

Phrases have little-known translations

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This is for the aspiring leaders out there; the ones who have not yet had their idealism crushed into oblivion.

One of the most daunting challenges these folks face is deciphering their senior counterparts. Apparently they don't teach you how to be enigmatic and indirect in school.

So I thought a little translation guide might be helpful.

An experienced leader says, "I'll put that on my list."

Translation: "Check back with me when the temperature in hell drops below 32 degrees Fahrenheit."

An experienced leader says, "Think outside the box."

Translation: "But make sure you stay well within mine."

An experienced leader says, "Don't bring me problems, bring me solutions."

Translation: "I don't have the faintest idea what to do or I would provide the leadership needed."

An experienced leader asks, "What are our benchmarks doing?"

Translation: "We're obviously too stupid to be on the cutting edge, so let's just copy what someone else is doing."

An experienced leader responds to an email you sent with, "Thanks for sharing."

Translation: "I couldn't care less about what you just sent me. Now get back to work."

An experienced leader says, "We need to build this into our strategic plan."

Translation: "Let's just keep talking and maybe we won't have to actually do anything."

An experienced leader says, "I know."

Translation: "I don't have a clue, but I don't want to be bothered about this now ... or ever."

Finally, an experienced leader says during an interview, "We are looking for innovative, imaginative free-thinkers to come in and shake things up."

Translation: "We think things are pretty good just the way they are, so when you get here, keep your new ideas to yourself."

Be honest. How many of these phrases have you heard — and naively assumed you understood what they really meant?

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