



Episode 180 Mindset Drives Behaviors, Behaviors Drive Results | Arbinger Institute

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Book Reference: [Leadership and Self-Deception](#) by the Arbinger Institute.

Behaviors are driven by mindset.

Before we begin correcting behavior we need to refocus how we see ourselves and others.

What is the story behind *Leadership & Self-Deception* and the overall mission of the Arbinger Institute?

Arbinger's work addresses the issue of **self-deception** and how we hide the truth about ourselves, and hide from the negative impact we have on others. We resist these perspectives even when this knowledge would ultimately help us.

Consequently, we live in a virtual reality of our own making oblivious to how that affects those around us.

"Until you make the unconscious conscious it will control your life and you will call it fate."
(Carl Jung)

Arbinger helps people realize the control they have over themselves and how to have a positive affect on others.

How did those around you react to the change in your life?

I shifted how I saw others - and they could feel that.

It transformed my relationship with my sister as I realized, I was mad at her for not being the sister I wanted her to be, when in reality I was not the brother she needed me to be.



That is the essence of self-deception, we hide the truth from ourselves through blaming other people. Once I moved past blame, there was a new possibility that I might be part of the problem.

Humility is to accept and acknowledge reality.

We are not as important as we think we are. There is a much bigger world than us.

Other people matter just as much as I do.

Being free of self-deception is to take the humanity of other people into account.

Other people are constantly sending out signals for what they need and want. When we are self-deceive we erect barriers that keep us from recognizing and responding to those signals from others. We call this being *inside the box* or having an *inward mindset*.

When we let the realities of others affect me - when we acknowledge that our actions and words impact another person's life - we call this being *outside the box* or having an *outward mindset*.

What are some symptoms of an inward mindset?

We operate through a lens that isn't necessarily true in that we give unequal weight to our own experience compared to the experience of others.

We ignore a fundamental reality that we are deeply interconnected with one another. So much of who we are is the result of living in the midst of others.

We are isolated in our perspective, and intensely self-focused.

We blame other people for our problems while exonerating ourselves.

Our emotions justify our self-absorbed thoughts, words, and actions. These become self-reinforcing.

When we feel other people need to change, it's most likely that we are the ones who need to change the most.

These behaviors often invite others to turn inward in response to us.



When we are outward focused we tend to play our best and enjoy the experience of being together the most. This happens when we intentionally give that experience to someone else rather than demanding that someone give it to me.

Where did the phrase, *inside the box*, come from?

Things are made invisible until they are named. Language allows us to see, but also limits what we can see. Much like science is the discovery of things that were already there, but now have names to them so they can be better understood.

Inside the box describes when we are closed off from others living in an isolated box. Everything that comes into our box is distorted by the box itself - it creates a barrier by which our experience is distorted.

As coaches, when we see players as obstacles or vehicles to our own success we are *inside the box* because we don't see them as people. We see them merely as a means to an end.

Is the Arbinger approach to leadership soft?

As human beings we have the ability to feel other peoples' intentions.

We are trying to generate the best possible results from a team - inviting the members and coaches of that team to see one another as people - gives you the best possible opportunity to extract the greatest level of performance from that group of people.

This creates authentic space where it is safe to bring their best to play.

Having an outward mindset is hard - it requires awareness, effort, and intentionality. It means having tough conversations and searching for truth, even when it's inconvenient or uncomfortable.

Hard leadership behaviors are more effective when we operate outside the box.



Episode 181 Getting Outside the Box and Seeing People as People | Arbinger Institute

NOTES

Book Reference: [*Leadership and Self-Deception*](#) by the Arbinger Institute.

We need to see people as people, not as objects, obstacles, or irrelevant. When we see people this way, we are **inside the box**. When we lead from *inside the box* our relationships suffer because

People respond to the way we see them.

