

Work Force/Forced Work
SEVENTH DRAFT (08/06/2009)

A Seminar lead by 1 man 2 women
And many people onscreen both “real” and acting.

Section 1, STANDARD METHODS AND TYPICAL EXPERIENCES (emotions)

Claymation Sequence 1 (standard methods and typical experiences)

Text onscreen during this beginning music:

*Instructional music (there is the music of bees and the machinists, trucks
backing up, the grind, the jackhammer, the door closing, the bubble bursting, the
lawn mower, the linoleum polisher, etc)*

*(into, dramatic music/ underneath it all, the murmur of the closed room. This will go on
for the duration of the piece. All recorded sound: very slight reverb of small, closed empty
room.)*

VOICEOVER (Katie J.)

Good morning, are you here for the “Lightening: Strategies for increasing productivity” seminar? Great,
room 21B. I like your tie.

(LEDA is watching TV in a white slip.

*It is a TV drama about work in silence. Two men in business suits. Dramatic
poses. Camera angles. Sharply Lit.*

During this LEDA dresses in a short-skirted business suit)

*Shift to: Onscreen: Animated, abstract (simplify, focus on
completion, create habits, identify the essential and eliminate the rest)*

25

SIMULTANEOUS (voices only, to music, slashes indicate next line overlapping)

I am trained/ I had a Fulbright,
I worked/ for the UN.
I am trained/ I went to college,
I had a/ food service job
I am trained/ I lived in a trailer,

I have been/ a window washer
I am trained/ I learned on the job,
I have been /a vampire,
(in unison)

I have plenty of skills
(back to round)

I am trained/ I sing for my supper,
I howl at the/ moon
I rush in/ and out at random

The doors/ slam as I pass through them

I am not /as/ important

/As/

as my mother promised me I would be

Important

important

VOICEOVER: *(this is part of the music, Ari)*

Simplify

AMANDA:

I want my work and my life to conjoin

VOICEOVER (Ari etc)

Focus on Completion

AMANDA:

I am a person who can do good in the world. I am trained.

VOICEOVER

Create Habits

AMANDA:

At my current job...at my current job

VOICEOVER

Identify the Essential and Eliminate the Rest

AMANDA:

I compete for information
Undermine my supervisor
Form alliances
Insist on my importance.

*(clay forms into a whale and gets dropped into a very dirty toilet.
Music changes)*

(Begin synthesized whale sounds)

FRANK (Herbie)

“General approach”

In the early 20th century, industrial psychologists convinced managers that if workers and unions could be taught that their problems were personal, rather than structural, they might be more easily subdued.

(instructional music condenses into a single tone and fades out to silence.

moment of silence before Dr. Hackle then

feedback as she steps to the mike mesh with incoming whale sounds

DR. LEDA HACKLE: (Meredith)

Hello, my name is Dr. Leda Hackle. I am a doctor of psychiatry and I also hold an MBA from Harvard University. I am trained. There are a lot of books out there that try to help you manage one of the most important areas of your life, your career. Everyone has a career. Everyone needs a career. Without it you would be careening down the mountainside of your own life.

FRANK: (video of Mike in closed room, picking up a suitcase)

I can either plunge into my job, and become completely submerged in its interpersonal marsh

LEDA

I can offer generalized solutions to typical problems, your typical every day problem.

Interviews (30 seconds)

Question: what do you have to offer? (marketable skills projected)

FRANK:

Or I can zone out, detach. Float above. Forget about it. Fuck it. It's just a job.

(sound sequence:)

Develop a standard method for performing each job

Develop a standard method for performing each job

Develop a standard method for performing each job

I can barely focus

It's the end of the day

LEDA (*CHEERFULLY*)

I have developed a standard method to increase the productivity of each individual employee across the board.

Imagine what it would be like to do what you enjoy and are good at, in a compelling environment, working with interesting subject matter, and relating to others in a comfortable way. Can you picture what life would be like? Do

you get a sense of how productive and energized you would be?

Too good to be true? No. But it does not happen overnight. Let's take a look at the steps involved...

doors, rushing water, subtle (the clickety clack sounds begin, banging moans)

NEWACTOR: SIGH
But then I am wasting over 40 hours out of my life each week.

LEDA
You are designed to do something, but not everything.

AMANDA
A fork is designed to help us eat, and we do not expect it to be any good at driving nails. The same is true for you.

LEDA
You are designed to do something, but not everything. What are you designed for?

Claymation, two women, onscreen we see two animated figures in split screen. One is getting spanked and one is chopping heads off legless chickens

claymation WOMAN (*chopping chickens*)
Yes, I'm disappointed with this job I have now

ANOTHER claymation WOMAN (*being spanked*)
Disappointed?

Claymation WOMAN
Yes, I'm very disappointed with this job I have now

ANOTHER claymation WOMAN
Why?

Claymation WOMAN
Well, it's just not *Fulfilling* you know?

ANOTHER claymation WOMAN

I read this great book that really helped me get through the day, it was called *Lighten Up, Floating through Work*.

(static)(women disappear, voices continue)

Or something like that, maybe it was *fight for your money/the five dysfunctions of a team/peaks and valleys/*

HERBIE:

Analysis of institutional systems such as the American work system involves the exploration of:

(1) How rules were established in the course of time: that is, what were the causes that gave rise to them and the useful ends they serve.

(2) The way in which they operate in society; that is, how they are applied by individuals.

LEDA

There are few exceptionally gifted people in this world. The wise person knows he or she has limitations and is not the most important person in the world. The world does not revolve around you, in other words.

Hush...that's the sound of airplanes not the world turning
Hush that's the fog, not superman coming down

Interview: Toledo, list of jobs
My mother, never worked a day...

