Understanding and Assessing Mental Toughness
Taking Coaching to a New Level
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How to Deliver Difficult Messages Constructively as a Leader
by Kavitha Chahel

Ten Tips on being a Good Leader
by Andy Johnson

Romanian Section

Învățăturile lui Buddha – o cale veche pentru un lider actual
Idee pentru întâlnirile de coaching cu un lider al secolului 21
by Monica Lacramioara Barbulescu
Welcome to another exciting edition of the International Coaching News (iCN) online magazine! Our 20th edition, themed Executive Coaching, inspired by leaders to help them improve self-awareness, clarify goals, achieve their development objectives, and unlock their potential.

This edition is loaded with content on a variety of relevant topics. It focuses on latest leadership coaching models that transform mentees into mentors and employees into leaders. Useful coaching tips & tools are also featured, along with focusing on various leadership and relational styles to improve and enhance collaboration. In this 20th edition, look out for the article ‘How to Deliver Difficult Messages Constructively as a Leader’ by Kavitha Chahel from United Kingdom. Kavitha highlights vital skills necessary for current and future work challenges. Another noteworthy article ‘Understanding and Assessing Mental Toughness - Taking Coaching to a New Level’ by Doug Strycharczyk, shows the importance of understanding mental toughness and using this fundamental step in coaching & mentoring. ‘Ten Tips on being a Good Leader’ by Andy Johnson of South Africa, discusses characteristics of good leadership. ‘Coaching Conflict Intelligent Leaders’ by Cinnie Noble of Canada, outlines the CINERGY® model of conflict management coaching, this model is based on principles from coaching, conflict management and neuroscience. Each of our columnists, too numerous to mention, has taken some really interesting perspectives, and I would encourage a thorough read-through of this edition.

Just like all our other editions, this edition is not just an interesting read, but it provides you with helpful coaching tools, personal development ideas and professional development techniques to grow your business.

I hope you enjoy this issue and do let us know if there are any topics you’d like to see covered in the future.

Leeann
Leeann C. Naidoo
Division Head, iCN Magazine
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Third-Generation Leadership Coaching: Playing with the eFIRE Model and Mindset
by Malcolm Nicholson – iCN Journalist (UK)

In an increasingly VUCA world, there is a need for leadership that is fit-for-purpose and can work the adaptive space between what is and what needs to be for an organisation to survive and thrive. At the heart of the challenge is generating productive dialogue right across organisations that assist leaders to sense and respond to internal and external shifts, the pace and magnitude of which are increasing. Trusting relationships are vital in fostering and supporting such conversations and integral to third generation coaching approaches.

eFIRE is a new approach with an energy centre of meaning and purpose and relationships, and a mindset that anchors practice and can contribute to the future development of leadership coaching. Dr Abbott continued “eFIRE is set up for complexity – that is, for messes. It’s not so useful if you want lose weight or learn French. It’s for messy ‘wicked’ problems where no one really knows which way to go. It aims to gain clarity in complexity and allow participants in the mess to influence the system for positive benefits. Of course, in messes even what is a ‘positive benefit’ is up for dispute!”

Key characteristics of the model that provide its power include:

- Assumes change is the norm in organisational life
- Embraces the emergent and unexpected
- Non-linear – moves back and forth through five elements, noting that VUCA worlds are non-linear, so the coaching model needs to accommodate this
- Encourages a system and cultural view
- Takes conversations to deeper levels
- Works for single and multiple conversations
- Energy sits in the middle – generated from meaning and purpose, values and relationships
- Requires a mindset of curiosity and experimentation

Most leadership coaching models we use in organisations come from life coaching or executive coaching where an outsider with a fresh set of eyes helps someone to enact change of some kind. eFIRE is informed by these models, but takes a perspective of the leader-coach. In using eFIRE, the leader has a point of view which in some cases trumps the point of view of the person being coached. This is the reality of organisational life. As Peter Drucker said, ‘The people with the power make the decisions.’ Paradoxically though, eFIRE hands power to the person being coached – giving control in order to gain it. The energy centre of eFIRE ignites organisational performance as well as positioning individuals for growth – within the context.

It also moves away from the idea that there’s one solution to a problem. With complex challenges, the approach is to have a variety of approaches and to seek connections between them and to go where there is traction in a spirit and practice of experimentation. However, there also needs to be an intentional action to ensure focus and progress.

The eFIRE Model in Practice: The five phases depicted in the model are containers for questions and exploration generated by the context in mind.

Frame for intention, creative tension and boundaries – with curiosity

This fuels the model and provides for the injection of emotional authenticity. The art of leadership coaching is to engage in the conversation in ways that will sustain energy through the process. Human flourishing depends upon people having some higher order purpose. Through how they show up, the questions they ask, and the causes they pursue, leaders have enormous capacity to vary the energy that can ignite organisations – for better or for worse. In practice, if the leader coach notices a shift in energy in the conversation (including in themselves) this is a trigger for curiosity and exploration.

Figure 1: The eFIRE Model

Energy from values, purpose and relationships

This sets intention for the scope of the challenge - ‘intention’ is preferred to ‘goal’ to encourage a deeper and more exciting consideration of the issues involved. Coaching is invariably discusses an ideal state that differs from current reality. This is the opportunity...
for the leader to inspire the coachee to think about how things would be if they were moving towards an ‘ideal’ (at an individual, team or other level). The context of the individual, in the team, in the organisation, in the industry/society is considered and made relevant. Organisational and team strategies, targets and objectives are considered. A process is agreed for moving forward that includes boundaries that both limit and enable – to encourage a systems view. The leader will use energy questions appropriate to the context.

