



Every Contact Leaves a Trace: The Trace of Interactions

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The theme of this conference is "Every Contact Leaves a Trace". We all know that even the "best" criminals leave at least one trace. Sometimes we do not have the ability to examine that trace, but then our technology get more and more developed and traces found long ago can be examined and thereby help us solve old cases. Looking for trace is natural when it comes to policing. We believe in and always look for a trace.

In the afternoon on the 10th of August last year (2017) a submarine left a harbor in Copenhagen. Onboard were a Swedish journalist and the captain who was the builder of the submarine. On the 21st of August the torso of the journalist was washed ashore and found. Through the help of Swedish police dogs, a Danish research vessel focusing on currents, and divers the rest of the body, wrapped in plastic and with weights to hold it down, was found. One arm and one leg at the time. According to friends this submarine captain once has said he knows how to do the perfect murder. The submarine captain was later accused and convicted of murder, assault and sexual assault. The thing is that this submarine captain did go to a great length to make sure that the body would never be found. That there would be no traces. But there always is. However well one try to cover them.

My name is Ann-Christine Andersson Arntén. I am a doctor in psychology. And I am employed at the assessment function within the Swedish Police. My focus area is organization and leadership development.

The interesting thing is that just as criminals leave traces we all leave a trace when we interact with others. Even if we try to mask our inner thoughts they will always in one way or another come to surface through our behavior [1,2].

Churchill once said that: "Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference".

And that is so true. Our attitudes towards others and situations will always be mirrored in our behavior. Even if we try hard, just as hard as the submarine captain did, to cover our inner thoughts.

As a person we interact with others all the time. We interact with the people we meet on the street, the cashier at the store where we buy our groceries, workmates, bosses, friends, relatives, partners, and children. Some of us have occupations that are more based on interactions with others, teachers, doctors, police officers and leaders for example. It is important to understand that the interactions we make within our special occupations are leaving traces on the people we interact with and in the society.

There are factors such as trust and respect that form behavior and enhance the outcome of interactions between people.

When we trust someone we believe that this person will not hurt us even if they got a chance to do so. Moreover, trust is believed to be associated with how people represent themselves. In the same way the context and mind-set will affect how you will trust someone. But trust is also highly associated with predictability. And therefore the degree of trust between police officers and citizens is based on earlier interactions between the two parts.

The other factor that will form ones behaviour and therefore have an impact on relations between officers and citizens is respect. Respect can also be seen as a base ingredient for building trust. Except for representing a very important element in our relations to others it is also a factor that affects the creation of a just society. The presence or absence of respect largely determines how we relate to one another, to society at large and how we adhere to rules and social power. Research has shown that if you are treated in a respectful way by authority you will increase your commitment and willingness to comply with rules. So if police officers treat citizens with respect it might result in more adherence to rules and acceptance of the social power that is associated with the police as an occupation.

The ultimate goal is of course to create a state of mutual respect. But this unfortunately is not always the case when it comes to interactions between the police and the public. Therefore the responsibility for practicing respect has to be placed on the representatives of law enforcement. The philosophy of unconditional respect dictates that those in authority (the police) should demonstrate respect for others independent of actions on the part of the public. Unconditional respect focus on the respect of each person as regard to their humanity.

We know from research that the interaction between doctors and their patients influences the outcome of the treatment. So the degree of trust built between the doctor and the patient predicts both objective outcome and self-rated physical-health variables.

I argue that the same goes for policing. Effective policing is not just about what is done. It is not just about practicing work-methods that have been proven to be effective. Effective policing is also about how policing is executed.

Sir Robert Peel who was a British politician, prime minister, and the Home Secretary that established the Metropolitan Police Force 1829. He dictated in his "Nine Principles" that the ultimate mission of policing is to build high trust relationships instead of drawing lines of distinction between police and public. But unfortunately there has in the past all too often been made deviations from these principles. On the other hand there are now more and more often said that the police now have reached a crossroad where we have to decide if we are to find our way back to being guardians, as stated in Sir Peels early principles, or stay in the shape of warriors. When we do that choice we have to acknowledge that there always are casualties in wars. Casualties on both sides! We see them in police shooting or maltreatment of citizens as well as we see citizens attacking and shooting police officers when they in the line of duty are doing their job. We have to make a decision on what path to choose.

There are police departments and police academies that already have chosen the path towards guardians. For example we have the work of Chief of Police Mac Tristan in Coppell Police department, and we have the work of Major Chip Huth and the 1910 Squad in Kansas City, Missouri Police Department. Both of them are clear examples of how leadership and the interaction with the public will reflect the outcome of policing. Another example is the work of Blue Courage that in their program is aiming to help police officers and departments to choose the path towards a guardian approach. In this model officers are taught the importance of relations and

interactions. How to act and how this is affecting others, police-officers and the society.