OLD LAUREN BACALL VOICE

We feel unified by working, that it's something every American does
But class, gender, race, geographical location, age, and skill levels make jobs as different from one another as individuals.

(Sound samples)
HUSH it's just panic

On the other hand, many of us work the same schedule, and are perceived in the same way. How does this affect our socio-political conceptions of "the workforce" as a whole?

HUSH it's just the contract
Hush it's just the ocean
(whales)

Are we individuals or a force?

Do we have common experiences, or not?

Hush it's just a Private jet
(wind)

If we both work 9-5 Monday through Friday, what do we share as a result of that? But if I am a commercial fisherman and you are a nurse, what do we not share?

Hush it's just a ghetto
(siren)

WOMAN'S VOICE (*Continuing at a low level*)

how full is your bucket?/death by meeting/it's okay to be the boss/our iceberg is melting/the power of small/make today count/the carrot principle/the difference maker/the power of nice/the encore effect/the back of the napkin/who moved my cheese/talent is overrated/the difference between good and great/a sense of urgency/the 21 irrefutable laws of leadership/the 3 signs of a miserable job/Monday morning choices/no more Mondays/buy.ology/work the system/rules of thumb/rubies in the orchard/why GM matters/the present.

(spanking rhythm to static to?)
(Begin sound of rushing water)

SPANKING SMPLES BEGIN

ALL (independently)

*They repeat this for a while to a certain pragmatic rhythm/singsong/under things,
in harmony with fluorescent lights static*

Gosh Poof where did this day go! Gosh I tell ya /this was just a filibuster workday/I brought my lunch today/he needs to calm down, put a bag on his head. I see you smiling buster.

TOGETHER

Too bad about Amanda

AMANDA (*office pictures from the catalogue*)

When people say "work" I picture an office. The office is a symbol of the American workplace.

85% of Americans work in an office. An office is loosely defined. I just made up that statistic.

No one is sure what an office is, but you know it when you see it.

An office can be just for one person or for a lot of people.

It can make actions, like an official office.

You can be elected to it.

An office is an orifice for putting people and things in.

An office is full of desks and computers.

An office may or may not have a policy about dress code, chairs, and decorations.

An architect may design an office, or it may be junk space.

Junk space where there is nothing to do with it but put people and things in it.

It may be beige or orange. An office may have carpet or not. There may be coffee or not. If there is coffee, it may not be hot.

*(Entering. Strings, Scott Walker.)
(a delicate keen)*

LEDA (ONSCREEN, just her lips) et ALL (live)
Manage the Systems of your life
To move towards serenity, prosperity,
and the best for the world around you

LEDA

This is NOT about ridiculous business or labor strategies. There is no such thing as class. My theory is based on the Meyers Briggs personality sorter, Studs Terkel's research, the stock market index, the time vs. money paradigm, the loose change metaphor, the idle hands are the devils playground platitudes, Dante's Inferno, Electra's complex, Richard Sennett's book "Authority," the Watergate tapes, the Roosevelt Labor transcripts and 2-minute interviews with over 2 million working people. I can help you win! I can help you be you! I can be you for you! I can make you feel happy while letting you know that you are dog shit! You are dog shit!

CLAY MAN:

Taking the cultural path of least resistance leads to more rapid evolution of the human species.

AMANDA:

Is that good?

2.) The Scientific approach to business management and process improvement

(during this section:)

LEDA (live)

Whether you work in manufacturing, in a law firm, at a banking institution, or elsewhere,

(onscreen: if you don't work in an office or a factory you just don't work at all!) (statistics: In 2000, 68% of Latino men working in the United States worked in production, transportation, or material moving, with an emphasis on service industries.)

you, understand the value of productivity. Now you may accuse me of old-fashioned Taylorism, but I challenge you to tell the difference between his old scorned, assembly-line, Henry Ford good-old-days and today's streamlined theories which simply rephrase these theories! Now look, Taylor believed that workplace patterns based upon tradition and rules of thumb should be replaced by precise procedures developed after careful study of an individual at work. Efficient patterns seen and analyzed should then be applied to the workers as a whole, as enforced by management. Now I would challenge you to find any difference between this and contemporary management and workplace process ideology... For example, Six Sigma promotes:

stable and predictable process results (i.e. reduction process variation)

Manufacturing and business processes with characteristics that can be measured, analyzed, improved and controlled.

Achievement of sustained quality improvement requiring commitment from the entire organization, particularly from top-level management.

LEDA meets "RANDY" live. They sit down in two chairs. Behind them, large LEDA sits in a living room chair.

RANDY: (Herbie)

Good morning Dr. Hackle, thank you so much for joining us.

LEDA

My pleasure Randy.

RANDY:

Let's get right down to brass tacks Dr. Hackle, what is Productivity?

LEDA

Productivity is a measure of economic efficiency, meaning how much money you make. If productivity is high, that means input like labor is being converted very effectively into output goods and services, which can then be sold.

ALL (independently)

They repeat this for a while to a certain pragmatic rhythm/singsong/under things, in harmony with fluorescent lights static)

Goods and services. Service me. Serve me, underserved, undeserved, you do not deserve / perhaps you need some tea? Do you want some tea? Are you okay? Are you okay? You okay? Are you okay (I'm fine) (oh yeah, I'm fine) (thanks)

(Just Brian)

I'd like to be someplace like the desert....

TOGETHER

Too bad about Amanda

LEDA:

You understand that forcing more productivity is the main part of your job. What is productivity and how do we get it out of ourselves and our employees? That is what we will now discover. Fortunately, we can discover it through one of the basic laws of physics, Newton's second law.

Please direct your gaze to this very simple equation: (IT APPEARS ONSCREEN)

$$\mathbf{F} = ma$$

The fact is, this equation is the cornerstone of Democracy.