**Inquire through systemic exploration of multiple perspectives**

Once a process and direction are understood through Framing, the parties engage in an emergent process of systematic inquiry. A systemic and cultural inquiry engages thinking about what other perspectives are at play in the issue at hand. It would normally start with the Leader exploring the way that the coachee sees the challenge.

Systems thinking methodologies might be used here, or other tools for expanding the perspectives in the conversation. This is where the expertise of the leader and coachee is vital – to bring in instruments, tools, methodologies etc. that are fit-for-purpose. A rich picture is often a good way to begin the probing in this phase. Following a conversation, the coachee might decide to talk to other people and undertake a separate process of inquiry before returning to a new discussion. The leader may have a perspective which is offered as late as possible in the conversation (noting that organisational rules, policies and procedures may determine elements of the inquiry).

**Reflect on Exciting Possibilities: using strengths and resources**

This phase is concerned with stepping back to reflect on the outcome of the inquiry and working with energy to generate ideas on what could be possible – generating a strength-based change process. The leader calls the discussion back to the systemic and cultural nature of the inquiry. The coachee is challenged to think holistically as he or she engages with the detail of designing possible ways to progress. There are no limits placed here. The leader assists the coachee in finding areas of high and low energy that might inform later decisions about where to place emphasis. The emphasis is on using strengths and resources to address issues, problems, gaps, etc. Energy would typically be higher in this phase. If not, there may be a shift back to earlier stages after some energy inquiry.

**Experiment and Execute for maximum impact through intentional action**

This phase is when some choices are made about taking action that matches intention. The assumption is that action taken because of systemic inquiry and reflection is likely to have a positive impact - of some kind. An action plan is devised by the coachee that maximises the possibility that positive change will occur toward the ideal state. Note that in complex organisational situations, there are rarely any approaches that offer 100% success so multiple ‘safe-fail’ approaches is often the best strategy. The mode is about experimentation and execution. A monitoring system is embedded in the plan. The approach here is to create a story moving forward – not just an action plan. The story will have interrelationships and nuances that provide some intrigue and uncertainty – though with a strong narrative.

The eFIRE approach also requires leaders to coach from a mindset that will generate productive dialogue and not lead to formulaic approaches that leave conversations on the surface. The elements required are:

- **Growth mindset,**
- **Reflective practice,**
- **Open,**
- **Pragmatic and Paradoxical,**
- **Ethical,**
- **Relational**

**GROPER**

In conclusion, third-generation leadership coaching requires engagement with the idea that everyone in and around an organisation is a relevant actor in the play of organisational and societal sustainability. I’ve proposed that the successful utilisation of third-generation leadership coaching as a strategy for navigating VUCA challenges requires organisational actors to (1) have sound coaching competencies as per accepted industry standards, (2) be conversant with a range of interrelated bodies of knowledge that inform the way that hyper-complexity impacts organisational life, and (3) have an appropriate model and mindset for operationalising the knowledge and skills that they have. The eFIRE approach encapsulates these elements.
EXECUTIVE COACHING:

**Transforming an Employee into a Leader – enter the Mentoring Coach**

by Gary R. Gasaway (USA)

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**What is a Mentoring Coach?**

A mentoring coach has an individual perspective that provides both insight and perspective in aligning an individual’s developmental goals with those of the organisation. The mentoring coach has a horizontal/systemic perspective; which in turn, creates a direct avenue that matches the flow of business across several different functions.

One of the most valuable characteristics of the mentoring coach is that he or she provides an external mirror: models effective two-way communication and feedback to improve the performance of the potential leader. The mentoring coach also provides effective feedback on an on-going basis, so that the potential leader knows how he or she is performing in relation to goals and objectives.

Then lastly, the mentoring coach fosters self-insight. This personal insight helps the potential leader grow through introspection and feedback from not only the mentoring coach, but from others as well. By fostering insight, it is more concerned with helping the potential leader’s take charge of his or her own growth. This action then also fosters accountability regarding personal growth in that the mentee is successful at learning and becoming a more effective leader.

**Mentoring is a Relationship!**

Mentoring begins when a mentee; or potential leader, and mentoring coach agrees to work together over time to help the mentee become more capable. It is a relationship powered by a shared commitment to learning and growing.

A mentoring coach is someone who helps a mentee learn for themselves and from other experiences. A mentoring coach is typically senior to the mentee, broadly experienced, and outside the mentee’s chain of command. Generally, a mentoring coach’s role is to encourage the mentee to stretch by taking a new course of action, to learn from it, and to apply the learning.

The mentoring coach creates the path for the mentee to expand his/her professional capabilities (abilities and experiences). This relationship is built upon mutual respect, mutual trust, and mutual learning which are the hallmarks of successful mentoring.

**What Can Mentoring Do for the Potential Leader?**

Mentorship is a powerful process. It is a partnership in which a trusted mentoring coach helps the potential leader learn first-hand, on the job. Mentoring helps potential leaders build the ability to transition to a new assignment in a fast-moving work environment. In this environment, the mentee’s network is improved, along with informal ‘rules of the leadership road’ are established. This is only possible because mutual trust, respect, and a feeling of being valued is created and maintained between both the mentoring coach and mentee. Learning and applying crucial new skills, build business acumen, and uncovering valuable lessons learned through continuous feedback sessions by the mentoring coach is vital for success.

It all starts with **Showing an Interest in the Potential Leader – The Mentoring Coach**

As a former mentoring coach at a large corporation, knowing what makes a good mentor was vital to the effectiveness to strengthen my mentee’s talents, knowledge, and skills to guide them towards potential leadership positions. Mentoring supports succession planning and leadership training programs by providing an opportunity for knowledge transfer and sharing of information by the mentoring coach. With the assistance from the mentoring coach, potential leaders and successors can be “groomed” and cultivated to take on higher-level responsibilities and roles and leadership positions.

