

The Sound of One Hand Clapping

The other day I was talking with a new coaching participant. He is one of my Inflection Clients; he is mid-career, bright, technically skilled and successful. He and his company are at an inflection point where the past will be different than the future. We were reviewing some comprehensive assessment information and the news was mostly good. Contrary to his initial response (I'm doomed) we were able to identify many attributes that he can exploit and a couple areas that, if adjusted, can take him to the next level. A thousand coaches do this every day. That's not the point. This is... After a very focused conversation that lasted two hours, we began to wrap things up. We discussed when we would speak again, homework and upcoming events. No big deal.

Then, before we hung up, there was an empty space. He was not finished for the day. I asked what was on his mind.

"Bob, I really appreciated our conversation today. I've never had a conversation with a boss, a coach or a peer about the stuff we just talked about. This makes a big difference, thanks."

Now, here is a man who most companies would love to have. He is bright and hard working, while keeping the company's best interests top-of-mind. He is also cynical about their genuine interest in him because he gets very little positive feedback. A recruiter's dream.

He knows he is pretty good...one hand clapping.

He wonders if his company values how good he is...the other hand.

I would suggest that there may be people in your organization that would benefit with hearing both hands clapping.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Every morning do your Gratefuls. This is a technique shared with me by my friend and mentor **Margo Chisolm**, the extraordinary mountain climber and coach. For five minutes every morning, make a list of what you are grateful for; people, abilities, acts of kindness, opportunities...you get it. I have been doing this since the day I met Margo 18 years ago and it has changed my life.
- Say thanks to at least 3 people every day. Practice makes perfect.
- Advanced practice: say thanks to every person every day who does something for you; clears your plate, takes your cup, opens a door, gives advice (even if you don't agree), gets in your face, makes an unreasonable demand (forces creativity), gives you space...you get it. Perfect practice makes perfect.
- Identify your top contributors. Make it a point to notice their best work and mention it to them. Extra points if you mention it to your boss.

Doesn't the sound of both hands clapping make a wonderful sound?
This is part of innovation.