This equation shows that speeding up an object in velocity (acceleration) is directly proportional to the magnitude of the force applied to the object, i.e. how hard it is pushed, and inversely proportional to the mass of the object, i.e. the heavier the object is, the harder it is to push.

Back to the live world. Onscreen, LEDA is replaced by images.

ALL

Let's say, Let's say, Let's say you are drowning

LEDA

In this case, let's say you are a boss of some kind, say you are the manager of a Wendy's franchise. You have bobbed up to this level, like a glob of fat in water.

So there you are, floating. And let's make an individual employee the basis of this equation, let's say a single mom in an urban area. This employee is the object

ONSCREEN a young woman in a vague fast food uniform.

ALL

Let's say, Let's say, Let's say you are drowning

Now, the harder she is pushed by her supervisor (you), the faster and harder he is going to work.

synchronization, precision, and specialization.

You ARE a company.

Is it mathematical? Is it practical? Yes and yes. Suck it.

LEDA Onscreen

But faster and harder is no good if it's just going to push her towards a breakdown.

ALL + LEDA:

Let's say, Let's say

AMANDA:

Let's say you understand all too well what you need to do in order to keep your job

LEDA

She needs to be able to go fast and hard but also be light...But if she is "heavy" (air quotes) it's going to be hard to push her. So the secret to this seminar is called *lightening!* *LIGHTENING* yourself!

RANDY

So Dr. Hackle, here is the million dollar question, how do I increase productivity?

LEDA:

from a management standpoint

Well, it comes down to the workers

cut health insurance lengthen the workday and calculate that.

I don't give a shit, pardon my French, about supplements for workers.

They don't need any of them, and in this day and age, with the death of the unions, the workers need to get used to being grateful that they even have jobs.

Interview with union

LEDA

So that aside, I believe that productivity can be increased by a process I call "Lightening" which is helping the workers to really release, and not to care at all, about their role as workers, and letting of all the bad energy that has haunted labor for decades, maybe even for years.

ALL (independently)

*They repeat this for a while to a certain pragmatic rhythm/singsong/under things,
in harmony with fluorescent lights static)*

Honey, better to have this job than no job. Every time I see that idiot, I just want to punch him in the face. How did he get where he is? He doesn't deserve it. You wanna take lunch? Don't worry about it. No, I'm sorry, I'm just so tired...

TOGETHER

Too bad about Amanda

(colors flash onscreen)

CLAY WORDS:

Specific cultural patterns form the evolution of the brain and vice versa.

This is done as culture creates repetitive and unified chemical states (emotions), putting bodies through repetitive actions, and rewarding/punishing thought patterns.

AMANDA:

Is that good?

3.) Interpersonal Affairs: How much of me is me and how much is just The Way of Things?

LEDA:

Whoa! This is a lot right? Don't panic! I know right now this extremely complicated equation is banging around in your head like a frog in an oil drum! But just relax, breathe, this is going to help us, and don't worry if you don't understand it all at once!

Baseline:

Ke-Keynesian

Keynesian

(cut-out word bubbles)

CLAYMATION MAN (the one that looks like John Travolta)

When faced with a co-worker with an extra big mouth
feeling like you'd just like to put a sock in it
do you:

- a.) bow your head feeling ashamed and walk away
- b.) talk louder and louder

- c.) organize a consortium of those who dislike this woman
- d.) put your (bleep[cock]) in it.

LEDA

It's so simple! People are already moving forward, they have to in order to live. It is impossible for a living employee not to put out ANY work force.

The Phillips curve
(cut-out word bubbles)

Interview excerpts

XXX "I'm the kind of person who..."

LEDA

She quiets down and leans in as if this is a great secret

What is working light? Well it's about priorities. It's about surrendering to the correct authorities...

"unload" your personalities, unload outside anxieties
only worry that you might be fired, and the next day, a new you hired, you must realize

(music? Pre-recorded?) (words in bold are cut out of 3-D cardboard)

Supply theories based on the neo-Keynesian cost-push models maintain

That stagflation or "stagnation" and "inflation" combined
are caused by significant disruptions to the supply side of the supply-demand market equation,
for example, if there is a sudden real or imaginary or relative scarcity of key commodities, natural
resources, or natural capital needed to produce goods and services.

They also maintain that social and political conditions such as checks and balances on organizational
structures or restrictive "socialist" control of production may cause markets to enter into a stagflation cycle
eventually resulting in severe depression

however they define "scarcity of commodities" as an unfavorable economic deal for those who supply, as
in not enough profit being made to justify release of products to fulfill demand.

operatic (Joseph K.)

I hold in my hand
I hold you in my hand
I hold your life in my hand
I hold your job in my hand
I hold your food in my hand
I hold your shelter in my hand

LEDA:

Ladies and Gentlemen in this time of “economic crisis” and “identity crisis” and whatever else is swimming around in your little skulls,

Whatever you do, I urge you to REALIZE your expendability
your lack of marketable abilities

- 1.) Free yourself from emotional engagement and detach yourself from your surroundings
- 2.) Free yourself from the need to make creative decisions or think quickly, all decisions and thoughts come directly from superiors, you have no need to offer your opinions...
- 3.) disconnect from the effects of concrete working actions, i.e. block out all distracting “big picture” thinking and focus on the details
- 4.) sublimate yourself to that which is larger than yourself, sublimation is the transformation of unwanted impulses that can distract and irritate you into a force of pure, unadulterated focus on repetitive competition and efficient task fulfillment.