**Employee Development: Showing an Interest in Employees’ Careers**

The mentoring coach must have a foundation of understanding of their potential leader’s strengths before they can be effective in guiding them towards career goals. There are three areas that create strengths:

- **Talents** – the employees’ natural recurring patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior.
- **Knowledge** – the employees’ understanding of facts and lessons learned.
- **Skills** – the employees’ understanding of steps of an activity.

The combination of these three areas creates their strengths.

**What are their goals?**

Each employee’s talents are enduring and unique. Each employee’s greatest room for career growth is in the areas of their knowledge and skills to enhance their talents. Once the potential leader’s talents, knowledge, and skills are identified; it is then time to understand the employee’s goals.

**Understanding employees’ goals**

Effective employee development depends, in part, on an understanding of potential leader’s career goals. To focus on understanding these goals, ongoing communication is necessary. This communication becomes the link to performance feedback. The mentoring coach also must schedule periodic individual discussions with potential leaders to review their career goals.

To be effective in this discussion, identify the following questions:

- What are their goals?
- What skills must they develop to reach their goals?
- What do you see that supports or could be possible barriers that might affect these goals?
• Are their goals realistic, considering their skill potential and position within the organisation?
• Are their career goals challenging enough, given their demonstrated potential?

If you agree that the employee has the potential to reach his or her career goals, together create a development plan for those goals. It is also important that if you see an employee’s career goal as unrealistic given current skill levels, point out where you see discrepancies and suggest other, more realistic alternatives.

Sharing career information
When potential leaders are aware of their opportunities towards advancement by broadening their knowledge and enrichment of their skills, they can make better decisions as to their career paths. The mentoring coach must provide all available career information to potential leaders. The following guidelines will assist in those efforts: Provide as much information as you can about current leadership positions within the organisation that may be consistent with each employee’s goals.

Meet with employees to communicate skill requirements, additional education needs, and experiences that would help to qualify them for the leadership positions.

What are the Benefits of Mentoring Potential Leaders – Retention, Mobility, and Diversity
Mentoring benefits both the potential leader and the team, department, and the company. Its benefits are far reaching including developing skills, gaining experience, building relationships and sharing knowledge.

Retention
Potential leaders who are mentored are more likely to commit to a company because they feel the company is willing to further their development and career. Employees tend to leave companies when they don’t feel valued and/or provided development opportunities.

Mobility
Mentoring can provide potential leaders with cross-functional experience and knowledge that enhances their ability to move within a company. This provides the company with talent that is flexible and responsive.

Diversity
Populations that have not always been afforded equal development opportunities are given increased access to knowledge and growth through mentoring experiences.

Lastly, the benefits of mentoring go beyond development for the potential leader. The entire organisation reaps rewards from promoting and fostering mentoring. Mentoring facilitates information sharing throughout an organisation and the company. Information is pushed down as well as laterally and upward. Potential leaders gain information and experience and mentoring coaches can take on a fresh perspective. Information is shared and retained as generations leave the organisation. For the mentoring coach, a legacy is made that will far outlast their employment.

ABOUT GARY R. GASAWAY
Gary R. Gasaway is an author, keynote speaker, trainer, and a certified professional life coach

As a retired manager from Southern California Edison, Gary used his natural talent for coaching and became a “corporate coach.” He has previously published: The Coach’s Chronicles – A Journey Through Life’s Trials and Triumphs and The Coach’s Chronicles II – It’s Your Story! Start Writing it! Gary’s third book: The Coach’s Chronicles – Everything Matters will be released in the fall of 2017.

Gary has a Bachelor of Science degree in Organisational Management and a Master of Science in Leadership and Management. Gary is the founder and owner of Conflict Coaching Solutions.

Mental toughness is a narrow personality trait which helps to explain how individuals respond to stress, pressure, opportunity and challenge, irrespective of circumstance. Although its roots lie in resilience theory, mental toughness has emerged as a wider and potentially more useful concept. Usefully it embraces important developments in psychology such as learned optimism, Grit and Mindset.

The concept introduces an important dimension to our understanding, and use of, personality. Most personality models (and measures) focus on behavioural aspects of personality – how we act as well as how we feel when confronted by events. Mental Toughness describes how we think – why we act or respond emotionally the way we do.

This is a fundamental step in coaching and mentoring practice. What someone does can be comparatively straightforward to assess. What is creating this, inside someone’s head, is much more difficult to assess.

This takes the capability for self-awareness and reflection to another, more powerful level. Creating self-awareness is the cornerstone of coaching if one wishes to help the coachee to understand themselves and to do something about it where needed.

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Mental Toughness consists of 4 constructs, each which in turn can be subdivided into two factors. This enables leaders, managers, coaches and trainers dig deep into understanding the mindset of their charges. The four factors are called the 4Cs and the 4Cs Mental Toughness concept is now the most popular description of Mental Toughness in the world.

Understanding and Assessing MENTAL TOUGHNESS
Taking Coaching to a New Level
by Doug Strycharczyk (UK)

MENTAL TOUGHNESS
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The first is Control. This describes the extent to which a person feels in control of their lives and their circumstances (Life Control) and the extent to which they can control the display of their emotions (Emotional Control). The first is where the sense of “can do” sits and the latter describes the extent to which the individual can manage their own mood and the mood of others.

The second factor is Commitment. This is about goal orientation and achievement orientation. This describes the extent to which someone is prepared to set goals and make promises and, once made, to what extent they will do what it takes to achieve those goals and deliver those promises. Those promises can be made to self or to others.

