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Lesson 9: "3 Degrees"
3/26/2007

Class Summary:

This class was one of the most interesting to date. I began the presentation segment of the lecture with my article on Northern Ireland power-sharing. After the rest of the speeches, a discussion began on motivations in the workplace. Most people agreed that compensation, personal satisfaction, project diversity, and the work environment are the most important motivational factors. The class closed with a game called "3 Degrees," where we were unknowingly manipulated by the TA to form three economic classes and measure how motivation levels differed for each.

Response:

The game was particularly frustrating being in the middle class bracket, but after the second round I became suspicious that the TA was not picking the "degrees" at random. Basically the exercise illustrated how power corrupts, and how good people who become empowered most often change their ways to ensure that they don't lose it. When the instructor from the other section came in and talked about the game, it really hit home with respect to the national and global crisis of the growing gap between the rich and the disenfranchised.

Analysis:

I've thought about this issue frequently and I still don't see how the situation can be avoided without resorting to some measures of socialism, most notably healthcare and education programs. Throughout history there have always been oppressed groups of people within a given society- unfortunately it just seems to be another aspect of the human condition. Honestly the only way to close the gap is to change the global perspective on what it means to be a community, but that level of evolutionary thought isn't going to happen for a while. Thus, in the meantime we need to remember that empires crumble when its people realize they are not receiving the privileges they deserve. Canada has socialized healthcare; there's no reason the United States can't do the same.

Sound-bite:

"Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."- Lord Acton