Noise

Noise noise

SONG:

This is as much as I can bear (the trains criss cross the small town and shake the
buildings)

Spraypainting auto bodies

(in every place is a grit on the wind that smells like the
buildings)

The days are long since I cut my hair

(your laugh is like a hawk that throws rocks through the
windows of buildings)

(rhythmic)

Regimes of Accumulation and Modes of Regulation

My my I feel the cool air from the cavern between me and my situation

This is as much as I can bear (if you run away you can't come back he said as I was
leaving)

taking care of someone else's dogs

(working in the daytime thinking constantly
of leaving)

The days are long since I cut my hair

(I wish one could ride the rails these days but the trains
don't leave the station)

Regimes of Accumulation and Modes of Regulation

by god, another generation,
another wave of fertilized cheese food children

Regimes of Accumulation and Modes of Regulation

Johnson's Controls, sued by the employees for intoxication
vents open onto the floor
hotboxed grandmothers lost their hesitation
I can't go, I have to pick them up off the floor and carry them out into the fresh air

Regimes of Accumulation and Modes of Regulation

LEDA

It's so simple! People are already moving forward, they have to in order to live.

*End sequence
music shift*

(her voice distorts and begins to be repeated)

TEXT ONSCREEN:

To the U.S. Department of Labor, work is, by its very definition, organized into something called a job.

TEXT ONSCREEN:

A job is a contract that established a rate of exchange, labor for money.

LEDA:

What do you do for a living? Oh how nice, that must be wonderful. I'll bet you just love that. What a great job.

Interview with the guy who says "a man has to work"

TEXT ONSCREEN:

Approximately 145 million, 863 thousand civilians over the age of 16 have jobs, meaning that they are employed by someone or something other than themselves or file w-2 forms.

However, the Bureau of Labor Statistics counts jobs rather than persons, so multiple jobholders are counted more than once...

LEDA:

(warmly)

My advice to you is: Never ever, for one minute, think you deserve what you don't earn.

TEXT ONSCREEN:

Most workers work around 40 hours per week, five days a week

LEDA:

Treat your subordinates like you would your daughters...

Most workers leave their places of residence in the morning

And commute to a place of work in the same way everyday

LEDA:

Advice: break your day into sections in your mind, then make lists for each section.

Most workers get between 15 minutes and 1 hour as a lunch break in the middle of the day

And get paid by the hour, by salary, or by units or product produced or otherwise affected.

ANOTHER WOMAN

No other choice

CHORUS (onscreen, eight actors)

The crisis is our singularity:

the endogenous crises are cyclical crisis which are necessary and inevitable, for they make it possible to cancel imbalances accumulated during the phase of expansion, without major deterioration of the institutional forms. These crises are indissociable of the operation of capitalism.

ONSCREEN:

Employment has continued to decline sharply, now hovering around 10% unemployment nationwide, and approaching 20% in some states.

SOMEONE

a snatch of interview:

I hate being told things I already know.

I relish any opportunity to discuss myself.

Music Continues

Oh, you feel like a machine? Oh, you're being discriminated against in the workplace? Oh, you're undervalued, underpaid, or somehow treated like shit? I'm sorry. Are you a coal miner? Oh, a meat packer? That's awful. Oh you work in a textile mill. Uh huh. I think I saw you on 60 minutes.

LEDA

Casserole recipe

HERBIE

Wistfully

I'm bored too...

CHELSEA

Uterine fibroids

Shirley Temple SAMPLE

JoANNE (claymation)

I think the world OWES me a living. Roosevelt said so. FDR. I deserve happiness. My father used to come home...*(static overlap)* when the French fries are soggy *(static)*

Overlapping text...

LEDA

Pie chart/I operate the electric chair

RATIONAL MAN in a SUIT and GLASSES:

The jobsite is a society in miniature. It is a society for which Americans prepare from birth, train for beginning at age 5 with entrance into Kindergarten, study for, test for, apply for, and gain entrance into. The entrance is an event, the first job a revelation that informs participation in the jobsite society over a lifetime.

Interviews

Courtney tells "take down" at Bloomingdales story.

CLAY WORDS:

Human synapse construction is more variable from individual to individual than eye or skin color.

AMANDA

Is that good?

4.) In The General Productive Workplace Labor is defined and authority and responsibility are legitimized and/or official zed

2020 (star trek)

VOICEOVER (female)

You're here for the seminar? Right down the hall, room 21B. You're a little late sir, want me to check your coat?

MAN (*onscreen in full Errol Flynn make-up*) (MIKEY)

Here are some character indications taken from the Meyer's Briggs type indicator, which was developed in the 1940's and enjoyed much use from the corporate training sphere in the 1980's and 1990's. Myers Briggs' seminal sorting questionnaire, which assigns individuals a series of four letters that construct analytic indications of their preferences and behaviors, is based on Carl Jung's 1921 book *Psychological Types* and the theories contained therein.

The ESTJ, or according to the later Kiersey temperament sorter, the ' Supervisor'

ANTHONY (Herbie)

I'm just not a leadership personality.

(recorded little nasally voice: "I'm not good enough")

ERROL FLYNN

Is driven to turn theories into plans

ANTHONY

I've never known what I wanted to do with my life...I don't really care if my life DOES something, why can't I just be?

ERROL FLYNN

is Future-oriented

Highly values knowledge

ANTHONY

My co-worker was complaining to me the other day:

AMANDA:

why can't I be included in the strategic planning meetings? Or even just in the initiative meetings? I'm a senior staff member, and these things directly relate to my job. I want to be a part of things for god's sake.

ERROL FLYNN

is Charismatic

AMANDA:

I hate having to pretend I'm weaker than I am. I have to be like "well I know you are the expert on these things but I feel it would really help my professional development to have this information"

ERROL FLYNN

is Impatient with inefficiency and incompetence

Wants things structured and orderly

ANTHONY

yeah Amanda, that's rough...

