Being Cause-in-the-Matter

As we use the term being cause-in-the-matter, it is not an assertion – that is, it is not meant as a statement of fact. Or more specifically, we do not use the term cause-in-the-matter to mean that you caused the conditions with which you are confronted, or even that you did it or you made it happen.

Rather than using the term being cause-in-the-matter as an assertion, we use the term as a declaration – that is, so to speak, as a place to stand from which to view, comprehend, and deal with the facts of the situation with which you are confronted. Whereas an assertion is a statement about the facts of the matter, the declaration, being cause-in-the-matter, is a choice from which to view and relate to the facts.
“Ultimately, being cause-in-the-matter is a context from which one chooses to live. Being cause-in-the-matter is not burden, fault, praise, blame, credit, shame or guilt – there is no evaluation of good or bad, right or wrong. There is simply what’s so, and your stand. Being cause-in-the-matter starts with the willingness to deal with a situation from the view of life that you are the generator of what you do, what you have and what you are. That is not the truth. It is a place to stand. No one can make you cause-in-the-matter, nor can you impose being cause-in-the-matter on another. It is a grace you give yourself – an empowering context that leaves you with a say in the matter of life.”

Werner Erhard
EXERCISE

With a partner(s) discuss:

What is a stand you can take (a context you can create) so that the facts of a condition you are dealing with occur for you in a new world?
THE FOUNDATION FOR LEADER AND LEADERSHIP PROVIDES ONE WITH ACCESS TO POWER
PART 2
In this Course What is Meant by “Power”? 

Definition of power:

Ability to allow things to happen

Power is always an exercise of something. Power equals the size of your intentions divided by the time it takes for your intentions to get realized.

The scope and magnitude of your word realized is power.

Power is Something about altering the occurring for yourself, another, or others such that there is an alteration in one’s way of being and acting that is effective and/or contributes to the quality of life.

The freedom to be and act is power.

The degree of integrity I have is equal to the amount of power I have.
“Now when you reach out to another person through the energy or creativity that is in you and that other person responds, you are exercising power.”

“Anything that comes out of you and goes out into the world is power and in addition to that, the ability to be open, to appreciate, to receive love, to respond to others, to listen to music, to understand literature, all of that is power. When you make somebody else do something against their will, to me that is not power at all, that is force, and force to me is the negation of power.” (Charles Reich, born 1928)
When I do not honor my word, I diminish power.

The less authenticity I have the less power I have.

When my life is about nothing more than my own personal concerns for myself, I have little power.

When I am “at the effect” I have no power.

When you have as your foundation being a person of integrity, being authentic, being given being and action by something bigger than yourself, and being-cause-in-the-matter, you have given yourself a foundation that is truly powerful.
THE POWER OF A CONTEXT TO USE YOU A DEEPER CUT

THE POWER OF A CONTEXT AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUR WAY OF BEING AND ACTING
What is Meant by Context?

Every situation we deal with shows up for us in some context or another (even when we are not aware of or noticing what that context is). A context functions as a cognitive lens (a powerful filter) through which we see the world, others, and ourselves – highlighting some aspects, dimming other aspects, and blanking out yet other aspects.

For example, if our context for dealing with others is “people can’t be trusted”, we are likely to question any evidence that the person we are dealing with can be trusted, while highlighting anything that comes up that might question their trustworthiness, and when they are actually attempting to be fair with us, we are likely to miss that completely. In order to deal with the way in this context the situation occurs for us, we are likely to be defensive or at least wary in dealing with that person.
The Power of a Context to Use You

On the next three slides there are two simple but clear-cut example of contexts using you. (Later we will provide you with an even more potent example.) From these examples you will see that a context has the power to shape your way of being and shape the actions you take in dealing with a given situation.
A Simple Illustration of
the Power of a Context to Use You

Read and see what you make of the following paragraph:

"A newspaper is better than a magazine. A seashore is a better place than a street. At first it is better to run than to walk. You may have to try several times. It takes some skill, but it is easy to learn. Even young children can enjoy it. Once successful, complications are minimal. Birds seldom get too close. Rain, however, soaks in very fast. Too many people doing the same thing can also cause problems. One needs lots of room. If there are no complications it can be very peaceful. A rock will serve as an anchor. If things break loose from it, however, you will not get a second chance."

We suspect that the paragraph made little or no sense for you.

On the next slide you will see the paragraph again. Please read it to yourself and see what you make of it this time.
"A newspaper is better than a magazine. A seashore is a better place than a street. At first it is better to run than to walk. You may have to try several times. It takes some skill, but it is easy to learn. Even young children can enjoy it. Once successful, complications are minimal. Birds seldom get too close. Rain, however, soaks in very fast. Too many people doing the same thing can also cause problems. One needs lots of room. If there are no complications it can be very peaceful. A rock will serve as an anchor. If things break loose from it, however, you will not get a second chance."

