



Workforce Diversity Network

Review: Video and Training Program



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At the Workforce Diversity Network, we are always looking for articles, books, and training programs that can be used by our members to compliment and strengthen their diversity and inclusion initiatives. Please visit workforcediversitynetwork.com for future reviews.

The Leadership Secret of Gregory Goose

Developing an inclusive workplace, fostering co-responsibility, engaging multiple perspectives, and empowering people are all seen as essential skills to effectively leading and managing diversity.

The central challenge of a diversity and inclusion initiative is to create a culture that “works” for everyone; an environment that values differences in perspective and applies them for improved organizational results. It requires a kind of leadership that enables and invites people to contribute their unique ideas and skills. This is the view of leadership outlined in the video and training program “The Leadership Secret of Gregory Goose.”

Gregory is a serious yet humorous workshop that looks at old and new approaches to leadership, contrasting the command and control style that many of us grew up with, to one that is more open, inclusive, and empowering. Gregory “honks, flaps pecks and struts” his way to the leadership position of the flock until he discovers that those skills aren’t necessarily the ones he needs to stay there. New concepts and language are introduced to describe and contrast the different styles including:

- Co-Creating – Partnering with employees, peers and colleagues to understand and play a role in the direction of the organization’s success. Discouraging “we-they” thinking. Setting a positive and inclusive tone and helping people feel we are all working together toward common goals, and strategies; creating a sense that “we are all in this together.”
- Power-With Others - An inclusive style of leadership where individuals work in concert with each other
- Power-Over Others – An exclusive style of leadership characterized by dominance over others; often there are lower levels of productivity. The leader’s power is derived from their position in the hierarchy



An excellent facilitator’s guide that makes it easy to engage leaders and managers at all levels in highly interactive sessions accompanies the video, and there are solid recommendations on how to follow up with participants after the workshop so there is sustainable change in the organization.

At the Workforce Diversity Network, we are always looking for articles, books, and training programs that can be used by our members to compliment and strengthen their diversity and inclusion initiatives. When I first was introduced to Gregory, I was struck by the similarities between its philosophy and approach to leadership and those found in current thinking about what’s required to be a successful leader in an increasingly

diverse workplace. This made me all the more interested to talk with Gregory's creator, Judith Glaser, to learn more about her observations and experience with the workshop.

WDN: I can imagine that leaders who have been successful using the command and control style of management might be skeptical of "power-with" leadership and reluctant to change. Has Gregory been effective in dealing with situations like this?

Judith: People are often resistant to change because they think change means changing themselves and the underlying issue is that I like myself and I don't want to change. I coached a tough, smart leader who was using the "honking, pecking, strutting" behavior and he didn't want to let it go because it was tied into being who he was. He didn't want people to think he was being weak. We spent about an hour talking about what those behaviors represented and how they affected his main objective in the company which was to build a high trust, high risk organization that could experiment with going into new things. When he was using that behavior, what he was basically doing was making people follow him, obey him and not take risk. Once he saw there was a direct connection between that and his "power over" leadership style, he was able to release himself from the feeling of, "You want to change me and I want to be tough" and the whole resistance to change dissolved. This is a perfect example of how effective the Gregory model can be

WDN: When you introduce Gregory to an organization, do you recommend starting with senior leaders?

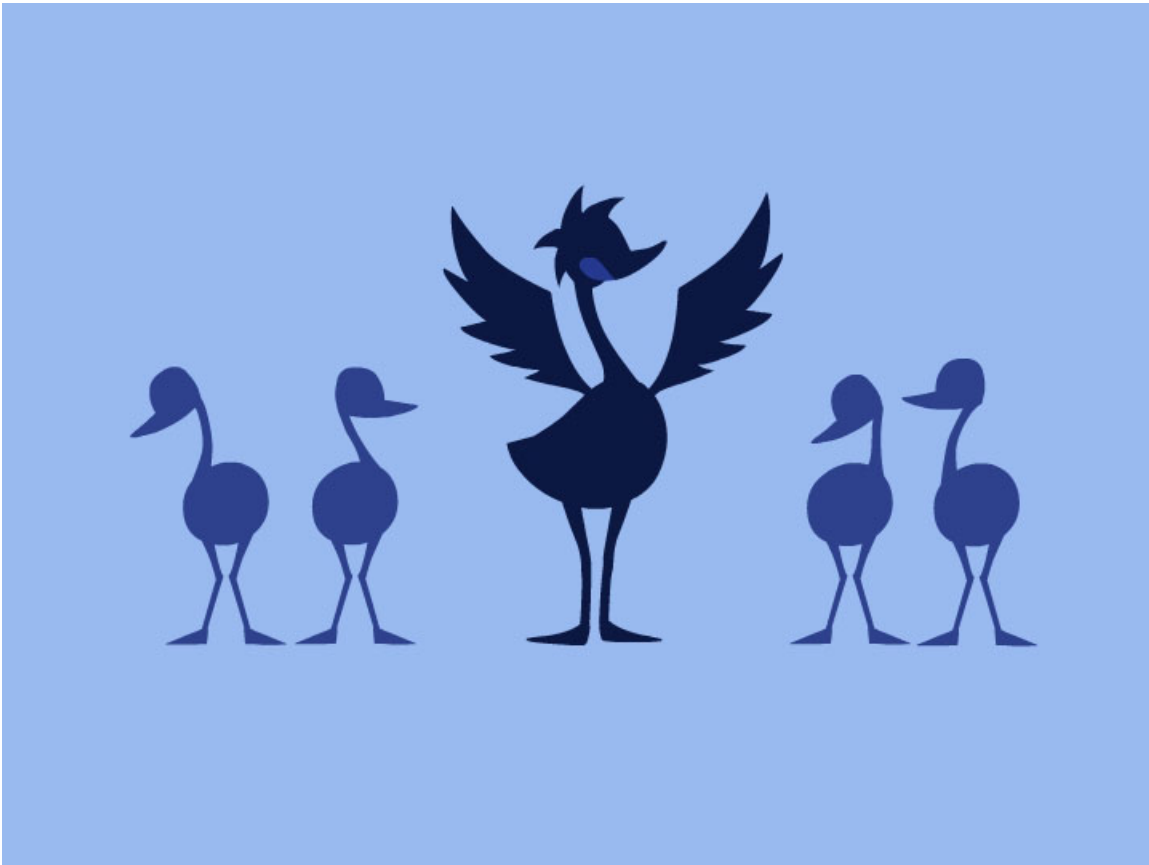
Judith: Yes. My work is with senior leaders because, if you have people at the top who are trying to be good citizens and work well with one another, then there's more of an openness and receptivity to that at the lower levels because that's how the leaders do their work. When leaders come in and start speaking differently to people or acknowledging people in new and better ways, and having conversations that don't make people feel small, that cascades a new chemistry inside an organization. That's why it is important to start at the top leadership level.

