

The ETP Network Paradigm Climb

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November 11, 2007



At a pivotal moment in the 1975 movie "The Eiger Sanction", mountain-climber Jonathan Hemlock (Clint Eastwood) starts his team's descent from the north face of the Eiger – one of the most punishing peaks in the Swiss Alps even for the most seasoned mountaineer. He is roped together with three other men when one of them slips and drags the team over a sheer precipice, leaving a dazed Hemlock tangled in his top-rope, suspended in mid-air some 9,000 feet above the valley floor. The rope, already frayed and now snagged on an outcropping of jagged rock thousands of feet higher, has caused him to go into a body-pounding "pendulum swing" against the rock wall. Worse, the sudden, downward jolts will snap the line at any moment from the accumulated strain.

Just a few feet below, the expedition's ground man, Ben Bowman, is positioned to pull his friend to safety through the cut-out of an old railway tunnel and throws an emergency rope through the tunnel entrance instructing him to "clip himself in." Bowman then orders him to do the one thing that will save his life: "Jon, listen to me. I want you to cut the rope above you." Hemlock will survive, but only if he can summon the courage to do the unthinkable: cut the rope above him.

This amazing scene from *The Eiger Sanction* is one of many movie clips that get dissected in corporate seminars dealing with change management when the discussion turns to paradigms, paradigm shifts, and the ways in which business trends often require us to learn, assimilate, and accept sweeping change in order to help organizations remain competitive and economically viable.

Only a tiny percentage of us ever confront life-or-death paradigm shifts of the magnitude faced by Jonathan Hemlock on the north face of the Eiger, yet it's fascinating – not to mention highly instructive – to ponder what must have gone through his mind when the only available option for survival turned out to be something so completely counterintuitive.

As business professionals, the paradigms we tend to encounter are typically rooted in ideas for new business models or, as it relates to the ETP Network, ideas for improved networking and career management. Not surprisingly, they are also acquired over much longer spans of time. But just because business paradigms don't typically have the hyper-compressed timeframe and glamour of a special-effects alpine climbing accident, don't be fooled into thinking that the mechanics driving the changes are any less important to understand. The ability to grasp the process by which paradigms are transferred and assimilated is the actual key to unlocking the power within the paradigm that will produce positive results for you, whether you're suspended on a rope in the Swiss Alps or forging new business connections on *LinkedIn*.

Learning From the Failures of the Past

No worthwhile treatment of the ETP Network Paradigm could begin without first examining why the ETP Network came into being in the first place. As founder Rod Colon discovered, people in transition were placing a great deal of faith and trust in a nebulous maze of job agencies, headhunters, and internet job boards that seemed to function, for all practical purposes, like some immense "black hole." Job seekers reported that their results from this black hole were dismal at best, with many citing numerous instances in which even the common courtesy of providing follow-up with applicants was nonexistent. The question that remained was why? What was missing from the "black hole" that kept it such a singularly lackluster neighborhood in which to scout for job opportunities?

As Rod dug deeper, he realized that the "black hole" remained ineffective because it precluded the possibility for normal human interaction, especially the critical precursors for all meaningful relationships: communication, trust, mutual respect, and reciprocity. Most networking experts agree that those who live and work in this "Unknown Network" do so with no logical need for getting to know a job applicant beyond the data supplied on the application form itself. The WIIFM principle (i.e., "What's In It For Me?") clearly shows a "zero dividend" for investing time in the formation of relationships when placement of a body in an available position is really the only practical goal.

Clearly, there had to be a better way. As Rod discussed the situation with friends and family members, he started laying the groundwork for a new approach to job searching, an approach based on the building of a strong network of trusted friends and associates. As with most other large-scale projects, it took time to get the program started; now, however, the ETP Network flourishes with over 1,800 active members and a rapidly growing base of corporate partners. It's fair to say that the ETP Network has filled an enormous gap for those in transition since members now have a small army of associates who know them, trust them, and are willing to help them make connections in any way possible.

How then do we account for the "magic" of the ETP Network? The magic lies in its paradigm, and the paradigm is offered freely to anyone who wishes to learn and adopt it.

The ETP Network Paradigm

What follows are the principal components of the ETP Network Paradigm. Bear in mind that the paradigm itself is the aggregate of these points, not just any one point in isolation.

Point 1:

Each ETP Network member is the CEO of ME, Inc. If you adopt this mode of thought and regard yourself in precisely the way a corporate CEO regards his or her position, this then empowers you to exercise full control over the course and direction of your "business." You call the shots and make all key business decisions because the success of your business depends on it. You also assume all of the risk associated with those decisions.

A critical component of being the CEO of ME, Inc. is the ability to be intimately familiar with your products and services along with an

exceptionally insightful analysis of the current market's demand for those products and services.

Note that this perception of one's role in the career management model is in stark contrast to what most of us were brought up to believe, i.e., that others controlled our destinies and we were somehow obliged to seek our fortunes using only their rules of engagement.

Point 2:

Each ETP Network member must stake out territory in what's known as the Warm/Trusted Network. This means that everyone needs to spend significant amounts of time building relationships, planting the seeds of trust and reciprocity, and then carefully nurturing those relationships over time. Only in this way do you not only ensure your own niche within the W/TN, but come to be viewed as both a valued and reliable link in the multidimensional chain.

