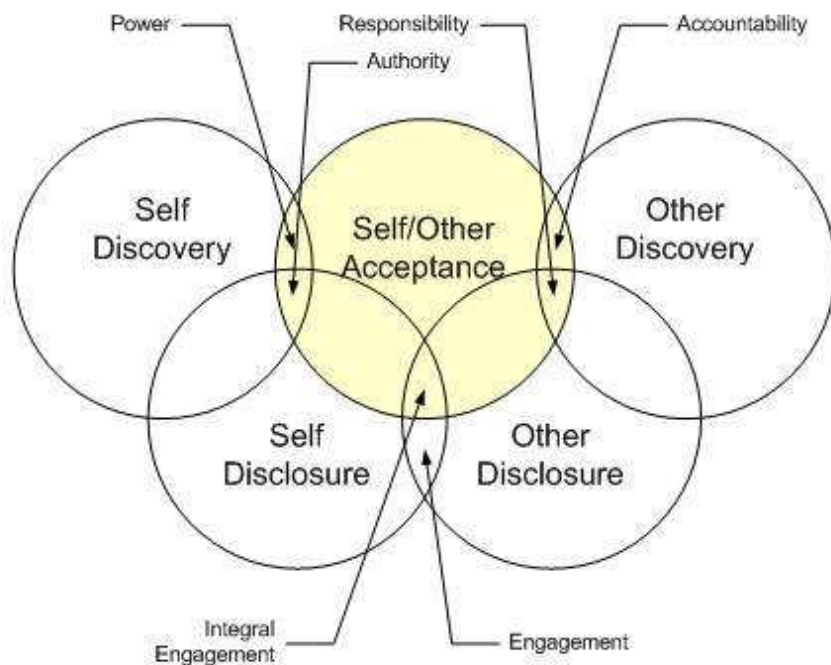




ENGAGEMENT + INGAGEMENT = Differentiated POWER



One of the most fascinating and useful trends I have noticed over the past four years is this whole idea of engagement, as it applies to resilience.

Resilience is the differentiated power to create emergent solutions to difficult conditions; to persist, even when things do not work out at first; to navigate ambiguity and uncertainty with an expectation that things will work out; to transcend common problems and barriers when it is difficult to do so and to collaboratively anticipate the future through efficient and sustainable means.

Defining Engagement

I took a quick look at www.m-w.com online, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online and here is what it said:

Main Entry: en·gage·ment

Pronunciation: in-'gAj-m&nt, en-

Function: noun

1 a: an arrangement to meet or be present at a specified time and place <a dinner engagement> b: a job or period of employment especially as a performer

2: something that engages : PLEDGE

3 a: the act of engaging : the state of being engaged b: emotional involvement or commitment <seesaws between obsessive engagement and ambiguous detachment -- Gary Taylor> c : BETROTHAL

4: the state of being in gear

5: a hostile encounter between military forces

Frankly, I am amazed at the breadth of meaning of this term, but that is not really what I want to talk about now. This whole idea of engagement is nothing less than a profound way to approach leadership and that is why I have been studying it over the past few years.

Yet, what I have realized is that the level of “en”gagement is constrained by the level of “in”gagement.

Sounds kind of funny does it?

That we would be constrained in our work with others through engagement of any sort, by the amount of “in”gagement that we practiced. So, how would we define this “in”gagement?

Actually, it is the art and science of self-discovery, self-disclosure and self-acceptance. While like “en”gagement; “in”gagement by itself is not enough. When we combine the two we begin to approach high levels of sustainable resilience in complex environments.

Engagement in complex environments

A complex environment is identified when no one’s answers solve the current problem or tension. In other words, we get into a paradox, where only so much goes so far and then the problem reappears often as more complex than we imagined. This is the layering of complexity, where this equals that, but it also equals something over there as well.

These kinds of complex environments can be VERY difficult to deal with for people. In some cases, it almost seems like doing nothing is better than doing anything. In these moments of ambiguity, self and other “in”gagement plus self and other engagement = differentiated power and enhanced resilience.

When we combine a serious effort to look inward (self-discovery) and become more knowledgeable about ourselves with an ability to *disclose* some of that form and process; in many ways, we become more effective at accepting others, leading to engaging others more efficiently, effectively and sustainably over time.

Being vulnerable to uncertainty and paradox is a powerful point of leverage when we face complex issues. To manage the inward as well as the outward journey is the territory of leadership in complex times. Over time, it leads to increasing levels of resilience.

For more information on this sustainable system of engagement, get CPR for the Soul: Creating Personal Resilience By Design at www.cprforthesoul.com.