

Openness the key to accountability

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Almost everyone I know seems to harbor a gnawing sense that things are not as they should be.

The more I ponder our troubling circumstances, the more I come to an inevitable conclusion: most of our current problems – especially with our various institutions – are the direct result of an increasing lack of transparency at virtually all levels.

This is probably most apparent in the way our government operates these days.

Politicians often claim they have nothing to hide and that their decision-making process is an open book. It has even become fashionable for legislators to talk about how completely limp they are.

The reality, however, is nothing could be farther from the truth. We usually see right through politicians who claim to be transparent.

Want to be truly transparent? Then why not televise all committee meetings and make it illegal for legislators to have any discussions that are not on the record? Eliminate backroom deals and illuminate how things really get done.

But the scourge of secrecy is not limited to government; it also seems to have metastasized to the private and nonprofit sectors as well.

How many times have you been informed of a decision – after the fact – that adversely affected you or your organization? And how many times have you had absolutely no clue as to how it was made or even who made it?

And don't get me started about the mysterious ways personnel decisions often evolve.

Lack of transparency leads to suspicion, mistrust, confusion, poor morale and a low level of commitment to what has been decided.

Openness has always been the key to accountability. We must find a way to reverse the unhealthy trend perpetuated by those who do not want their methods revealed.

God save us from our stealthy, behind-closed-doors saviors.

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