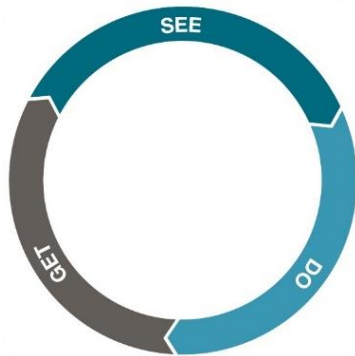
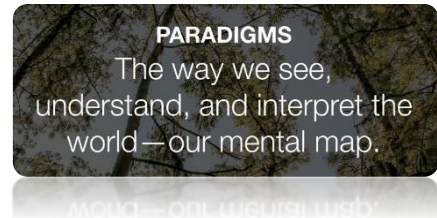


The Power of Paradigms

By David Kegel

So much of what we do in our personal and work lives is a result of our paradigms, or the mental models we hold. And what we do, in turn affects the results we get.



Stephen Covey coined this as the **See-Do-Get cycle**: What we **See** (our paradigms), determine what we **Do** (our actions, behaviors), which in turn determine what we **Get** (our results). Unless we stand apart from, and examine our paradigms, we might never see that many of them are distorted, short-sighted, or just flat out wrong.

Covey put it this way: *“We think we see the world as it is, when in fact we see the world as we are.”* We see everything through the perspective of our own paradigms. Once you see things as they really are, you’ll think, feel, and act differently.

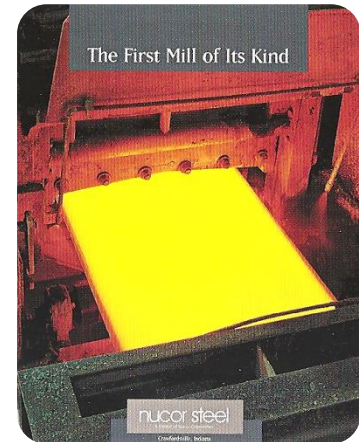
A great example of this is a contrast between Nucor and Bethlehem Steel. In 1988 Nucor announced it was going to build its first sheet mill in an Indiana cornfield using a revolutionary new continuous thin slab process. This new process would bypass the need for very expensive machinery and labor cost used in conventional steel making.

Let’s compare Paradigms (See). Nucor’s was *“we have the confidence that we know we can make it work!”*, per Ken Iverson. Bethlehem’s paradigm was *“That mill will never succeed, and it will bring down Nucor with it”*, per a Bethlehem general manager.



Paradigms determine Actions (Do). Nucor’s action was to purchase equipment and begin construction of the industry’s first commercial thin slab process sheet mill in Crawfordsville, IN, along with fighting through the challenges and setbacks that come with trying something brand new. Bethlehem’s action was to make fun of Nucor, and even commission their engineers to write a report for their executives on why Nucor’s experiment was going to fail.

Actions in turn determine Results (Get). The Indiana sheet mill was a tremendous success, leading to the addition of Nucor sheet mills using the same process in Arkansas, South Carolina, Alabama, Kentucky and the recently announced 6th sheet mill to be built in the Appalachia region. The results for Bethlehem were catastrophic. The cost advantage Nucor gained from this innovation left Bethlehem uncompetitive and eventually led to their bankruptcy and the sad end of Bethlehem Steel.



Oh, the power of your paradigms!

Let's make it a bit more personal. If you have the paradigm of "I work best under pressure", what behaviors will that lead you to do, and what results will you get?

If you have the paradigm of, "this Builder is a pain in the ass", what actions will that lead you to, and what results will you likely get?

If you have the paradigm of, "our division will never get our quality costs in-line", what behaviors will that likely lead to, and in turn what results will you likely get?



Here we are the beginning of a fresh, new year. A time when many are thinking about resolutions, changes, refocusing and resetting our goals.

Are you happy with the results you're getting?

If you're like me, the answer in some cases is yes. But in other areas, unfortunately the answer is no! For many of us, if we're not getting the results we want, we'll simply try doing something different. A tweak, if you will. And if you're just looking for a

minor change in results that may well work. But what if it's not just a tweak that's needed?

How about instead, take a step back and challenge your paradigms. Ask yourself the question Bethlehem never had the courage to ask. Ask yourself: **Am I seeing this correctly?** Is my paradigm, right?

If you want to make minor changes in your life, just work on your behavior (Do). But **if you want to make significant, quantum breakthroughs, work on your paradigms** (See).

This See-Do-Get cycle is one of the many valuable learnings you'll take away from our 7 Habits of Highly Effective People training. If you're interested in taking the next step in your personal development, please give us a shout.