WDN: A common concern of our members is that many training sessions are informative and energizing but don't result in any sustainable change or new skills. Once a group of leaders has completed a Gregory workshop, what recommendations do you have to build upon what they've learned so it doesn't just become another program of the month?

Judith: A primary objective of the program is to have every participant use Gregory as a way to get anchored in this new type of leadership which is "power with". Following the workshop I recommend a process of peer coaching that involves having leaders who have gone through Gregory together, meet on a regular basis, every six weeks or two months or whatever their plan is, where each of them go out and do experiments around this with leadership examples of things they have done or tried to do differently using the seven leadership behaviors that they want to model. They share their experiences with each other and talk about the results that they're getting. With this process you have a living organization that's really committed to doing a different type of leadership and the stories that they share with each other are crystal clear, real life examples of what people are really doing and they learn from each other such dramatically new and exciting things. Adult learning, adult wisdom and adults coaching each other with real life examples is what makes this sustainable, real and not academic any more.

WDN: Past surveys we have done sometimes show the performance expectations and reward processes in organizations don't align with the expectations in Gregory. What have you observed in your work?

Judith: Everywhere I go the performance expectations and reward processes are being changed to reflect the new leadership model. The words that people say over and over again are that there is a different way at getting at this change stuff. You can't demand people to change or force them. You can't do some of the things we thought you could because of your positional power as a leader to do them. In the world today, people don't respond to those motivational tools. What people do respond to are things that deal with the candor of what's really going on. Let's all agree that this is the truth. Let's not play with each other. Let's be candid with each other. And then let's support each other in going through the steps of being the best that we can be and sometimes it means that a leader gives up something and learns the new belief behind the myth that if you give up your control you'll be powerless. Let's learn to catch each other in these mythologies that aren't true any more. As Gregory says, "When you give up power you get power." I love when people are challenging their basic assumptions about what it's all about. That's wisdom – that's deep wisdom, and if Gregory can help people become more wisdom thinkers that's a real benefit to any organization.



WDN: A coaching model seems to play a big role in the success of Gregory and how it is deployed in an organization. Can you say a little bit more about the role of coaching?

Judith: I talk to leaders about the idea that we are stuck inside an old paradigm regarding a style of leadership that doesn't work well and that nobody really wants. We discuss the possibilities associated with creating inclusive cultures where healthy conversations are the norm and co-creation sets the tone in how work is done. We talk about unblocking old thinking to open the way for new approaches. Big culture change initiatives driven from the top down don't work. The very style of such processes is derived from old heroic leadership paradigms.

A better approach is to work at the individual level to awaken leaders to other approaches – extreme awareness of self and others – I versus we behavior. The culture won't change if the leaders at the top won't change.

WDN: Leadership is a serious subject but there is clearly a humorous side to Gregory. How does that add value to the program?

Judith: I like the idea of teaching people to be honest about what leadership is, what it's moving towards, what you really want, give yourself clear examples, pick the most important dimensions you can work on together and work on them. Gregory is supposed to help simplify that journey for people. It's fun and funny first of all so we can laugh at ourselves. When people have humor about who they are, then they can catch themselves honking and pecking and strutting, and if people can catch themselves doing it, then something different happens. You're not pointing the finger and saying, "Let's change this person." You're saying, "Oh my gosh! Look what I'm doing!" And that self-awareness in leaders is critical for sustainable change to take place.

Organizational leaders we work with at the Workforce Diversity Network frequently ask the questions:

- Once we've done diversity awareness training, what do we do next?
- What do we need to do differently?
- What skills do we need?
- What would it look like if we really managed and led diversity?"

The Leadership Secret of Gregory Goose answers many of these. Power-with leadership is an essential component of a comprehensive diversity and inclusion initiative and Gregory's lessons teach leaders at all levels the skills that bring out the best in people. It is an excellent workshop for all types of organizations including business, education and government. We highly recommend it.

For more information on the Training Program contact:

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