

## Paradigm shifts

Lets talk for a while about paradigm shifts. We have already come to understand paradigms to be the mindsets we employ to interpret our observations. It's the glasses we use to look at the world, not so much to see, but to interpret and understand. All of us have this thing that what we say, think and do is right according to our paradigms. We won't say, think and do what we say, think and do unless we believe we are right. The moment our paradigms are challenged we have to re-evaluate and re-consider what we have been saying, thinking and doing. This means that we face the threat that we have been 'wrong' all along. This is if we sit with a black and white paradigm.

A black and white paradigm sees two colours - namely - yes you've guessed it - black and white. If I am unsure about myself or if I am not convinced of who I really am I can tend to develop a black and white paradigm. The world out there is interpreted in either right or wrong. This is a dangerous paradigm because it doesn't allow space in our minds for the grey areas and paradoxes of which there are many. A black and white paradigm will place most things in one of two boxes and if it does not fit it will force it to fit and if that doesn't help it will suppress or ignore the paradox. A paradox says that both things are equally true or equally false.

If we have the tendency to employ a black and white paradigm we might feel threatened by change. Change will in most cases overwhelm us and causes severe discomfort, because most changes threaten our paradigms. Most changes say that what we have been saying, thinking and doing in the past won't be valid in future. In other words change could say I have been 'wrong' all awhile. This of course will only be true to those who entertain a black and white paradigm. Most changes say that the way we have been doing things 'around here' is not going to work any longer, its not going to deliver the results we need to deliver.

I talk about 'employing a paradigm' to interpret what we observe because I don't believe we are victims of our paradigms. I would rather prefer to think of my paradigm serving me than I serving my paradigm. I mean I can change my paradigm whenever I choose to. I am not determined by my paradigm; rather I can shift or allow the shifting of my paradigm. Even if you are old you still have the capacity to shift your paradigm. No person is too old or too together or too sorted out or knows so much that she can't allow her paradigm to shift. You can teach an old dog new tricks. Everything is possible for him who believes.

A profound principle of paradigm shifts is that 'when a paradigm shifts everything moves back to zero'. This principle has important implications. It means amongst many things also the following - your past success has brought you to where you are now, but it will not be able to take you further. All the potential that you have released in your organisation was good enough to bring you to where you are now, but it won't be able to take you any further. What you have achieved up to now must rest in the halls of past fame. The future brings new challenges and the past won't be able to propel you into the future you need to experience. Nothing is guaranteed when the rules change, when the paradigm shifts.