ERROL FLYNN

has excellent verbal communication skills
Dislikes routine or detail-oriented tasks
is Self-confident

(we follow his back down the hall, he takes a seat in the audience)

LEDA (live):

Now, look, In this seminar, we are not here to address the economy, the decline of the middle class or the infuriating habits of your employees. The first thing you need to understand is you are working for something much more powerful than yourself.

LEDA takes a seat in a folding chair center stage. She is wearing a navy blue suit set, mini skirt, white shirt, rings, pulled-back hair.

Music

Sped-up work as in '80's documentary

During this: Voiceover (LEDA)

When did I realize that I was very, very, very good at business? I think when I was 17, I had an internship at my father's workplace, a very large corporation, the name of which I will not reveal. By the time my internship ended, I was offered a job in the marketing and branding department. The reason they offered me the job is that I had reorganized the shared computer files and hard files so that only I could understand them. I declined the position and asked instead for a \$400,000 consultation fee. I now manage a team of 41 consultants, in addition I lead seminars all over the world. I am often translated into Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Russian, and German.

She picks up a very large 3-ring binder from the floor. It is red or black.

She opens it across her lap. It is full of white pages.

She takes a three hole punched sheet of white paper from the other side of the chair.

She opens the binder rings, and moves the paper towards them, the paper shakes in the air

She balances it, aiming to skewer the holes on the binder rings

The paper shakes in the air from the shaking of her hand...

LEDA gets the piece of paper into the binder

DURKHEIM CHARACTER: (Ben)

The jobsite is a society in miniature. For most people, it is a separate society, which they do not share with family or close friends.

AMANDA:

When did I realize that I was very, very, very good at working? I think I was eight and my daddy asked me to wash the car. He told me he would give me a dollar. I washed the car and he gave me a dollar. The next day, I dug up some dog shit from the back yard and spattered his car with it, then I asked him if he would give me two dollars to wash his car.

Heros? Yes, I have heroes. Not my father. But I have them I guess. Harry S. Truman I guess. He was the one who correlated a longer workday and workweek with military prowess and an ability to defeat the Soviet Union.

onscreen chorus (filmed segment in space)

INTERVIEWS during all of this (7 or 8 different people)

(we see this, real people superimposed on miniature apartment)

MAN (NewActor):

Hi honey I'm home

WOMAN

How was your day dear?

MAN:

It was the strangest thing, I wandered around the office for three hours looking for a pencil sharpener, finally I asked one of the technicians and he directed me to a little closet by the water cooler and in it were three beavers!

WOMAN:

That's nice honey.

(light in window of apartment)

CLAY WORDS:

Attachment and engagement with people and surroundings raise levels of oxytocin and vasopressin, which cause feelings of trust, comfort, and reward in addition to behavioral and emotional altruism.

AMANDA:

Is that good?

5.) Advice and How it Feels

NOW

LEDA

Are you stressed out at work? Armpits that itch? An ass that keeps spreading out and out? Do you have bloodstains on your calves? A watery eye that won't dry up? A perpetual knocking in the chest? Have you had ENOUGH? Feel like you're sinking? Gone back to drinking?

Hello, I am Dr. Hackle. I understand that your lives are full of stress. I also understand that stress manifests itself as weight, and weighs you down. Weightful stress can feel so heavy, it can be hard to stand up straight and walk tall! It can tow you down, tow you under

(music begins, a sweet almost lullaby, the people come and go in waves)

The undertow is cold and dark, moreover it is wet and you can drown in it. Do you want to spend your whole life fighting the force of the undertow? The weight of stress? The thousands of cubic pounds of liquid that can prevent you from exercising your right to breathe?

(shouting, weird, intermeshed with music)

ALL

Now your boss may come to you and he may want you to work faster. Now your boss may come to you and he may want you to work harder, he may take you aside, he may ignore your pride, he may grab your throat, he may take you down, he may ask you why you're late everyday, why you take a lunch break that lasts three days, he may ask you to pull down your pants, he may ask you to take out the trash when you go, he may call you an anarchist, he may ask you to clean out your desk, he may ask you to wash out your mouth with soap, he may ask you what you've been working on, he may grab your ass, he may tell you not to smile, he may ask you what internet phenomena you are familiar with, he may compliment your belt, he may tell you about his family, he may tell you about the rave he went to when he was seventeen, he may ask you where you live, he may organize a party in your honor, he may expect you to thank him for the time off, he may sit down slowly...

An office, day.

ERNIE: (Herbie)

(g-chatting, muttering under his breathe as he works)

yeah, I would understand if there was a reason the cat was in the toaster but it seems like...

TEXT ONSCREEN:

As many as 80% of employees are subject to some level of telephone or computer-based monitoring. In some offices, a list of URLs visited are posted by an employee's name in the breakroom or kitchen.

SUSAN:

Ernie?

ERNIE

Oh hi Susan, how are you?

SUSAN:

When did you get in? you were not here at 9.

ERNIE:

Ah, well I set my alarm for 8:30 but I don't know what happened, I guess I just slept through it...

SUSAN:

Ernie, I am worried about you

ERNIE

Why's that?

SUSAN:

I can't say.

ERNIE:

What? Why not?

LEDA:

Now

Let me identify a simple dichotomy in perception. I want you to bear with me, and think very seriously about this. Please close your eyes.

She breathes in

Picture, on one hand, the working class person as an intelligent person who is more than capable of making his or her own decisions and knowing what is best for him or herself (*turning Herbie on the stool*) and even for others. Empathetic, aware, intellectual, and inherently curious, this individual can be trusted to raise children right, to vote on all levels of government, and to make his or her, often useful, opinions known. This is the organized worker, whose labor belongs to him and his family, whose sweat is shed out of dedication and sincere desire to be a citizen of the United States of America. Studs Terkel, in the 1970's went about proving that America's workers are this kind of individual, with minds full of pertinent thoughts, hands strong and ready, and hearts swelling with honesty.