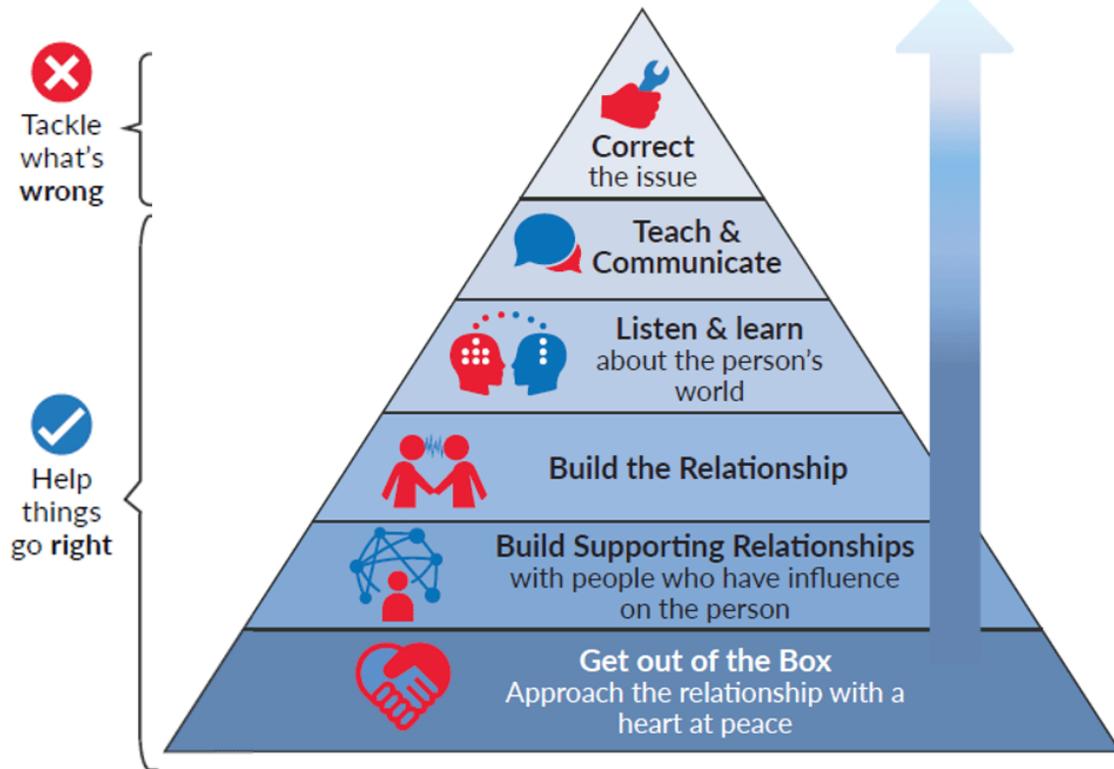
How do we begin to see people differently when you realize you are *inside the box*?

- Recognize and avoid assumptions we make about others
- Admit there is much we don't know about others
- Become "ravenously curious" about other people
- Ask others:
 - What impact have I had on you?
 - Are there ways I make things harder for you?
 - If you could fix me, where would you start?

The Number One quality of a great teammate is curiosity.

How do we use this approach to hold players accountable to changing their behaviors?

THE PYRAMID OF CHANGE



To bring change we must spend most of our time at the lower levels of the pyramid.

Correction is the last thing to do - spend more time and energy building a relationship.

Ask questions such as

- Did I communicate my expectations clearly?
- Why were you unable to meet those expectations?
- Is there a relationship on the team that is hindering your ability to reach the performance / behavioral standards?
- Here's where I need you to be, here's where you are. Can you help me to understand what you're willing to do to get to this level?

A system of accountability results from what is required for them to raise their level, and then check-in with them regularly to monitor their progress.



We should not build relationships to change a person's behavior. We should pursue relationships because we see our players as people, and to value them for who they are.

Performance, loyalty, and being a team player are all things a person *gives* to the team - those things cannot be extracted from them. Only when those things are given authentically will they reach their highest potential.

It's not only important for us as coaches to stay *out of the box*, but it's important to keep our teams *out of the box*.

How have you seen this impact sports teams and organizations?

The **San Antonio Spurs** read *Leadership and Self-Deception*.

- They actively work at seeing each other as people
- They understand the concept of "our shots" and "our points"

In the context of **BYU-Hawaii Women's Soccer** a player might think differently about an open teammate depending on whether they are *inside the box* or *outside the box*.

A player *in the box* might think:

- Do they deserve the pass?
- Is that someone I like?
- Are they inhibiting my performance?

A player *outside the box* might think:

- She's an extension of us
- We are shaping / attacking the game together
- All players think like a captain, "What's most beneficial for us?"

Those *outside the box* take responsibility for the success of those around them.

Peace Players International uses basketball to place opposition groups (such as Israelis and Palestinians in Israel) together on teams to teach many of the Arbinger principles to young people to create peace through sport.

Complaints about playing time often originate from *inside the box* thinking.



"It's all about me" and other justifying behaviors are indicative of thinking *inside the box*, and to the player's detriment, those behaviors sabotage their ability to accomplish their goals.

What is the organizational culture like at Arbinger?

The box is pernicious - our need to feel justified as people is constant. Even at Arbinger, "we struggle."

Arbinger is open to the opinion and input of every team member within the organization. Every idea is taken seriously. We don't fight often. There is very little office politics. People are given an opportunity to advance their career by taking responsibility for their role.

How do you use the Arbinger approach with your family?

Pointing out when someone else is *in the box* is never going to work - others will resist that.

It's most impactful when I try to live it

- When I examine what I haven't been doing to support my wife and kids
- Apologizing when I've fallen short of expectations, or failed to do what I promised to
- Asking my wife if she wants to talk about something to find out what's on her mind

My kids watch and absorb how my wife and I interact, how we disagree, etc.

Even young kids will find a way to blame things beyond themselves. We get them to see their choices so that they don't build a habit of justifying their behavior.

Takeaways

- Read [Leadership and Self-Deception](#)
- Start a journaling habit with three simple prompts:
 - What am I grateful for?
 - What is the most important thing today?
 - Who in my life am I most *inside the box* with?
 - Email JPNerbun@ThriveOnChallenge.com for his FREE journaling system