We suspect that with the context present (the single word at the top of this slide) these 14 sentences now make sense.

As is said, The Context Is Decisive.

This example is from “On Being Certain: Believing You Are Right Even When You Are Not”, Robert A. Burton, MD, St. Martin’s Press, New York, NY 2008 p.5.
A Context that Uses You: One More Simple Example

When driving, if you have ever gotten annoyed by being held up behind a slow driver, imagine what would happen to you if you suddenly realized that the other driver was your elderly grandmother who you really love and care about.

You are still being held up by a slow driver. However, the context has changed from “I am being held up by a #$%@!-ing slow driver” to “my elderly grandmother who I really love and care about is the driver in front of me”. Because the context has changed, you will notice that instead of being annoyed, you are being calmly patient.

By the way, don’t confuse creating an empowering context with an attempt at positive thinking. An empowering context alters the impact on you of the facts of the situation with which you are dealing – unlike positive thinking, which attempts to cover over or alter the facts themselves.
A Context that Uses You: One More Simple Example

While this is a rather trivial example of the power of context, the next time you are held up by a slow driver, create the context for yourself that the slow driver is your elderly grandmother, and you will confirm for yourself that:

the context is decisive!
Experiencing For Yourself a Context that Uses You

With a partner(s):

1. Look into your own life and pick out a) a specific situation or kind of situation, or b) a specific person, or c) a specific category or class of persons. And then:

2. Uncover for yourself the context in which you hold that situation or kind of situation, or person, or category or class of persons. Finally, and most importantly:

3. Discover for yourself the impact of that context on the way in which that situation, or person, or category of persons occurs for you (shows up for you) and/or the impact of that context on the way you act.
Experiencing For Yourself a Context that Uses You

We are now going to speak to the people who were still not able to complete steps 1 through 3. If you found yourself unable to locate a context that uses you, an easy place to start is to locate a prejudice you have about the beliefs of others or some identifiable group of people, or even of a specific person. While a prejudice is a negative example of context, because we all have them, it is an easy place to start.
The Power of a Prejudice to Use You

By locating a prejudice you have for some category or class of persons or even some specific person you know, you will in fact have discovered for yourself a context that uses you.

By locating that prejudice and then seeing its impact on the way people in that category occur for you and the impact of that prejudice on the way you interact with such people, you will have discovered for yourself the power of a context to use you.

While you may think you are so politically correct that you cannot locate a prejudice of yours, you can certainly see it in others, and thereby discover for yourself the way in which a context uses us human beings – including you.
In Summary

The context for any given situation contributes the, so-to-speak, flavor, smell, and taste of the situation, which shapes one’s way of being in response to that situation and the way one acts in dealing with the situation. In fact, without some context for the situation one is dealing with, one would find it difficult to make sense of what was actually transpiring and what the appropriate action might be in that situation.

Functioning as a cognitive lens, a context impacts, and even distorts, the meaning (intelligibility) of whatever we are dealing with. In other words, contexts make what we are perceiving through our senses meaningful and intelligible to us. As a result, because our brains naturally generate our way of being and our way of acting to be appropriate to the way what we are dealing with occurs for us, contexts have a powerful impact on both our way of being and our actions.
What Has Been Introduced in this Section

In this section you have been introduced to the fact that the context in which a given situation is held by you impacts your way of being and your way of acting in that situation.

To spell out the above more precisely, you have been introduced to:

1. The power of a context to use you, and
2. The fact that every situation is perceived through some context or other, and
3. That contexts impact the way situations occur for us (show up for us), and finally,
4. That the way a situation occurs for us (shows up for us) shapes our way of being and our way of acting in that situation.
What Has Been Introduced in this Section

Earlier, we shared two simple examples of the power of a context to use you (“kite” and “grandmother”).

In addition, we discussed that every set of circumstances (every situation) is always perceived through some context or other, and that that context distorts the way those circumstances occur for you. The context impacts the occurring.

Finally, we discussed that your way of being and your way of acting in any situation are impacted by the way the circumstances you are dealing with occur for you.
BREAK ASSIGNMENT
Break Assignment

Write about the following:

1. Look into your own life and pick out a) a specific situation or kind of situation, or b) a specific person, or c) a specific category or class of persons. And then:

2. Uncover for yourself the context in which you hold that situation or kind of situation, or person, or category or class of persons. Finally, and most importantly:

3. **Discover for yourself** the impact of that context on the way in which that situation, or person, or category of persons occurs for you (shows up for you) and/or the impact of that context on the way you act.