A WEEK IN Learning

A MANAGER'S VIEWPOINT
John Silva, Learning and Development Manager - Leadership

You are required to attend an all-day, offsite meeting. With a heavy sigh, you think to yourself, "Great, nothing is going to get done today. Everyone will just slack off while I'm gone." As the meeting goes on, you are constantly on your phone, texting back and forth with your team to make sure they are working. You get up and leave your meeting multiple times to take or make calls because they *'just can't do it without you.'* You need to keep up with everything because, ultimately, you are responsible if your team fails.
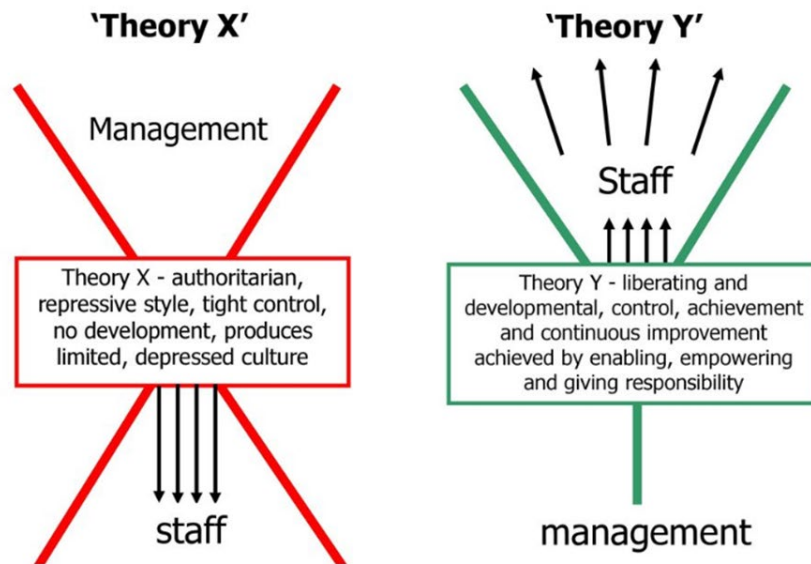
I know this story too well because this was me years ago. Even today, I see it at times in other leaders. In the 1950'S, psychologist Douglas McGregor named this type of management belief as Theory X. Theory X managers believe that people would rather avoid work, if at all possible. They believe that the only way work will get done, is if they closely supervise their people. Theory X managers use rewards and punishment as motivation. They feel that their people are at work simply to get a paycheck and nothing more.

> *"Theory Y managers believe that their people are self-motivated in working towards their team and organizational vision."*
>
> - **John Silva**

In contrast, Theory Y managers believe that their people are self-motivated in working towards their team and organizational vision. They believe that their people work because they want to contribute to the team's success. Theory Y managers focus on creating an environment for people to choose this level of engagement, instead of focusing all of their time on controlling the environment.

A real life example of Theory Y unfolded right in front of me here at GCNA. Last week, I had the opportunity to travel to Yuma in order to deliver our Performance Management Training to the Store Managers in that area. I arrived to a full class of leaders. Every Store Manager and Assistant Store Manager was present. I asked the leadership in the room, "If everyone is here, who is running your stores?" Without hesitation, they turned to me and said, "Our stores run themselves, we're not worried at all." The entire group engaged with me in their learning for the afternoon. Everyone focused on their development as a leader and not their phones. These leaders believed in their people and their abilities to keep operations running smoothly in their absence.

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'Theory X'

Management

Theory X - authoritarian, repressive style, tight control, no development, produces limited, depressed culture

staff

'Theory Y'

Staff

Theory Y - liberating and developmental, control, achievement and continuous improvement achieved by enabling, empowering and giving responsibility

management

Both of the stories I provided were examples based on the assumptions managers make about their team. Theory X managers assume that people do not like their work. Theory Y managers assume that people enjoy the initiative that their work requires. Here are some questions you can ask yourself to see where you may stand:

- *What assumptions are you making about your team?*
- *Do you feel good about those assumptions?*
- *How would you like your manager to view you?*

So, how can you change your mindset? Start with considering your choices in the situation. Perhaps your team is exhibiting Theory X behaviors. Is it because that is how *you* are *leading* them (with assumptions of their feelings and behaviors)? Truth is, your team will know if you do or do not believe in them - and they will act accordingly.

If you would like to learn more about giving control and how people are motivated, here are a couple of books that have helped me recently:

"Drive" by Daniel Pink
"Turn the Ship Around" by David Marquet

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