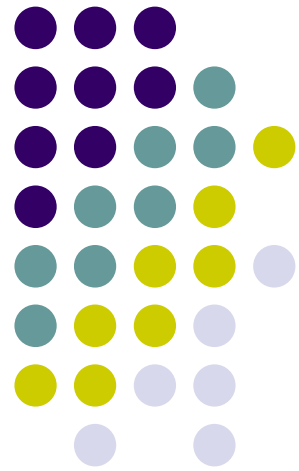

Kansas Leadership
Centre

Activate Conference
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Educators



PROVOCATION AND
DISTURBANCE: ARE THEY
NECESSARY FOR
LEADERSHIP EDUCATION?

Michael Johnstone

Vantage Point Consulting Australia



A MODEST PROPOSAL



Provocation and Undiscussables



You'll have to sit down and talk to your son about personal responsibility!

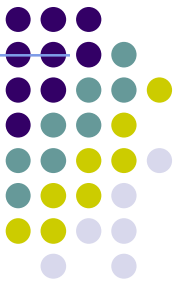
Yeah .Righto! What's his name then?

A CORE LEADERSHIP TASK

**TO GET AND HOLD PEOPLE'S ATTENTION TO
THE CRITICAL ISSUES CONFRONTING
THEM, INCLUDING THEIR CAPACITY TO
QUESTION THE STATUS QUO, AND TO
LEARN**

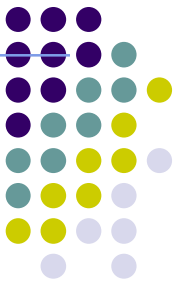
DEFINITION

Provocation is any form of intervention or action that is designed to bring forth, at a minimum, some reflection, and optimally active examination of the restraints to change.



DEFINITION

- **Provocare = “to bring forth”**
- **An action that stimulates, elicits, arouses or irritates**



REASONS TO USE PROVOCATION

- To bring attention to something
- To create energy, focus and/or urgency
- To move people into a zone of learning and reflection
- To create “news of difference” : so messages get past people’s restraints and defenses
- To nudge people out of complacency and self-satisfaction
- To reframe an action or understanding so that a new meaning can be considered; or
- To create opportunities to test the limits of current success

Provocation or Stimulation?

I am endlessly fascinated that playing football is considered a training ground for leadership, but raising children is not.

