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A lot goes on in organizations. Sometimes you're aware of it and other times you miss it. There are undercurrents (hidden agendas) in actions by leaders, managers, workers, and associates. It is important for you to pay attention to them because some people's motivations are intended to deceive you or to get out of something. It may have an impact or no impact on you or the organization at all, but you should be aware nonetheless.

I once supervised someone who asked for permission to take a college class during a portion of a day each week. I noticed there was a direct correlation between the day the person took their college class and the day I designated as administrative day--the day to complete reports and file paperwork. Initially I thought this person wanted to actually

## Are you aware of the undercurrents in your organization?

go to college but eventually found out they were avoiding administrative day.

I also knew a leader who told us he wanted to improve customer relations and that we should all take a course on learning how to smile. Some people took this to heart and signed up for customer relations courses, but in reality, the boss was going through the motions associated with managerial appraisal time. It was a fad at that time for leaders to emphasize customer satisfaction in mission objectives. He didn't really care whether we smiled or not.

If you're a leader, supervisor, or team leader, I recommend you question, directly or indirectly, the motives of everyone and everything. This doesn't mean you should be paranoid, but you must be watching out for hidden agendas. Even if it doesn't affect you in any way, it still can be humorous to spot what is really going on.

Don't be afraid to ask people why they want to do something. Don't hesitate to chat with someone for a few minutes about a business trip they're asking for permission to go on. Find out the reasons someone wants flex hours or two-hour lunches. Try your best to answer the following questions:

- \* Why is this happening?
- \* Is there anything I am missing?
- \* Who benefits from this?
- \* How are they benefiting?
- \* What else could be going on?
- \* Can I benefit from this?
- \* How?

At the end of the day, you should know why people want to do something different or deviate from something routine. Knowing the hidden agendas (undercurrents) in your organization can better equip you to make decisions to enhance morale.

~ The End ~