# Vectors of Influence

written by CD | JANUARY 26, 2020

Vectors of Influence come from all sides in a changing world and tension easily arises that hinder effective Human Transformation. Challenges arise leading teams through uncertainty and change of Digital Transformation. However, to arrive at good solutions, there is a lot of value in fostering discussions based on conflicting perspectives.

These interactions can play out to benefit everyone or to create rifts if emotions enter. In reducing conflict, it helps to appreciate the same interaction with the same person can go differently on different days.
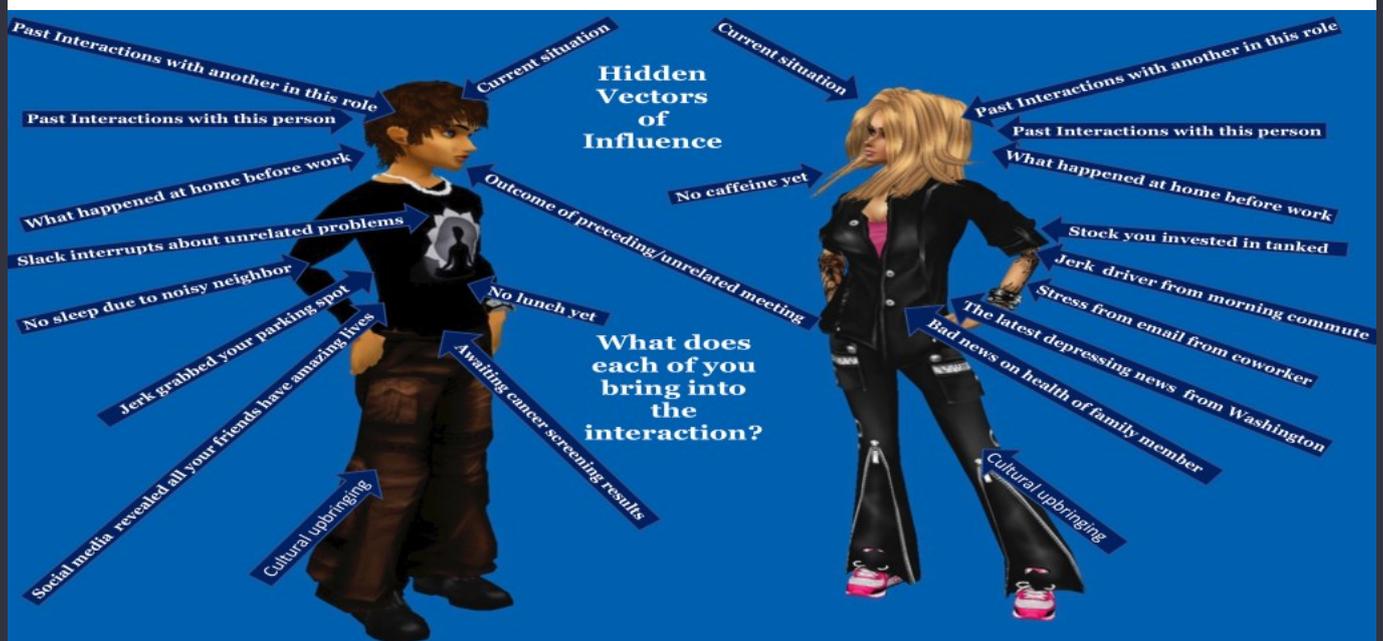
In taking a class on classroom management for my teaching credential, I remember hearing lots of questions on about what do I do in situation x, y or z. Life had taught me that every situation is different and hence deserves a different approach. The same teacher and the same student in the same situation on two different days can unfold very differently based many things that may have preceded that encounter. It took me back to my physics roots on the influence of various forces that can contribute to any collision. Hence, I came up with an image like the one I created above.

None of us Immune to the Vectors of Influence

None of us are immune to the influences of experiences throughout our lives or even in the course of a single day. We bring those experiences into any interaction as do those that interact with us.

This is why in person interactions for important or contentious interactions are so much better. They enable you to gauge mood and how things are going and to leverage cues and your intuition on whether it's better to adjust your approach. Still, there may be hidden vectors of influence.

This is also why first impressions matter so much. All the following interactions with this other person will be grounded in the first interactions. As such, it's worth the investment to consciously prepare for and respond during the first interaction.

While you typically can't change what the other person brings to the interaction (other than previous positive interactions to build upon), you can have an influence on where you start. This is why it's good to start your day on the right foot. For example a hug from one or more of your family members in the morning and knowing one awaits you when you return home can help start your day in a better place. One thing I do is timing a walk up 11 flights of stairs to the office in the morning (instead of taking the elevator). This helps start with a sense of accomplishment. Another suggestion to make your bed each morning (see video speech on that below).