Control and Commitment together describe what most mean by Resilience. However, Resilience, although a valuable and useful quality, can take two forms. You can be resilient if you have to be resilient or you can be resilient if you want to or enjoy being resilient. The latter introduces a positive element to the former. It is more robust and this is what the next two constructs add.

Challenge is the third factor. This introduces a proactive component to the model. This describes the extent to which the individual will push back the boundaries and stretch themselves - and to accept the risk (Risk Orientation) and how they see all outcomes from this approach (Learning Orientation). Some see learning and opportunity, even in failure and setback. Others decide “they never want to do that again”. It is where openness to learning sits.

Finally, Confidence completes the picture. This describes the extent to which people believe in themselves - have Confidence in their abilities - and to possess the Interpersonal Confidence to influence others and dealing with challenges from others. This component adds a further proactive component.

It’s not difficult to identify how these apply to anyone who seeks to optimise their lives. And in a transformational setting, it’s an absolute must for leadership.

All of the scales and subscales are independent. For instance, some people may be goal orientated, but will not do what is needed to achieve the goal leading to underachievement. Some aren’t goal orientated but will still enjoy working hard, often described as “busy fools”.

Moreover, all the scales interplay with each other. Someone who is high on Commitment but low on Confidence is likely to behave differently to someone who is low on Commitment but high on Confidence.

The opposite of Mental Toughness is not Mental Weakness, it’s called Mental Sensitivity. There is nothing wrong with being at any point of the scale although research shows that Mentally Tough individuals tend to achieve more, enjoy better well-being and adopt a more positive approach to life. Research shows that the Mentally Tough achieves senior positions in organisations much more so than the Mentally Sensitive.

In fact, there are potential strengths and weaknesses at both ends of the spectrum. Self-awareness is the key again central to coaching and mentoring activity.

This is especially true in Executive Coaching where the potential weakness lies in areas such as over commitment, taking too many risks, over confidence and believing “I can do it, why can’t they?”. These illustrate the risks associated with being very mentally tough.

All can be neatly summarised in this representation:
The concept and the measures are proving to be a key addition to the coach’s armoury.

For more information:
- Psychometrics in Coaching", edited by J. Passmore (Kogan Page 2015)
- Developing Mental Toughness by Doug Strycharczyk and Professor Peter Clough (Kogan Page 2016)

Mental Toughness Licensed user programs are available in on-line format (English only - contact headoffice@aqr.co.uk) and in tutor led format in Warsaw (xxxxx) and Bucharest (1st March 2018)

Remarkably well. It is consistent with motivational models such as Maslow and with all Leadership models, providing an additional level of understanding to support development in these areas.

It is also relevant for all so called “soft skills” development. It has a particularly strong role in Coaching and Mentoring where it supports the development of a client’s self-awareness of their strengths and their development needs ... and why these exist.

Usefully, the Mental Toughness concept embraces a number of similar ideas such as Mindset, Grit, Character, Resilience and Learned Optimism in one comprehensive and very practical framework.

Importantly, in a world where evidence based practice is becoming the norm, the Mental Toughness concept is itself well evidenced by almost 100 peer reviewed research papers from over a dozen universities.

Companies today are calling for coaching to help them increase their performance, retain talent, improve work related behaviour, enhance cooperation and communication between co-workers and transform their key-performers into leaders. All these benefits of coaching are mostly anecdotical. Behavioural changes are hard to measure in terms of monetary value, thus there is no clear data for ROI of coaching yet.

But no matter the ROI, some companies are using external coaching now and then, some others are committed to building a coaching culture. Some companies are using executive coaching, and some are willing to use coaching for their employees.

**Current demand for coaching in the workplace**

The current demand for soft-skills development and the need to adapt to constant changes, placed coaching in the workplace on the rise. This can be evidenced by the increase in the number of studies on the topic of organisational coaching, such as the studies conducted by ICF from 2014 – Building a Coaching Culture (2014), Building a Coaching Culture for Employee Engagement (2015) and Building a Coaching Culture for Managers and Leaders (2016). In addition to these, ICF last global survey (2016), devoted an entire section to managers using coaching skills.

Taking into consideration the findings from these surveys, 66% of coaching clients are managers, 60% are executives and 56% are business owners. However, the share of executive clients suffered a slight decline from 2011, from 25% to 23%.

As shown in the last Building a Coaching Culture report, "the percentage of respondents who report that their organisations leverage managers/leaders using coaching skills has increased over the past three studies with a three-year average of 86%":


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**Do Companies Really Need Coaching? An Observation on the Available Data regarding Coaching at Work**

by Iulia Sorescu (Romania)
Why do companies need coaching?

All these numbers can be correlated with the business environment. Job insecurity, innovation, artificial intelligence, the rise of the millennial workforce and the need to adapt to their expectations, the gap between technological advancements and the rate of human adaptability are some of the changes that have to be addressed by companies.

To adapt to these global changes, organisations need rapid transformations which lead to higher responsibilities for leadership development, strategy planning, thus executive burn-out. Coaching has come as a solution to assist the organisation and its decision-makers.

Do companies really need coaching?

Looking to the available data regarding the situation of coaching in the workplace, there are some observations related to the real demand for organisational coaching. Do companies really need coaching or is it just a new trend for the learning and development departments?

Duality of data

On one hand, we have the companies and the executives claiming in favour of coaching and expressing confidence in its positive impact. On the other hand, there are still obstacles when it comes to apply coaching at work, among these being the lack of time, lack of accountability for using coaching, lack of budget, limited support from senior leaders and inability to measure impact.

Subjective resources

Most of resources on this topic, are reports and surveys conducted by coach training companies, such as those mentioned above, run by ICF. How reliable are these findings? How real is the demand of coaching at work and how many companies are actually experiencing coaching with the desired outcomes?