Major Huth advocates the importance of 'unconditional respect' when it comes to policing. He has led the implementation of "unconditional respect" in the 1910 Squad, Kansas City. The effects of this approach have been shown to have many positive effects such as a 100% elimination of community complaints and a three-fold increase in productivity of guns and drugs taken off the streets in the area. Moreover collaboration with citizens have emerged, through which the police obtains more tips from citizens, there is better information sharing, and joint problem-solving. All together this leads to more effective and safer policing.

Unfortunately respect and trust is too often mistaken as being soft on crimes. On the contrary - I would say. Showing respect and building trust is based on building relations and that has nothing to do with being soft on crimes. In the day to day work there need to be an ongoing balance between setting boundaries and building relations. You cannot do one without doing the other. It is about effective policing and Sir Robert Peel acknowledged this in his nine principles.

As trust is built on the previous interactions every meeting is important for building long-term trust. But unfortunately it is not just the interaction you as an individual have with others that will build trust. As a police officer, you are measured from how other representatives of the organization acts. It is therefore utterly important that the protocol of behaviour is discussed and put on display. And here is where leadership makes a difference.

One has heard an expression that said "As in office as in street". Meaning how you are treated by your leaders will guide you how to treat the public. Chief Tristan puts it this way:

IF WE TO OUR EMPLOYEES ADVOCATE A CERTAIN BEHAVIOR, THEN

- as leaders you should model that behavior.
- if you want people to do the right thing, then emulate the right behavior.

WE MUST LEAD BY EXAMPLE

So if we want effective policing leadership is crucial. We need to find the leaders that can be role models and that will help us reach the standard set by Sir Robert Peel. The change in society is so fast that if we do not have good and close relations with the public we will always be far behind chasing after instead of in the frontline

being proactive and preventing as many crimes as possible. There will always be crimes committed. And we need help to solve them.

When I started my research on leadership and organization within the Swedish Police I needed an instrument that met the quality requirements of research and that were possible to use in other languages than Swedish. Through the University of Gothenburg I got in contact with JobMatch Talent. JobMatch is a certificated instrument and is designed to measure a person's work-related abilities and behavior in relation to the demands of a certain the position.

I know that there are examples of good leadership. Examples of police leaders that actually have made the movement from a reactive hierarchical police leadership to a proactive leadership more in the Peelian style. In the departments of these leaders policing is closer to the public and decisions are made by employees way down in the organization. Mac Tristan is one of them. He has twice managed to change police departments from being hierarchical and reactive with a warrior approach to a proactive guardian approach.

For change to happen we need to recruit leaders that have special qualities. First of all if you want to be a good leader you have to like people. There are a lot of things that you can change with support and help but to learn to trust and like people would need a lot of therapy and there is no time or money for that. So always look for leaders that like people. What does it mean to like people? First of all you have to have trust in others. As a leader you have to trust your employees. I too often hear about the gap and mistrust between police management and police officers. A mistrust that goes both ways and that is devastating not just for the police as an organization but also for the society. So you have to trust your employees for to be able to build an organization that takes advantage of the knowledge and wisdom of everyone within the organization. And above that you have to have a tolerant attitude towards others. You also have to be able to use those skills to create contacts and to communicate your vision. When you model this towards your employees you also in action say that this is what you expect from them in their relation to each other and to the public.

But you cannot live on your love for people to be a good leader or an excellent police officer. You also need to have the courage, will-power and motivation to actually make change happen. The thing is, as every relation leaves a trace and as your inner thoughts and believes leaves a trace in your behaviour, you really have to believe in the need for change within policing. And you have to believe that you as a leader have to model that behaviour for your employees. You have to be persistent, resilient and optimistic that this is possible. Because if you doubt or just act out of politically correctness it will leave traces in your behaviour and you will never succeed.

Moreover, you have to be a person that makes decisions out of what is best for the organization. Not out of what is best for you as a person, your career or your ego! And this is important. Once again, your inner thoughts will leave a trace on your behaviour. Your employees will know if you are sincere or not. If you have good intentions it will show if not that will shine through in what you say and do.

A respectful interaction between police and citizens will lead to a higher level of trust. And as the relation between patient and doctors leads to better health-outcomes and lower mortality trust in the police will lead to more effective policing by increased exchange of information, help with problem-solving and enhanced cooperation and thereby forming a safer community both objectively and subjectively.

When employees are increasingly involved in decision making within the organization it will lead to more effective and flexible policing but also to a better work environment.

Chief of Police Mac Tristan once said. "We work hard to hire the best and brightest. And then we use them as robots. We have to change that! If we want to be effective we need to make the most of everyone's knowledge. We need all our employees to step up and take responsibilities and start to be leaders".

If we want this to happen we need to focus on recruiting the best leaders. Change is tough work it includes a conviction to change, actions, behaviors, relations, time, patience, and courage! Only good relations and the best leaders will make change happen! We have just launched a new website so if you are interested in ways to make policing effective please follow PoliceTalent on facebook, website and our youtube channel.

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