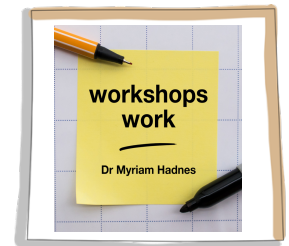


Episode 254

Are Facilitators Manipulators? A Panel Discussion



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[https:// neverdonebefore.org/courses/leadership-course](https://neverdonebefore.org/courses/leadership-course)



The nutshell

There is an inherent difference between manipulation – where facilitators use their skills to guide groups towards a shared goal and facipulation – where facilitators use their skills to alter the outcomes. Manipulation is unavoidable and necessary as long as it has the clear purpose of serving the group.

“Our agenda is our assumption.”



Challenge

There is a fine line between ethical manipulation and manipulation for personal gain that facilitators can easily cross if they lack self-awareness and presence to navigate between the group’s the client’s and their own needs.



Why workshops fail

If facilitators manipulate the group towards a pre-defined outcome, we speak of unethical facipulation. If we manipulate results, these will remain unsustainable because the group doesn’t own them.

“We have opinions as facilitators that we need to be aware of.”



Nugget 1

In facilitation and leadership, manipulation starts with the workshop’s **purpose** as it will inform the agenda. Our **presence** influences trust and **power** dynamics within the group and hence we need to intentionally manipulate the **process** to balance the room and support the **participants**. Overall, our self-awareness of how our actions affect participants is crucial for success – a bit of **play** comes a long way.



Nugget 2

Facilitators cannot assume that participants automatically trust and consent to their leadership. Instead, we need to obtain consent at the beginning of a workshop by illustrating our approach and being open to receiving their reactions. Our agenda is based on our assumption that we have to verify.



Do it yourself

Keep the agenda mysterious. By not revealing everything upfront, you create room for participants to break away from standard roles and explore new perspectives. It encourages engagement without giving away all the details.