Comparing for example the ICF 2016 Study, Building a Coaching Culture for Managers and Leaders, and 2017 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends⁷, the approach to business environment is clearly different. While the first is emphasizing the benefits of coaching, the other is offering different solutions. Actually, in the second study, the word coaching appears only 11 times in 144 pages.

High-performers?

Another observation is that even though coaching works toward increasing employee engagement, most of the articles mention “increase the capabilities of high-potential performers”. But who are these high-potential performers? Based on what do companies decide who is taking advantage of coaching and who is not? On the assumption that the high-performers are rather the people who are most connected or well-placed in the work-networked, coaching is offered rather aleatory than based on the idea that every employee can use it for increased performance.

Conclusions

I wrote this article from a life coaching perspective, on the premises that coaching is supporting people with their development, learning and transformation. While I don’t deny the benefits of coaching at work (I actually think that it can do wonders), I find that we lack objective data regarding the use of coaching at work. Also, there are still some under-analysed issues, such as who benefits of coaching, beside executives and managers and how well can a coach combine the company’s interests with the coachee interests.

Given the fact that people are the biggest asset in a company, coaching can help enhance and better using their resources, thus contributing in a steadier way to the company’s performance and profit. But, would a company invest in coaching with the risk that the coachee might leave the company as the result of coaching? How many leaders/managers do a company need? And what is the case for the companies operating in developing economies?

About Iulia Sorescu

Life vision & enhancement coach with a passion for combining coaching with visual arts techniques

Iulia offers life coaching for high-flyer Millennials to transform their dreams into reality. The combination between goals setting and self-esteem boost with the visual arts is a perfect fit to keep them motivated and inspired. Using creative tools in her practice, she makes sure that the process of self-discovery is appealing and engaging.

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Beyond Mere Leadership to Engaging Leaders

‘There are leaders then there are Engaging Leaders’

by Steve Jones (UK)

In 2010 the UK Government commissioned ‘The MacLeod Review’ and titled “Engaging for Success – enhancing performance through employee engagement” which suggested that the cost to UK plc of disengagement of employees is between £59.4bn and £64.7bn a year.

I can never seem to get my head around such figures but what was apparent to me was that there was massive disengagement going on in the UK within its workforce.

The research showed that just 29% of employees were energised and committed to work. This meant that two-thirds of the workforce in the UK was disengaged. How could this be? It also revealed that if we were all motivated we would all be working a four day week; and that the UK were ranked 14th in motivational terms in Europe behind some third world countries. To me this was unbelievable but evidently true.

As I read more of the research it identified two things to me.

1. Leadership was poor in the UK
2. That there was a massive opportunity to use coaching methodologies as a solution.

I started to look at these simple but effective enablers. At the same time as I was looking at these enablers I was approached by Capita Symonds in Southampton. They had seen a presentation I had given on Motivation in Business and invited me to run a leadership programme for its managers.

This presented the perfect opportunity to design a program incorporating the 4 enablers, which gave birth to my ‘Engaging Leaders’ Program.

Using coaching methodology I was able to steer the team through a four-day program over a two-month period ending with them presenting their learning to Capita Symonds hierarchy on the 5th Day. Coaching methodologies when delivering training allow participants to create their own thinking around the frameworks provided rather than it being prescriptive.

I have since taken numerous individual and teams through this 4/5 day programme and one of the biggest comments I get is: Why isn’t this stuff taught to businesses? But this can only happen if companies have an appetite for engagement and in companies where employees feel involved, well-led and valued by those they work for. Developing the right attitudes, behaviours and outcomes are intrinsic to employee motivation and engagement.

Since the early days of this course I have now developed a complete Employee Engagement Programme and my first two clients through the programme have been nominated and won national awards for their ‘Employee Engagement’ and subsequent growth.

Both programmes in essence help individuals understand a whole raft of leadership employee engagement skills including:
Steve Jones is a well-known business coach, public speaker, trainer and consultant. Steve is an expert at creating ideas and strategies that build businesses, drive revenue and improve business position & performance. He has a passion for making companies and their products the best in their product category.

Steve’s unique understanding of leadership and management, team building and motivation in business, coupled with his understanding, drive and enthusiasm, clearly set him aside as an expert. More recently Steve has been invited onto the Government’s Employee Engagement Task Force team where he is now co-chair and has been contributing his knowledge in the areas of team building, motivation and performance improvement, whilst at the same time running a series of workshops for Grant Thornton’s Growth Accelerator Programme and new ‘G’ Programme.

**ABOUT STEVE JONES**

- How to visually design, show and describe the nine areas of their business to anyone, so that the most senior and junior staff can easily understand it.
- How to create a three year strategic plan and a one year breakthrough plan that is visual and again easy to follow all on single page canvas.
- How to understand individual and team motivation and personality
- Difference between leading & managing; leadership mindset and styles;
- Managing Performance (good & bad); change management; coaching individuals & teams.
- How to understand individual, team and business values so they can be aligned.

My message to all coaches would be develop programmes that enable the client to take ownership of the outcome by having frameworks for discussion, rather than prescriptive training programmes. The more fluid and intuitive you can keep it within the framework the better.

If you would like to know more about my programmes please do contact me.
Conflict in organisations is inevitable, and if not well managed it can cost organisations enormously – financially and otherwise. For instance, the price tag for training new staff to replace those who leave, as a consequence of poorly-managed conflict, is just one high expense. Medical and stress leave, legal and related costs associated with harassment, bullying and other such claims, loss of clients and lack of productivity all add up and have a serious impact on the bottom line. Effects on morale, working relationships, team unity and even the reputation of the workplace are all at risk, too, due to ill-managed conflict.