Vectors of Influence on Horses
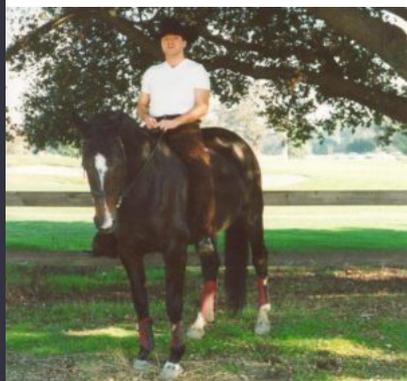
Having had my own horse and learning about horse whispering also provided a great deal of insight into how many very subtle influences impact a horse's demeanor. It starts with understanding the implications of them being both flight and herd animals. They once roamed the wild wary of predators. It helps to know how much they queue off of your fear, nervousness/calm as well as your body posture. Knowing this allowed me to move a horse around an arena with changes in posture and look. With time you discover they change direction and speed, simply queued off of subtle, non-verbal gestures. It offered me another perspective for interactions of all types.

When taking a class on the various theories of psychology, the professor started by having us learn about the childhood of the psychologists. Knowing what shaped their personalities proved to be invaluable in understanding some of the origins of their theories.

John Boyd's OODA Loop and theory behind it also digs into having a full understanding of all vectors of influence. It was born out of his experience as a fighter pilot, but's it's applicable in a very generic sense.

John Boyd's OODA Loop
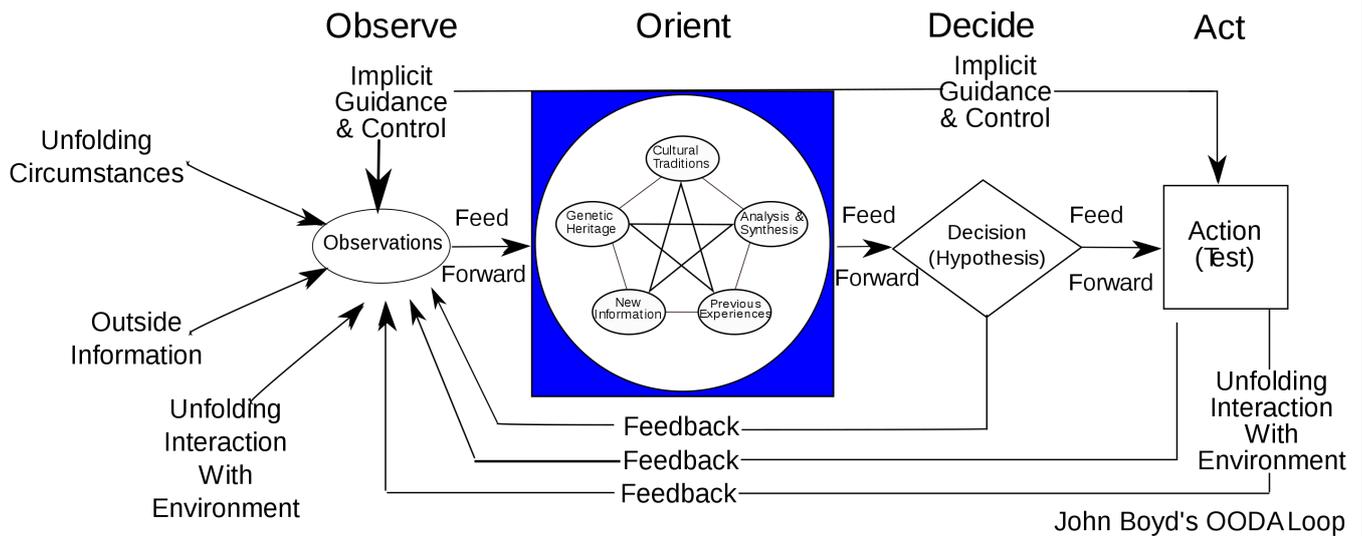
The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People & the 8th Habit

Steven Covey provides a great example of how differently we can perceive things if we know what happened in someone's day before we encounter then (and conversely how little when we don't)….

> *"I remember a mini-paradigm shift I experienced one Sunday morning on a subway in New York. People were sitting quietly — some reading newspapers, some lost in thought, some resting with their eyes closed. It was a calm, peaceful scene.*

Then suddenly, a man and his children entered the subway car. The children were so loud and rambunctious that instantly the whole climate changed.

The man sat down next to me and closed his eyes, apparently oblivious to the situation. The children were yelling back and forth, throwing things, even grabbing people's papers. It was very disturbing. And yet, the man sitting next to me did nothing.

It was difficult not to feel irritated. I could not believe that he could be so insensitive as to let his children run wild like that and do nothing about it, taking no responsibility at all. It was easy to see that everyone else on the subway felt irritated, too. So finally, with what I felt like was unusual patience and restraint, I turned to him and said, "Sir, your children are really disturbing a lot of people. I wonder if you couldn't control them a little more?"

The man lifted his gaze as if to come to a consciousness of the situation for the first time and said softly, "Oh, you're right. I guess I should do something about it. We just came from the hospital where their mother died about an hour ago. I don't know what do think, and I guess they don't know who to handle it either."

See Also:

- Robert Coram — *Boyd — The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War*
- Sun Tzu's — *The Art of War*
- Stephen R. Covey — *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People & the 8th Habit*
- Wyatt Webb — *It's Not About the Horse*
- Wikipedia: *John Boyd's Observation-Orientation-Decision-Action Loop (OODA)*
- Simon Sinek's *talk on Empathy and Perspective*