Three Ways of Looking at People

It has been said that we find ourselves “looking” at people at one of three levels. These are:

1. As Machines: Merely the extension of machines, little interaction or human contact. They are a cog in the assembly line. Example, tollroad collectors, drive through bank tellers, answering service receptionists (or in reverse, answering automated phone messages).

2. As Landscape: Merely the centerpiece of a landscape scene. It can be the colorful “native” dressed in native gear set in position in front of volcano. Or it can be the dirty, ugly faces of the destitute set in the context of urban blight, used often to stir pity or attention for fund-raising purposes.

3. As Human Beings: Where each person is valued on their own terms, listened to, and treated as a unique human being, and not as a programmatic client.

In your organization, on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the total commitment to one of these perspectives, how do you generally grade its interactions 1. with client; 2. with staff; 3. with potential funding personnel?

Your Organization:

_____ with client

_____ with staff

_____ with potential funding personnel

In your own personal dealings with others within the organization, on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the total commitment to one of these perspectives, how do you generally grade your own interactions 1. with clients; 2. with staff; 3. with potential funding personnel (if applicable)?

Yourself:

_____ with client

_____ with staff

_____ with potential funding personnel

Why do we or the institution respond as it does? Does any of this need to change?