Since conflict is going to occur, there is nothing to be gained by avoiding its existence. This, among other things, means acknowledging that conflict is a normal part of working interdependently and is the starting point consideration in building both conflict intelligent leaders and a corporate culture of conflict competence. Accomplishing both objectives requires a shift in mindset to understand that most conflicts have components that signal unrest that can have destructive outcomes for staff and the organisation itself if mismanaged or not addressed. It also requires the understanding that well-managed conflict can result in innovative solutions, collaborative problem-solving, and improved morale and teamwork.

What is more, identifying the issues that lead to conflict in organisations provides a barometer that reflects job satisfaction, calibre of leadership skills, and what is needed to strengthen the human and structural foundation of the workplace. A major key to adapt ways to build and sustain those objectives is to normalise conflict and facilitate conflict engagement. Here are some ideas on this in an effort to develop conflict intelligent leaders and organisations.

NORMALISING CONFLICT

One major way to normalise conflict is to make effective conflict management a core competency with concrete descriptions of what that means for all staff. Providing whatever resources, training and coaching required to support and assess the expectations are, of course, vital. Similarly, evaluating and assessing conflict management skills for those applying to join or advance within the organisation also helps to make conflict intelligence a norm and a clear competency.

Another way to normalise conflict is the requirement that all new managers are coached to strengthen their ability to manage and engage in conflict. This not only adds to the acceptance of conflict as a real possibility in the workplace.

It also supports leaders in their quest to advance and actively contribute to the objective of building an overall culture of conflict competence.

In addition to these initiatives, having one or more easily accessible systems in place – such as conflict management coaching, mediation, peer review panels and facilitative group processes – provide forum for staff to prevent the unnecessary escalation of disputes and address those that do arise.

What constitutes conflict intelligent leaders?

Conflict intelligence refers, among other things, to the ability to regulate emotions, to have stellar listening skills, and to remain open to and inquisitive about the causes of workplace dissension. Leaders who are conflict intelligent also demonstrate empathy for and attunement to others’ interests and needs. They examine their own contribution to conflict and ways to improve, and they interact with dignity when provoked and under pressure.

Other signs of being conflict intelligent are reflected in leaders’ ability to deliver hard messages effectively. Similarly, they demonstrate the ability to receive and respond authentically and appropriately to challenges they encounter among staff, clients with whom they interact, meetings they chair and attend, and so on.

Conflict intelligent leaders are also somatically competent. That is, they are aware of how they present and portray themselves – facially and in their bodies – and work on changing these variables when they are told or are otherwise aware of how they preclude connection with others. Conflict intelligent leaders model ‘grace under fire’ and are conscious they do not use their power in ways that undermine, dismiss or threaten staff, clients and the many people with whom they interact.

Coaching that focuses on some or all of the above goals is often necessary for new and seasoned leaders alike. Skilled coaches employ tools and coaching models that focus on each leader’s particular idiosynchratic ways of being in conflict and assist them to identify what they need to become conflict intelligent.

The CINERGY® model of conflict management coaching was created in 1999 after significant research. It can take an average of 6 hours to effectively complete this model for specific disputes that clients present. This model is based on principles from coaching, conflict management and neuroscience and is comprised of the following seven steps. (The intention of each stage is also indicated.)
Clarify the goal - To determine what the client wants to accomplish in conflict management coaching.

Inquire about the Situation - To find out what situation led the client to want or be referred to conflict management coaching.

Name the Elements - To coach the client to deconstruct the specific conflict and analyse what happened for him or her and for the other person in their conflicts.

Explore Options - To consider and evaluate what optional plans of action may suit the situation and conflict dynamic for both the client and the other person.

Reconstruct the Situation - To rescript the conflict story and plan the optimum way forward.

Ground the challenges - To consider what barriers might preclude goal achievement.

Yes, the Commitment - To commit to when, where, etc. to act on the plan.

IN SUMMARY

Interpersonal conflict is typically complicated and fraught with challenges for those who do not manage it well. Poorly managed conflict can have a huge impact on organisations by having an adverse impact on productivity, working relationships and morale. However, coaching leaders and others to develop conflict intelligence by unbundling their disputes and ways of managing them is critical to their success and the health and well-being of the workplace. Using coaching skills and a specific frame that increases self-awareness and intentionality about constructive ways for clients to “be” intelligent when in conflict serves them, those around them and the organisation itself.

Effective communication is a critical skill that great business leaders use when there is a difficult message that needs delivering. Often when one has a difficult message to deliver the associated feelings are usually of anger, frustration or exasperation, “let me just get this over and done with”. The issues are often thrown at the other person involved so that it becomes entirely their own problem that needs solving. The best way to deliver a difficult message or discuss an issue is for the issue to be disassociated from the individual in order to collectively find a suitable solution. This helps avoid dehumanising or isolating the person receiving the message.

Being a business leader is a fairly thankless role; if things go wrong you are responsible and if things go right you feel guilty for taking the credit for someone else’s hard work. Taking on this role can often feel like walking around with a bullseye stuck to your back, which can manifest into feelings of isolation and loneliness, and so therein begins the development of unhealthy and unhelpful behaviour patterns to deal with the demands of the role. When you feel isolated the last thing you instinctively want to do is show any weakness. In the act of being strong you end up coming across as being cold and detached, to try to hide any weakness. Learning to become comfortable with vulnerability takes time.

The way that business leaders deliver a message and what they say can make or break their business. The way in which we communicate with one another in the work environment can have a significant impact on the outcome of a situation. On one hand, if proper care and consideration is not taken, the way in which we communicate can add significant stress. On the other hand, when honest, empathetic, well-informed communication is achieved, that interaction can be generative and create something new out of a difficult situation. In doing so more options and possibilities become available than one previously thought possible.

