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Trashing Ignorance

Thrashing ignorance (The Ladder of Inference) is a wasteful and universal process that most of us periodically engage in. It means stacking up assumptions as if they are valid facts, then adding additional dialog, debating the issue, and defining a solution. None of it is real, and it does not require knowledge. Ignorance is the lack of knowledge, and the process perpetuates the ignorance. The problem occurs when we accept the false premises as facts, and put them into action.

Here is how it works.

Someone brings up a problem or situation, real or implied. Participants then feed assumptions into the discussion. Others add opinions and sometimes-real facts, often making it more real. Frequently, the debate over solutions is intense and emotional, and an appropriate fix is agreed on.

The consequence is an assumed solution for an assumed problem.

Thrashing ignorance is deeply rooted in the workplace and society in general. The repetitious nature of major news channels daily reinforces the concept. The process is even more destructive when it substitutes for, or blocks, keeping commitments.

The solution is to test for assumption or fact, and if non-productive, stop doing it.

Properly define problems and situations. Get the facts and test them for accuracy and truth, making it possible to define implementable solutions to real problems.

The current outrage is about Law enforcement, and "thrashing ignorance," is pervasive and harmful. The issue is too complicated to address in this newsletter and too intricate for television sound bites or protest marches.

Law enforcement is the guardian between social chaos and order, just as the military protects our freedoms from tyranny, and emergency services protect our health and homes from fire and other disasters. Our public servants perform tasks that most of us cannot, or will not perform for ourselves.

Sometimes this means putting their lives on the line, and sometimes losing it, leaving young families to grieve at their very personal loss.

There will be mistakes, some real, others perceived. The police must be allowed to protect themselves if they are going to take care of you. When law enforcement personnel break the law, they are criminals, but guilt should be determined through the justice system. Protest, voicing disagreement, is the right of every American, but when it becomes destructive social disobedience, it is a criminal activity.

The police officers that turned their backs on Mayor Bill de Blasio practiced the same rights afforded and encouraged to the protesters against the police. Whatever our form of protest, it must be based on real facts, or it is just another case of thrashing ignorance.

Here are a few questions to consider.

What would have happened on 9/11 if there were no police or fire fighters? Did not the New York Police establish a new standard for the entire country for preventing terrorist attacks?

If someone kidnapped your child, would you call the police? What if there was no one to call? What would be the result of a delayed response?

If someone came at you with a gun, would you yell for a protester or police officer? What would be the result of a delayed response?

If you are involved in an accident, whom do you want at the scene? What would be the result of a delayed response?

The current issue of police brutality is mainly "thrashing ignorance." People need to get the facts and think through the consequences of their response. Putting law enforcement under the political gun may slow down the speed of response, and in emergencies, speed is life. It may be your life, or the life of a loved one.

Our law enforcement, military, and emergency service's people deserve our respect and support. We need them to be there for us, and in return, all citizens must stand with them.

I salute and thank them all, and pray for their safety.

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