MAN (NewActor)

in overalls, Southern accent.

When I got out of prison I know I wanted to turn my life around. See, I'd been reading the works of Thoreau, and I wanted my heart to be as clean and natural as Walden pond. I started meditating on the image of my own heart, filled with water, and my anger dissipated. I am now happily married to my second cousin and own my own business, a hardware store and locksmithing shop.

A YOUNG WOMAN (Chelsea)

with a doll that's supposed to be a baby:

When my husband Albert died, I started making woven animals out of straw. At first, I just made them as gifts for friends, but now I have an exhibition in the museum of folk arts in Atlanta that will be touring to

New York City in the autumn. My mama is so proud of me, and I am so glad to be able to show the world the craft that has been passed down through the matriarchs in my family.

A YOUNG MAN (Herbie)

I am the fourth generation of workers at the cereal plant here in Gary. I work in the Sugar Loops division, just like my father before me and his father before him. I say a little blessing over every single Sugar Loop that passes before me, I say "go out into the world little dear sugary one, and sweeten and healthify the lives of little children"

LEDA:

On the other hand, picture a rather childish working class person, stunted by a lack of education and opportunity, one who often makes foolish choices and can not be relied upon to know what is best for himself or others.

This is a person who does not vote, or if he or she does, he or she is easily influenced by the media, by advertising, and by the public opinions of "experts." This person picks up \$1 cheeseburgers from McDonalds on the way home from work for his eight kids. He is religious, and perhaps a member of whichever current minority fills our most menial jobs, in the past, Irish, Italian, Polish, Black, now perhaps an immigrant from a South of Central American Country, i.e Latino, in any case, someone whose stake in the U.S.' economy is rather less than ideal, a woman perhaps, who doesn't understand the systems. She is working only to feed her own mouth and those of her offspring. Don't pretend like this person is manufactured by prejudices, honestly consider the idea that the workforce is primarily comprised of individuals without foresight, direction, skill, or a single intelligent thought.

Interviews

The question is, and has always been, which of these types of people comprise the U.S.' workforce today? If it is the former, what is to be done? If it is the latter, what is to be done?

SIMILIE MAN

The American Workforce. Once, a thrilling gamefield for athletic financial advisors, the playground for ripe-cheeked dot-comers, the grassy eden of spirit-body-mind practitioners, self-helpers, and advocates for workplace childcare, now, the very picture of angst, pain, and destruction. Like a miniature city beneath a claymation monster, this scene has been transformed, dreams crushed, doorways boarded up. The American Workplace is now merely a haunted house, a space of threat and paranoia, where complete destruction lurks around every corner. What went wrong?

MAN:

The secret to a good career is productivity. This is what you have to offer.

ALL

Nobody pushes me, I push myself.

Nobody Pushes me, I Push Myself

NOBODY pushes me, I push myself

Interviews about integrating life and work, Jeff

Music

*Dance sequence The Unhappy (man in that strange dark room)
an anger blow-out on the fence?*

(MUSICAL RHYTHM HALF-SUNG)

You make me feel very afraid
You treat me like an alien hand
Your mother must have raised you wrong

ALL

We'll push through
We'll make do
We'll hang on
We're long gone

You don't deserve what you have
I don't deserve to suffer this
You make me so angry I could hang myself
you make me so angry I could hang you

ALL

Don't underestimate my cognitive abilities

Don't underestimate my creative facilities

Authority

Interviews in answer to the Question:

Are people able, as a whole, to make decisions for themselves?

1 re-behaved interview (full make-up)

LEDA:

It is a new day. *(sunrise)*

Goodmorning everyone. I am talking to those of you who are in management today, my leaders. Today we will talk about Communication, the first step on your way to Lightening. Lightened Communication skills should not be overlooked. Good training programs teach managers about different types of communication systems and how to select the appropriate one for the particular communication at hand. Improving public speaking skills, handling one-on-one employee meetings, drafting department communications -- these are all important areas for managers to master.

She sets this up as she speaks: (chairs, mimicked onscreen, onscreen people are in them, MALE and FEMALE employees. The MALE is the authority)

ONSCREEN MAN

Always think: "If Robert McNamara had only ___(bleep bleep bleep rational and scientific analysis)_ the Vietnam war might have turned out differently"

LEDA:

In order to Free your employees—step one on the Lightning list—from emotional entanglements, etc, Think Strategically. Do not approve of employee relationships such as camaraderie or friendships, instead form manufactured partnerships called “mentorships.”

MAN: (NewActor)

(angrily)

Don't tell me how to do my job

Superior Man: (Herbie's body)

I need to understand exactly what you're doing and how, so let's talk about what and exactly how you're going to do something step by step.

(he sits down in the chair and crosses his arms. The other man looks angry)

LEDA

You can tell your board “One of the best by-products of mentoring is the slew of novel approaches it can engender.” However it really allows you to keep an eye on everyone and make sure they are only engaging as co-workers. You do NOT want them to emotionally engage.

(phone rings)

your office status is currently, In Office.

(beep)

(in chairs:)

FEMALE:

Ranciere defined *demos* as “those who have no share in the communal distribution of the sensible”

Superior Man:

is that how you feel? Like you are living in a DEMOcracy?

FEMALE

I want to decide what is sensible

Superior Man

Sure, well sure, what do you think it is?