Developing this critical skill is possible by incorporating some new daily habits into one’s life:

1. Managing stress

When you are able to manage your internal chatter and stress levels it allows you the space for clarity and to step away from your habitual responses and feelings. Meditation begins in the brain and can induce a trance-like state. When in a state of meditation our parasympathetic nervous system ‘turns-off’ the sympathetic nervous system that is responsible for the actions of walking, talking and feeling stress. This allows for a deep state of rest and relaxation. Our nervous system controls our entire body and the emotions produced by our brains. Our physical bodies are one of the most fascinating and complex machines. When we suffer from stress, the body responds. The response is often tension in the muscles, increased heart rate, shallow and
fast breathing and we increase the production of cortisol in our bodies which can have long term health implications.

When we can master the control of our thoughts and emotions, we can step away from our habitual responses and communicate at a level of empathy and with a problem solving mind set.

2 Stepping into someone else’s shoes

An easy exercise to try in order to be able to step into someone else’s shoes is perceptual positioning. It allows us to become the observer of our own reactions and changes that happen in our own body as we speak to this person (for example does your breathing change when you speak to them? Does your posture change when you interact with this person you dislike, as opposed to someone you like?). It allows us to also metaphorically step into someone else’s shoes and imagine what it is like for them to receive the message we deliver. Giving you the opportunity to explore new options, to help yourselves and the other person become unstuck from the habitual narrative.

Many MD’s and CEO’s I speak with believe their organisation is inclusive and everyone is part of ‘one big happy family’, yet the majority of their staff do not feel this way. Families by their very nature are dysfunctional and communicating without authenticity and connection can lead to unhappiness. There are families who function better in their dysfunction than others, not because they are the perfect family but because they have learnt how to communicate with one another in a more authentic and caring manner. Their interactions keep in mind the greater good of the collective and less so purely in benefit of the self, and there is a greater sense of happiness. Learning to deliver difficult messages constructively is a big part of creating a well-functioning, dysfunctional work ‘family’ that are engaged, motivated and productive.

Learning to listen is also part of effective message delivery and can help you deal with the issue in a non-judgemental manner. Free your hearing space to listen instead of queuing up another question or comment before the other person has finished talking. It is a skill we can all do with in order to really hear what people are saying. Once you have mastered this skill you will be able to uncover so much valuable information.

If you give all the information you are being presented with time to settle you are able to develop a broader understanding of the situation. Once you have heard different perspectives, it gives you the opportunity to explore new options, to help yourselves and the other person become unstuck from the habitual narrative.

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ABOUT KAVITHA CHAHEL

Kavitha Chahel is the founder and MD of Compassionism Ltd, a leadership coaching and training company focusing on helping business leaders create profitable businesses through highly engaged teams and by getting comfortable with their fear and vulnerability to connect with their compassion.

She is an experienced business coach and company director. For nearly 20 years she has worked in business development, marketing, business leadership and strategy across the corporate, public and charitable sectors. She is also a non-executive director of Asha Projects, a charity that provides safe housing to women and children fleeing domestic violence. She has worked with clients across EMEA, the Americas and APAC. Recently Kavitha published her new book ‘Compassionism’ and APAC. Recently Kavitha published her new book ‘Compassionism’.

That is why I strongly believe that the number one trait of a leader is VISION.

Vision is something that you see from within yourself. It is not something you create. It is something that arises from inside. Otherwise, it is not a vision, it is just a goal.

Of course that there are many people who have a vision or a dream. What truly qualifies a person to become a leader is his or her ability to give life to that vision. It is the phronesis that Aristotle was discussing in Nicomachian Ethics, Book 6. Phronesis, or practical wisdom, refers to “an individual’s capacity to discern what is worth doing together with the ability to get it done.” (Richard Halverson, Representing phronesis: supporting instructional leadership practice in schools, Northwestern University, 2002)

As Aristotle put it, practical wisdom “is not concerned with universal only, but with human affairs.”

Nobody follows a vision! People follow people and your ability to inspire others to work with you toward your vision to transform it into reality can create a real movement. That is why a vision should always come from the heart of its leader and it should be communicated to every person involved in the organisation, including your business partners.

Having a vision shows you and your people where you are going. Although vision determines the direction that people should follow, no vision stays the same in time. It will extend over time into something much bigger than you can imagine. A leader without vision is not a leader. Without having a clear vision, no organisation can survive.

In his biography, Steve Jobs recalls that he could see what the future of computing was destined to be.

By having a compelling vision, you will be able to gain more clarity on your priorities and upcoming challenges. The moment you lose your vision, you lose your ability to lead.

What is your vision today? Where do you see yourself and your company in the future? How far do you want to go?

The second most important trait for a leader is INTEGRITY.
Integrity is essential for every leader and it is about being the same on the inside as you are on the outside. In other words, integrity begins within. Integrity is something that you build every day and it should always be based on staying true to yourself and your core values. It is easy to pretend being a person with integrity, but we all face situations when our integrity is being tested.

Andrew Carnegie once said: A business is seldom, if ever, built up except for lines of the strictest integrity.

A true leader will not allow external factors to decide over his or her integrity, but it will make it a personal issue and always decide accordingly. So, integrity is about who we really are because who we are determines what we do. You cannot separate the way a leader acts from his integrity. The integrity of the leader is the main way of building trust with others which also brings influence. Warren Bennis put it this way: “Integrity is the basis of trust, which is not so much an ingredient of leadership as it is a product.”

Take a few minutes and do this small exercise: How would you rate your integrity on a scale from one to ten? Not only in your business, but in your personal life also.

