How Do Your Feelings, Values, and Beliefs Affect Your Actions?

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My articles usually provide practical guidance for leaders. This week's article is a bit different.

Rather than stimulating suggestions, what you'll find here are thought-provoking questions. I ask you to think about these concepts relative to your personal behaviors. More importantly, think about how feelings, values, and beliefs affect the behaviors of those you influence in your organization.

I speculate that most of the time you want to do the right thing for your customers and employees. If you have selected your personnel well and provided a healthy culture and environment, most of your team members typically want to do the right thing, too.

But how do any of us know what "the right thing" is? I've been pondering that question for the past couple of weeks. I've decided to share that question and dozens of others with you.

Before we move into the specific questions about feelings, values, and beliefs, please ponder the connotative differences among those the three words. How are feelings different from values? How are values different from beliefs? And how are beliefs different from feelings?

Feelings. We all have feelings. How easy is it for you to name your feelings? How openly do you share your feelings with others? Where do your feelings come from? How permanent or transient are they?

Some motivational speakers point out that every feeling is preceded by a thought. If you could better control your thoughts, could you increase control of your feelings?

How do your feelings affect your values and beliefs? How do your feelings affect your behaviors? To what extent do your feelings contribute to conflict with other members of your team?

Values. We all have values. How easy is it for you to name your values? How openly do you share your values with others? Where do your values come from? How permanent or transient are your values?

How do your values affect your feelings and beliefs? Are your values influenced more by your feelings or by your beliefs? How do your values affect your behaviors?

How aligned are your values with those of your other team members? To what extent do your values contribute to conflict with other members of your team?

Beliefs. We all have beliefs. How easily can you name yours? How openly do you share your beliefs with others? Where do your beliefs come from? How permanent or transient are your beliefs?

How do your beliefs affect your values and feelings? Are your beliefs influenced more by your values, by your feelings, or by something else? How do your beliefs affect your behaviors?

To what extent are your beliefs in alignment with the beliefs of the other members of your team? To what extent do your beliefs contribute to conflict with other members of your team?

Whew! Three related concepts--feelings, values, and beliefs. My objective is to raise your awareness of what drives behaviors in you personally and in your organization. If you will lead consideration of these questions in concert with your colleagues, I speculate you will have quite a few "Aha!" insights.

From reflecting on these questions, are there changes you want to make, personally or organizationally? Moving your team toward greater effectiveness will require some adjustments.

Having the responsibility of "leadership" is tough! If knowing exactly what to do were easy, we'd have a lot more effective leaders around. Still, it's worth considering possible improvements. Happy observing!

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