Point 3:

Establishing meaningful and long-lasting connections with others is all about mastering the recognition of "Wants/Needs/Desires" (W/N/D) in those you meet. Your ability to perceive and then act in response to someone's W/N/D establishes the basis for a solid connection and the potential for a long-term relationship. But the best part is this: Helping someone attain their W/N/D pays amazing reciprocity dividends for your own W/N/D.

Point 4:

ETP Network members need to make decisions based on sound business reasons, not emotions. Having a business ownership attitude and philosophy makes it easier for you to build your team. Networking is part of your R & D (Research & Development) effort, NOT Sales & Marketing. Be sure you know the difference between networking and selling and precisely when each needs to be performed.

The Paradigm Climb

Knowing the paradigm is one thing, but understanding how it's transferred, assimilated and adopted gives you the best chance to actually "form" the new (and occasionally awkward) behaviors in your own personal behavior profile. The reason for this is simple: Actions speak louder than words. Behaviors are more powerful than speeches. Using a system of powerful principles to advance one's personal or professional growth is unquestionably more pragmatic than simply reading or discussing them.

Let's now examine the mechanics of the ETP Network Paradigm Climb in order to discover how these new networking concepts are actually transferred to ETP Network members. This is an awareness exercise, and succeeds as long as you commit to acknowledging each step as a link in a chain.

Step 1: Articulation

Paradigms don't just appear out of the woodwork; they usually have champions or sponsors who are enthusiastic about spreading the word and articulating the core message of the paradigm in an attempt to raise awareness. Think Paul Revere but without galloping around town on a horse.

Who's got the job of articulating the ETP Network paradigm? At this point in the ETP Network's evolution, the responsibility falls squarely on the shoulders of its founder, Rod Colon. With respect to the paradigm training, think of Rod as your "ground man" on a mountain climbing expedition. The ground man is the leader of the expedition and is charged with setting up "base camp" at the foot of the mountain so that all members of the team begin the serious climbing armed with the knowledge, skills, and resources to reach the summit safely.

Step 2: Assimilation

At this point in the climb, interested ETP Network members begin the process of opening their minds to Rod's new and different way of networking. It is here that the actual "instructional phase" of the paradigm takes place. Rod presents the core messages, listeners pick them apart, occasionally lobbing them back and forth for discussion. Spirited Q & A, anecdote-sharing, and situational analysis go a long way toward demonstrating that a trust-based relationship model of professional interaction is clearly superior to the continual logjams swirling around in the dysfunctional, uncharted backwaters of the Unknown Network or "black hole."

When and where does this take place? There are numerous occasions and venues, among them: the "Daily Conference Calls with Rod Colon" (now scheduled as once per week, Monday evenings at 9 pm), the ETP Network web site, the ETP Network Yahoo Group (etpnews), Rod's multiple speaking engagements all over the country and worldwide, and some new and exciting programs planned for 2008 all serve as platforms for broadcasting the ETP Network message.

Step 3: Acceptance

Once the paradigm is successfully transferred, members eventually reach a point at which they either accept or reject the new model of networking. It normally takes time to test out one's comfort zone with any new type of behavior, so it's unrealistic to expect that someone who appears to understand the paradigm automatically and irrevocably becomes a true believer or "convert."

Acceptance takes time, too, because various tools and routines require some ramp-up. Being a member of LinkedIn, for example, does not guarantee that it will become immediately productive for you. But using LinkedIn with the recognition of who your Level 1s, 2s, and 3s are, along with the knowledge of when to use them and for what specific purpose, makes all the difference in the world.

During the recently completed "Daily Conference Calls With Rod Colon", there were some amusing and highly gratifying examples of acceptance in which a member described his or her experiences in the increasingly comfortable environment of the Warm/Trusted Network. We heard, for example, of people "seeing the light" for the first time, or having one of those unforgettable "Aha Moments" in which someone experienced the awesome fusion of principle, procedure, and strategy. It was evident in the anecdotes they shared and in the spirited way their voices suddenly changed from flat narrative into gushing effusion. They were finally getting it!! They were capturing the full breadth of a near-cosmic ETP Network Inner Mind Experience!! They had become believers!!

Step 4: Rejection of the Old Paradigm

There is one final aspect to a full and permanent shift in thinking: There needs to be, at this point, a wholesale rejection of the old methodologies, a new recognition of just how useless and futile they really were. This acknowledgement, whether expressed openly or in quiet introspection, represents the point at which a member actually "cuts the rope" on what's been familiar, traditional, and comfortable.

In Conclusion

You can tell if you've conquered the ETP Network Paradigm Climb: Just ask yourself if you are fully and comfortably engaged in all of its tenets and principles. Those who internalize the paradigm and actually modify their behavior to perform all of the new routines without having to think about them have come the farthest. Their new networking habits, taken as a whole, represent a kind of outer victory over an inner, lingering, and until now, greatly underestimated enemy.

Yes, when it comes to networking, there are indeed many options. You can take some substantial risks and prosper - even as you unconsciously tell yourself it can't possibly work - or you can keep yourself tied to an antiquated system that's proven its ineffectiveness over and over again and risk plunging back into the black hole of the Unknown Network.

If you believe you've actually made the mental adjustment suggested by the ETP Network Paradigm, then you've just made the ETP Network Paradigm Climb.

Which means it's time to take the final step: Cut the rope.

The Eiger Sanction, © 1975 Universal Studios, Universal City, CA

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