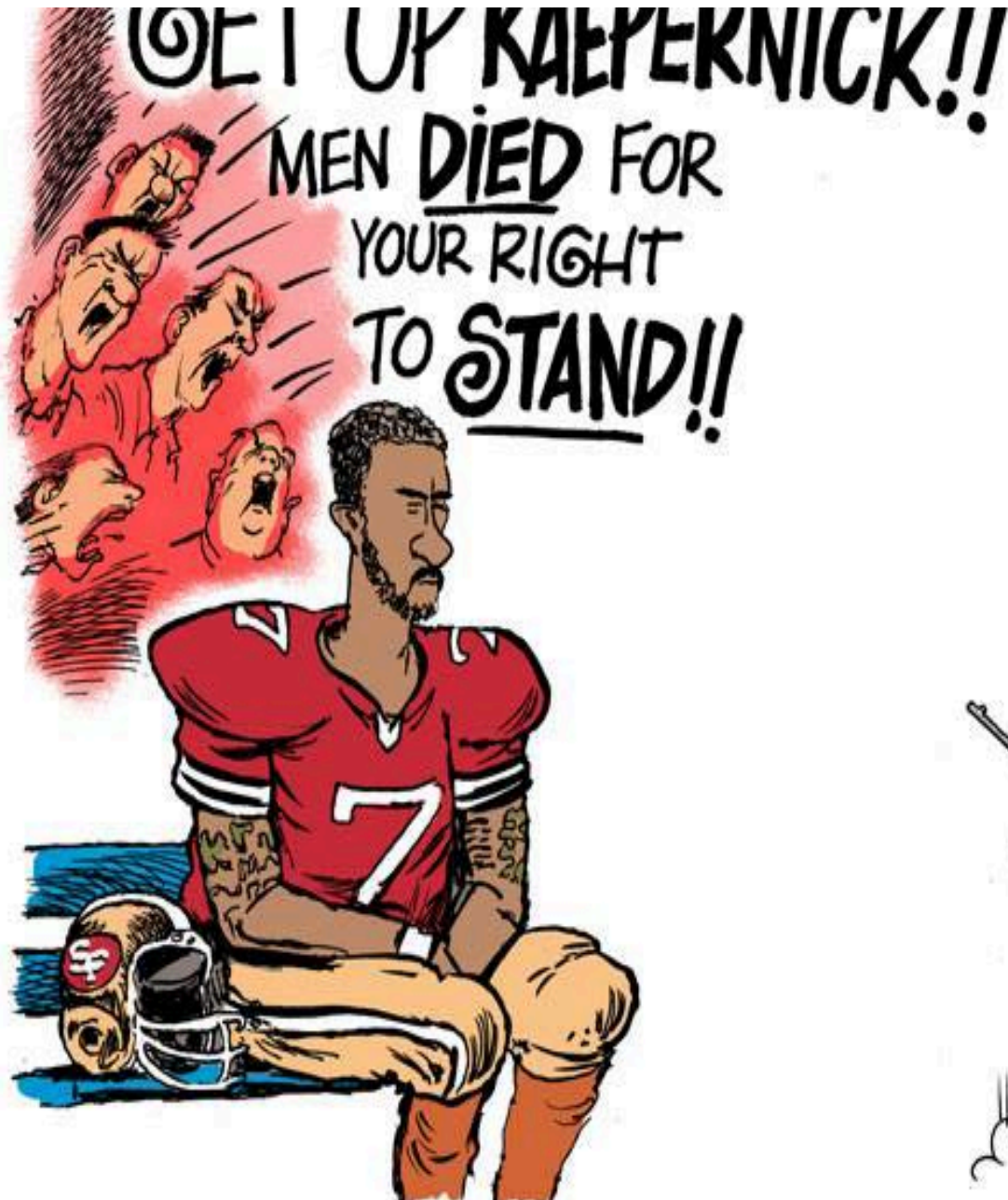
-Dee Dee Myers



PROVOKE OR EVOKE?



Provocative or Insulting ?



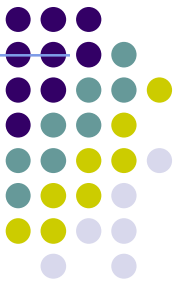
What assumptions do you make about provocation and disturbance?



Of-course, we have to begin with certain assumptions. Let's assume I'm right and you're wrong!

Forms of Provocation

<p>Tell a story</p> <p>Use unusual metaphor</p> <p>Call attention to irresponsible behavior</p> <p>Reorder agreed priorities</p> <p>Encourage deeper diagnosis</p>	<p>Use paradox</p> <p>Don't protect people</p> <p>Make assumptions explicit</p> <p>Reframe prevailing pattern or wisdom</p>	<p>Remove clarity or structure</p> <p>Name a pattern of failure</p> <p>Prescribe mistrust</p> <p>Conflictual interpretation</p>
<p>Name default roles</p> <p>Multiple interpretations</p> <p>Utilize resistance</p> <p>Be inattentive</p>	<p>Make a strong interpretation</p> <p>Name "elephant in room"</p> <p>Ask for behavioural specification</p>	<p>Don't answer a question</p> <p>Prescribe symptom</p> <p>Restrain change</p> <p>Act as a non-verbal mirror</p>



SOME FACILITATION QUESTIONS

Which part of the status quo are you testing?

- Which issues are ripening or can I ripen?
- Issues from which others flow?
- Degree of interest/ commitment/impact/ member affected
- What can the group bear? - Resources, skills, resilience
- Where value gap conflict is greatest
- Has longer term impact – strategic enabler

“ How much distress are you willing to inflict on others in the service of their learning?”



ACUTE PAIN

1840, by James Gillray

How do you hold yourself back from provoking and disturbing groups?



What attitudes, beliefs and values might you need to examine to increase your capacity to use provocation?