source of “credibility by association”
- But he had problems:
 - First, getting heard. We’d never heard of him except for “If Japan Can Why Can't We?”
 - Getting his message understood and implemented – more in a minute
 - The well-documented successes had one thing in common. Deming, himself, or one of his close disciples were directly involve with the C-Suite (e.g. Scherkenbach, Scholtes, Joiner) ... **his message needed an interpreter an “applications bridge”**

What Did Others Say?

- **What did Bill Cooper say?**
- On a June 2017 Deming.org podcast, Bill was asked, “Are we making a difference? Have we made a dent in what’s happening in manufacturing?”
- His answer was one word.... “No”

- **What did Phil Monroe say?**
- On another July 2017 Deming.org podcast, Phil was asked, , “Are we on a good path? Have companies learned Dr. Deming’s philosophy? Are we making progress?”
- Phil’s answer was, “I think we are going backwards.”

Why Was His Message Not Heard & Not Implemented?

The following *eight comments*, when viewed by his ardent followers are often vigorously denied, but I suggest you at least consider them.

Why Not? First Two..

1. He was hyper-critical of management. As personable and humble as he was with the workers he spoke to, he was downright contemptuous of, and caustic toward, management. He alienated the group he wanted to change. They “tuned” him out
2. For those who listened, he failed to convince many Western managers that there was a need to change.
 - They failed to see “the crisis” and that we were in “*a new economic age*”
 - Since 2000, 52% of companies in the Fortune 500 have either gone bankrupt, been acquired or ceased to exist. US corporations in the S&P 500 in 1958 remained in the index for an average of 61 years.
 - Most felt their systems were “currently adequate” and were supported in this belief by the prevailing system of recognition and rewards based on quarterly reviews and short-term thinking

Why Not? No. 3..

- 3. His philosophy contained many large paradigm shifts, stated in too general terms, without operational definitions of the problem**
- For example, he said “Break down barriers between departments..”
 - “Performance of management should be measured by potential to stay in business, to protect investment, to ensure future dividends and jobs through improvement of product and service for the future, not by the quarterly dividend.
 - He used terms like “Western management must awaken?” What does that mean to those who already think they are wide awake and working cooperatively to stay competitive?

Why Not? No. 4

4. There are several things that Deming required managers to do, which they do not wish to do, NOT AT ALL: Leaders must:
- Serve the system and those in the system
 - Improve their awareness of the people, the processes, and especially themselves
 - Continue to learn in a multidisciplinary fashion
 - Apply this knowledge in their work and also must become teachers
 - Continuously change their systems
 - Accept the responsibility for the entire management “system”
 - Replace competition with cooperation
 - Must attack behaviorism and understand intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and employee engagement

Why Not? No. 4..

4 - Continued

- They reject these issues, not on intellectual grounds, but because they have the power to do so.
- They are willing to die by 1000 cuts -- and have the power to do so.
- They are not only willing to live by short term success but are energized by that effect.
- This concept is also exacerbated by a human condition that is not unique to managers; it is a combination of denial, confirmation bias, inattentional blindness and other varieties of a failure to accept reality.

Why Not? Nos. 5 & 6

5. He recommended to eliminate some common practices without something to replace them, including the subjects of:
 - Appraisals
 - MBO
 - Low bidder
 - **But he knew what to do...**the firms he worked with prospered, the firms his close disciples worked with prospered.
6. He stated goals that may not be clear but worse yet he supplied no method to get there. Yet he he was hyper-critical of management when he said:
 - “Goals, aims, hopes. How could there be life without aims and hopes? Everyone has aims, hopes, plans. But a goal that lies beyond the means of its accomplishment will lead to discouragement, frustration, demoralization. In other words, **there must be a method to achieve an aim**. By what method?” TNE

Why Not? Nos. 7 & 8

7. **He underestimated the effort, both physical and emotional, which it took to change longstanding, company-wide practices and behaviors.**
 - He said, “This difficulty to change is nonsense, if you want to change, change.” (Roundtable videos)
 - Recall he was never worked directly in manufacturing and was never a line manager
8. **He grossly underestimated the pre-emptive power individual goals would have over collective goals, especially as it applied to management**

These eight issues explain to me why others have trouble implementing Dr. Deming’s Philosophy. It is too powerful a message to continue to ignore. Every year he is proven to be more predictive and more correct than last year.....

Why Not? Final Thoughts

- There is always a gap that exists between the theory of Dr. Deming's 14 Obligations of Management and application on the factory floor, in the executive meeting rooms and in the boardroom. To bridge this gap, he needed to take a concrete sense, by doing it. It was not enough to be in a high position in line management and spots" in his application.

To actualize his principles in the real world he needed to be involved as a "director" or he needed a "bridge" to translate and interpret his principles in their environment...

His message was "a bridge too far" for too many

- On the other hand, he had the undying attention of the world. He himself could use so much attention. He could answer any question or provide any guidance needed to overcome obstacles in learning and application. Not so with his Theory of Management.
- These Eight issues explain to me why others have trouble implementing Dr. Deming's Philosophy. It is too powerful a message to continue to ignore. Every year he is proven to be more predictive and more correct than last year.....

What's Next?

His Legacy

What you should do with Dr. Deming's teaching

- Study it
- Practice it
- Perfect it
- Teach it to others
- Dr. Deming would want you to use his PDSA model on his “mission in life” which is to reduce suffering

Thank You ... Lonnie



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