



Objectivity and Relationships, by Meg Wheatley

Why has expressing love become such a problem when it's a fundamental human characteristic? This is where I think we have over analyzed and over complexified something that is known to everyone alive. Babies know how to unleash love. It's all about our relationships and being available as a human, rather than as a role. It's about being present and being vulnerable and showing what you're feeling.

You know, we don't want to reveal who we are. Even the best of leaders try to be objective, rather than relational, and that's supposedly adding value to our work lives if we treat each other objectively. But it's again one of those huge things we get wrong. You can't have love if you can't have relationships, and you can't have relationships with one another if you have this curse of something called being objective or, one size fits all as a policy, or having to go by the manual.

I can feel the fear that so many of us have that, "Well, if it's not objective, we couldn't possibly live in the messiness and the intimacy that would come about by treating each human being as their own unique self." But I think that objectivity makes it impossible to be loving. Objectivity doesn't allow love, because love takes you to intimacy and uniqueness and very personal territory. We need to get away from the belief that you can run an organization using what are called objective measures or objective processes, which are actually just completely de-humanized. The fear of love in organizations is that it makes your life as a leader far more complex; but it also makes you much more effective.

I understand why leaders don't want to go down this 'love path' or the relationship path, because it requires so much. But that's where I think you have to want to believe in people. I believe on September 11th there were numerous corporate leaders who suddenly realized that people really were the most important thing to them, even though an hour before they'd been working a system that ignored human concerns. But then they got the wake up call of their life. When I said that you have to want to believe, you really have to want to have relationship, and there are an awful lot of people in our workplaces, not just leaders but whole professions, who have never wanted relationships. They've wanted the work, and hopefully we are now realizing, most of us, how important relationships are.

--Meg Wheatley