FEMALE

I want to get rid of the fluorescent lights in the office. Fluorescent lights can cause diseases such as systemic lupus to flare up. Common fluorescent lights, those with the long, white tubes? They have magnetic ballasts that flicker. This flickering can trigger epilepsy, chronic fatigue syndrome, and vertigo. Fluorescent lighting deepens depression, causing depersonalization, de-realization, detachment, and a feeling of floating; as if the brain has been loosened from its stem like a hot flower, and is floating up...I

want them turned off, turned OFF I say!

Superior Man:

calmly

How will you see if you turn off the fluorescent lights? No, I don't think that's sensible at all

LEDA

A brief history of authority in the workplace

FEMALE

Well, could I get a desk lamp?

LEDA

Patterns of authority are culture.

Superior Man:

No, I don't think so, if you got a desk lamp, everyone would want one.

FEMALE

I would buy it with my own money

LEDA

Until the late 1950's, it was perfectly acceptable for a supervisor to strike an employee, especially in a manufacturing environment. These days, the man or woman in charge has to be a lot more intelligent, and find ways of exerting authority without crossing the line. Make sure you assert your authority, and that it comes in between you and the employee. Distract, Exact, Isolate, Gravitate, Negate. Remember that, it spells DEIGN, as in, you will not DEIGN to speak to them about their personal lives or feelings.

Superior Man

No, I said no Jeanne, and that's it.

(he exits out of the frame)

LEDA

(she begins to become a teensy weensy bit hysterical)

Tactics.

One: The Three-Legged Race, alternatively referred to as the "gladiator" tactic. You can use this to avoid giving one person new authority, which would compel that person to ask for a raise, or to get a big head. Some of the more cynical among us use it to sabotage projects or even careers, which is necessary sometimes, as we all know.

(music)

Did you think time belonged to you

Don't believe that stuff

You act like a fool

I'll call your bluff

LEDA

How does it work? Well, you, like a father or mother, probably know your employees better than anyone else. You know about their past histories, leadership ambiguity, organizational tensions, or contention for the same promotion, even personal conflicts such as sexual relationships. By pairing individuals with past conflicts together, you can assure that the project will not go well, or that one individual will eventually triumph above the other by seizing control. This is also useful if you are considering both for a promotion and don't know who to choose.

(MUSIC)

If you quit your cannery job
You can come and stay in my bed
We'll turn off the light and pretend we're dead

LEDA

Two, Appropriation. In this difficult economic climate especially, it is no crime to exploit the character weaknesses in your employees. They don't deserve to stay afloat in work if they are weak, but you do, because you are smart and capable. To try this tactic, simply take credit for the work of your subordinates. Make sure you understand all the complexities of the work before attempting this. If something is then flawed about the work, you can blame the original author.

MAN:(Herbie)

It's not my fault!

WOMAN:

Let's look at exactly what you did, when you did it, and how you did it step-by-step, and let's look at the results.

LEDA

This is easy if you get in the habit of always using passive, neutral language such as

WOMAN

"this document was created"

LEDA

not "Frank wrote this document" or

WOMAN

"the project was completed ahead of schedule"

LEDA

then, when certain errors come to light

WOMAN

"it was originally unclear that frank had not followed necessary procedures."

LEDA

Trust me, I have gotten promoted many times in light of the hard work of others, and I am not ashamed to admit it!

MAN: (NewActor)

It's not fair!

LEDA:

Let's talk about why you think that, and what you think WOULD be fair, and why that would be fair. Go ahead.

LEDA

The other side of this coin is making sure that those you are appropriating from look bad, make sure to leave work after they depart and arrive before they do. Make sure that your desk or other kind of workstation is cleaner and that you always appear to be harder at work.

ALL

Be an example of what is wanted:
you are the only thing you can change

LEDA

Type loudly, sigh every now and then, and smile bravely when asked to do something, making it clear that you are overwhelmed but happy to be of assistance. However, do not complain about working! Should your rival complain, loudly admonish him or her for doing so. The rest of these subtler getting-ahead tactics should be obvious. Common Sense!

WOMAN and MAN

you are what you do

LEDA

Three, many compare workplace tactical systems to a game. They are not a game! This is actually tactic three, make sure these tactical systems do not turn into a game. Real games have rules, make sure your tactics are unpredictable and shift constantly and that there are no markers for success or failure. Never confirm completion of a project or who will do what for a project. Make your expectations hazy, and always act like they were higher than the results. Real games have durations, make sure the deadlines you set are ambiguous, say "soon" or "as soon as you get a chance" so that they work as quickly as possible and lose their ability to prioritize their own time, this is YOUR job, you want them to drop whatever they are doing to help you, if need be. Real games have impartial judges, make sure there aren't any. Try to involve everyone in your current and tides, make sure no-one is above competing for your attention and respect. Likewise, in games there are spectators and teams. You don't want either of these groups to form. Everyone plays, everyone loses. And most importantly, each individual is only out for him or herself.

WOMAN

You're picking on me

LEDA:

You're right, I'm so glad you noticed. Let me tell you exactly why I am picking on you and what you can change to make sure I don't have to pick on you.

Remember, insubordination is one of the things you can fire someone for.

Who should be developed? Who should be fired?

VOICEOVER (Ben)

The body tries at all times to maintain homeostasis, or an equilibrium of chemicals.

AMANDA

When did I realize I was really bad at working? Very recently.

BEN

Under stress however, inflammations are activated by the abundant release of hormones and chemicals meant to regulate the body's circulatory and nervous systems when they are influenced by anxiety, pain, fear, or other emotions.

MAN: (NewActor)

When did I realize that I am not the kind of person who...?

BEN

The failure of adaptive systems to fix these inflammations, failure which happens more and more frequently if the pattern continues, affects the well-being of the individual, including behavioral parameters, quality of life and sleep, as well as symptoms of metabolic and cardiovascular health. If stress is not relieved, this pattern can develop into a "systemic anti-inflammatory feedback" and/or "hyperactivity" of the local pro-inflammatory factors which may contribute to the pathogenesis of disease.

