7 Hidden Impediments of Great Minds

We all have them and when we are working toward achievement, they can be a source of great willingness and capability. As you may have guessed here; in a collaborative environment, these may erode our very efforts if we aren’t aware and clear when they’re present.

1. **Objective vs. Subjective Chosen Reality**
   a. **Subjective reality is a choice to evaluate the entire world around us**
      i. Allows for comparison and averts the value discussion
      ii. Bigger, Faster, More, Less, Better, Worse
   b. **The Case of the Mondays**
      i. **Monday is only an idea, albeit an idea we agree to share.**
         1. Even the Gregorian calendar must be updated to maintain its relevance every year. As a society we are conditioned by this to think about time as a fixed linear method in which “life goes on”. In fact, it is merely a perspective (lens) we agree to perceive a cycle life through. (Note: we also tend to agree that it is “a cycle of life”). We call this a cognitive dissonance and it is hidden in our everyday language and thought patterns.
   2. **So why are Monday’s bad?**
      a. This is a choice. We plan our projects and our work around a 5-day workweek, then we may spend Friday not working as diligently and we planned. As a result, Monday is overwhelmed with everyone coming back to work or extra things to get done and become very busy days.
   3. **Another perspective:** Imagine for a moment you are on a delivery team that deploys product every Tuesday. How would your days be affected by the co-workers that leave early on Friday, take Monday off, and the people that did come in are all having a ‘bad’ Monday?
      c. **In an objective reality**, things are more importantly true or false, not right and wrong. In our day we have approx. 70,000 thoughts and work with hundreds if not thousands of creative minds all around us. Accepting things as not a problem, but only a problem we perceive is the beginning of an objective perspective about any situation.

2. **Expectations**
   a. How many times are “setting expectations?”
   b. How well do you respond when someone sets expectations you? As leadership thinkers we have an alternative response.
   c. **Acceptance.** Do you want others to accept when you fail and allow you to grow as a result of that failure? Of course you do.
   d. **Michael J. Fox** said – “My happiness grows in direct proportion to my acceptance, and in inverse proportion to my expectations.”
   d. When teams make agreements and practice integrity (doing what you say), then acceptance of failure is our contribution to this culture or ecosystem. Can you accept that things will go wrong? Can you respond differently to the world around you without abandoning responsibility through blame and obligation? Of course we can!

3. **Competency and Leadership ARE mutually exclusive**
   a. **Competition as a unhealthy mind-set and the behaviors are the impediment**
   b. Perceiving that someone must lose for us to win may sound like a harsh way of putting it. I might offer that’s because it is how the thought works
   c. Whether a company, a project, or a co-worker; **competition is not what we want.** It may appear that way to us when trying to get a client, or pay raise, or a job promotion, but great leaders are looking for cooperation.
   d. **When cooperation (leadership behavior) is observed the natural response in observers is to ‘covet’ or want more of what we see.** This response creates and abundance of more things. Accepting things as not a problem, but only a problem we want and want what he or she has. Are you willing to help anyone be successful for the sake of everyone being successful? This will get returned to you.
   e. When competition is perceived, our quality goes down, the customer/boss/observer will see the tension and resistance. This creates a scarcity event and then you are right, there is now only one opportunity and if you don’t get it someone else will.
   f. **When it comes to all things, if you think it, you’re right so why not think win!** This is to say if I see there is only one opportunity, others will see that I see it and there will only be this one opportunity. But if I can look upon it without memory and see it for the first time every time, we can get it done together!

4. **Context**
   a. **Context is everything!** We’ve all heard this one before, but does it mean we must share context in all that we do? Of course not. We are valued for our specialization and skills.
   b. Consider the expertise we value in an implementation coordinator and the quality that this role provides to the organization based on the expertise. Losing this passion would remove the capability we have at implementation. Losing this passion would remove the capability we have at implementation. Losing this passion would remove the capability we have at implementation.
   c. **In a context sharing agreement, I would ask “Just for now” can we share context so that we may leverage your expertise in the output of this phase of the process. This creates a quality event that builds the team and allows for a shared reality while still acknowledging the value of the expertise.**

5. **Advocacy (and Inquiry)**
   a. **How sure are you that you “know” something?**
   b. Observation of a situation begins with questions. Asking these questions aloud gives the other team members the opportunity to dispel any unseen or unconscious assumptions you made have made.
   c. **Listen for phrases like, “All I know is...” or “Here is what I know” are signs that inference has occurred.** This is not to say what is about to be declared is inaccurate. It IS a voice inside your head that asks, Are you sure you actually KNOW this?

6. **Worry (Not Present)**
   a. Safety First Culture
   b. When we perceive things have gone wrong, we’ve been taught to revert to past “safe” behaviors. These are not necessarily the behaviors that work, but behaviors we have associated “acceptable outcomes” with.
   c. CYA responses erode trust, abandon ownership

7. **Status Quo Value Thinking**
   a. “That’s the way we’ve always done it here” is not a value statement.
   b. Team Member evaluations based on metrics that are no longer of business value become only valuable to the evaluator.
Personal Exercise
1. Objective v. Subjective Realty – Write down a time when something went “wrong”. How did you respond? Is there another way you may have responded allowing the issue to be resolved more quickly?

2. Expectations – Do you set expectations? Has someone set expectations of you? How did you feel when obligated to these expectations? Note a situation where negotiation and agreements could improve the working relationship or the team that suffers from expectations.

3. Competition (or Leadership) – Note a time when you felt in competition for something that didn’t work out for you. Is there a time when someone cooperated with you and helped everyone meet his or her goals? Write that down. Did you say thanks?

4. Context – Have you ever had a meeting when people didn’t share reality and it led to tangents and off-topic discussions? What agreements can you make in your next meeting to share reality? (Just for now)

5. Advocacy (or Inquiry) – Can you remember a time when you “knew” something to be true that ultimately led to an outcome you didn’t want? What failures occurred because of certainty? Have you observed this in your team members? What things can you ask to avoid unforeseen risks?

6. Staying Present – Have you ever had anxiety about a future problem you feared, but didn’t have yet? Have you ever worked with someone that blamed them for the past that hindered your ability to work in the present? What things can you do to resolve these conflicts? Has someone put forth effort to you that you didn’t allow? Can you revisit? Will you revisit it? When?

7. Status Quo Thinking – Ever hear someone say “that’s the way we do it here?” Is there value in preventing a response to change as a culture in this organization? What questions can we ask to offset this perspective and share reality in what’s valuable to the project team and the organization above our own agenda? Think of a time when something wouldn’t change and you felt obligated to do it? Can you approach it as something we haven’t overcome yet and own it? What would happen to the quality of the work if it were an owned constraint instead of an “I have to” mind-set?