AMANDA:

I want to work!

I just can't get enthusiastic about it anymore. I just don't *care*.

BEN

This systemic or neuro-inflammation and neuroimmune activation have been shown to play a role in the etiology of a variety of neurodegenerative disorders such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, chronic pain, and dementia.

MAN: (Herbie)

I'm not the kind of person who...fails, or doesn't pull his weight...Hell I'm a libertarian, I don't even think Medicare is a good idea.

BEN

Moreover, adaptive chemicals also modulate central nervous system function in the absence of overt immunological, physiological, or psychological challenges. Therefore, individuals subjected to constant, even low-level stress often exhibit signs of insanity such as delusion, severe depression and disassociation, and chronic inability to distinguish reality from the mind's theater.

AMANDA

This seminar deals with the middle and upper class. It deals with young middle and upper class Americans and their safe, boring, office jobs. I hate young middle class Americans. (*yells*) you and your white teeth! I want out. (*she exits*) (*yells*) consider this my two week notice and I'm taking my paid vacation time for those two weeks!

DR. HACKLE

One major complaint that I receive from working people today is that their intellectual and creative capacities are not being fully utilized. Part of this, I know, stems from recent popular books on creativity in the workplace, the right-brained revolution, etcetera. But what is creativity? And are thoughts and ideas really going to make you happier at work? Won't it just make you more frustrated? Employees, Try to relax. Try to detach. Let yourself be manipulated. Go with the flow.

MUSIC

Hush it's just class warfare
Hush it's just supplements
There's a scientific reason
for the climate and the season
Hush this doesn't apply to you
Hush this isn't a part of you

Interviews

LEDA

And leaders, give your employees the Lack of a Need to make creative decisions or think quickly. In a lightened environment, all decisions and thoughts come directly from superiors and are based on precedents, protocol, and policies. PPP! Write that down!

TEXT ONSCREEN:

Percentage people say they spend actually working at work: 30%. Although most polled were those in office jobs, averages amongst individuals who work a labor intensive job combined with those who work at home or less labor intensive jobs allow the statistic to hover around 30%.

HERBIE:

But what is "actually working"? For example, this play was written almost entirely while at work, one sentence at a time.

ETHAN: *(Michael D-H)*

People who work are fucking idiots. They're completely brain dead, bleached, broken, and useless. I mean the people who work full time. Full time workers are fucking idiots. I know they are, I don't know a single person who works full time that is making a real contribution to society. I don't consider working full time a contribution to society, it's a capitalism-driven lifestyle that allows an individual to relinquish all responsibility and surrender to the rhythmic authority of the private market. You say you're tired, that you don't have the energy to do anything but go to work and then come home and watch TV and go to bed. You say you can't afford not to work, you've got bills to pay. *(softly)* are you kidding me? Does someone have a gun to your head? What will happen if you don't pay those bills? They take your house away? They take your kids away? Good, because then you'll have the time and freedom to do something. After a while though, you will be ruined. Your mind will be soft, your body weakened and twisted around the repetitive tasks that punctuate your existence. You will be like the idiots complaining on television about the price of gas. It will be too late for you, you will drown in your own self, your own life, unable to see out of it. Eventually, you will stop reading the newspaper. You will forget to care. Your work will eat you alive.

Don't like your job? Quit.

Success= euphoria

Don't waste your fucking time, it's all you have.

Time is money? What a fucking joke, time is worth way more than money. It's taken hundreds of years to convince people they want to waste their lives trying to get money.

spot on a gentleman with a clean shaven face. Behind him, a young woman with a ponytail empties trash cans and replaces the bags. The lights are dim.
Outside, *the sirens of evening in a mid-sized city. A snatch of music from a passing car, early summer. The woman multiplies, she pauses and lights a cigarette. All of her leans left.*

A mash of sound, the floodgates open, a yawn, a crunch, noise. From underneath, sung pre-recorded in a monotone baritone Welcome to the satisfied, you ride horses, you carry hatchets, you take taxis, you don't pay taxes, you win races, you recognize faces... (fax machine, a snatch of bells in the air

ALL AT ONCE *(layered): Can I speak with you for a minute? Can I speak with you for a minute? (the polygamous all-in-one office symphony)*

LEDA

There's no such thing as a binding contract

MAN:

I want....I want...

MANH (NewActor)

I don't HATE my job...I don't love it either...I shouldn't complain, it's just not what I thought I would do with my life. Not everyone can own a wine and cheese shop, or be an astronaut, or an artist...

I don't have any aspirations to move up the class ladder, I just want to survive. If I got too much money I would have to share it with my relatives. And they don't deserve it. I would be dirt poor again in a heartbeat.

Interview, Scheherazade, I like my job

CHORUS (Onscreen)

So I've been told.

LEDA

Hi hi hi hi, sorry I'm late *(her arms are full of papers)*

I, I the paper got stuck in the printer, and then my hair got stuck, I think about half of it, and then a car ran over my foot...it's just one of those days!

So, what we're going to do today is super fun, a career test!

(yay)

(she hands out the tests)

First question:

(AUDIENCE takes the test)

LEDA

My, none of you are really suited for any particular job...

VOICEOVER

I cry everyday

why did I have to live past 20

and join the race

when I could just be sitting there, pulling up grass and tossing it in the wind all evening

(she squints into the audience)

(lights dim)

END

music

The People come and go in waves
They are the souls that no-one saves
A moment here, an hour there
The grind applies to all, it's fair

The people come and go in waves
The last row comes the next one leaves
An undertow pulls at their sleeves
Cold water turns their hands to cheese