The third most important trait of a leader is HUMANITY.

If you are going to make a difference in the world, you need to create a business that is based on humanity, not on profits only. That means you should look at your business as helping you and your people become more than you are while serving others to obtain what they want and making profits in the same time.

That is why continuous education through leadership trainings, coaching programs and also some spiritual practices should play an important role in the strategy of every company. Every leader needs a group of people around him not to compete with him, but to complete him. And leading with humanity is what inspire others to achieve their highest potential.

What does it really mean to you to connect with yourself and with others? You can not run a business without running people’s heart first.

What with Britain’s looming fall out with Europe and the USA’s current fall out with the rest of the world, this year has been a very tumultuous time for business. On top of the general current of business of Britain’s shores being stronger and choppier than ever, there is the uncertainty caused by the unsustainable printing of money within our shores - euphemistically called quantitative easing (QE) - making for a wholly uncertain commercial landscape. Business leaders are being forced to have a quick and thorough rethink of their strategies, making it a time to position for survival if ever there was one in the face of the coming tectonic changes. And that involves the ability to manage one’s business through the change.

The worry is that Change Management (CM) initiatives are prone to failure when handled incorrectly. So during a period in which effective change can be the defining factor of a business’s survival, it is essential that leaders learn how to use CM to their benefit, and thereby avoid their demise.

So much effort is put into drawing up their CM plans that many leaders find themselves devoid of time or energy to spend making sure that any new schemes actually work. After all, it is a lot to handle when you are already working full time to make your business a success. But in the face of the introduction of new tariffs on EU trade, the potential loss of EU labours, the QE pressure-cooker threatening to blow, and evermore frequent cyber attacks, it is important to know exactly what needs doing to ensure that any changes made are not in vain.

I have painted a rather bleak picture, but you won’t need me to remind you that well-prepared businesses have in the past profited from times of crisis. With that in mind, here are my top tips for the most effective way to manage your business through the change.

STEP #1 You will need a vision for change to guide you from the beginning of the change process and throughout. Right at the start, sit down and give plenty of thought to your company’s current position, the likely trends and characteristics of your industry in the near future, and what needs changing within your company. This is the time to exploit the wisdom of the crowd and by that I mean that the knowledge resides within your workforce and other stakeholders. If you put in lots of effort when it comes to creating an action plan and digging deep to obtain a clear insight of where you are and where you should be heading, you save yourself a lot of hassle later on. Determine exactly what you plan to do and, through canvassing everyone from the get-go, make certain that everyone you need to be involved is standing shoulder to shoulder with you. A shared vision is likely to be a more fruitful one.
You will need the ability to get things done: power is an essential ingredient. Business leadership has always required a quick-thinking and straight-talking figurehead, but more than ever, reliable authority is needed. This doesn’t mean throwing your weight around and dictating, but rather encouraging the input of others and collaborating with them, before making executive final decisions. This will ensure you have the confidence to put your name to these decisions. This authority must be used not only within the confines of the office, but outwardly too, to make the company’s presence known and properly established as a source of pride for your employees. No Change Management program is going to be completely without hiccups, so it is important that your colleagues can look to you for strength and reassurance during difficult times, so establish yourself and keep it consistent.

Engagement - without it, your Change Management efforts are going nowhere. Engaging your employees not only means caring about them and their needs on a day-to-day basis, but now making them the primary source of your company’s change plans. Many a study has recorded the various benefits of employee engagement, from boosted productivity to higher morale and even stronger immune systems, and those who successfully engage their employees will notice a positive vibe throughout the organisation. Employees will feel appreciated and that their input is worth giving, and as a result will work co-operatively and efficiently. Just what you need when the waters are choppy and storms are circling.

The involvement of your movers and shakers in managing the required change is key – you want them lobbying for the change, not against it. Identifying such people is easy: they will be the ones whose passion you notice most in the many meetings you will hold throughout the company to discuss what’s working and what needs to be changed. When you ask for help in pushing specific changes forward, be they to systems, processes or behaviours, they will be the ones who take a step forward and volunteer.

Finally, measurement is essential if you want your CM program to gain traction. All the hard work and employee engagement in the world can disappear straight down the drain if you have no quantifiable way of measuring the success and therefore no reliable basis for acknowledging and saluting each step forward. Despite it being the final step to this guide, this is a consideration that should be made right at the beginning, so you can design your actions around the concept of measurability. Your efforts will only be worthwhile, and will only promise longevity, if you can see concrete evidence of change and learn from your successes and failures. In times of difficulty, you can use your recorded successes to prove to yourselves that you can do it, and to encourage you to go on.

Experts have declared that we are now in the middle of the fourth industrial revolution - putting the current era on par with the Industrial Revolution in terms of the pace of change. It means that new thinking is essential to survive let alone thrive. By heightening your senses, tapping into the senses of your workforce, and committing to Change Management, you are in a strong position to knock any curveballs for six, and thereby see yourself and your team through difficult times.

In recent years, the theory of strategic thinking has gained steam in the business world. While it follows the same outline as strategic planning, it differs in that it allows more flexibility, greater creativity, and more collaboration among multiple levels of management.

Essentially, strategic thinking is a method outlining the following:

- Understanding the implications of strategic actions
- Holding the past, present and future in mind in order to make effective decisions
- Focusing on the goal of the action with the intent of achieving it
- Combining critical and creative thinking to all decisions
- “Intelligent optimism,” the ability to respond to good opportunities

Each of these steps is categorised into the following 7 areas:

- Vision of the future
- Strategic formulation & implementation
- Managerial role in strategy making
- Control
- Managerial role in implementation
- Strategy Making
- Process and Outcome

VISION OF THE FUTURE:
Only the shape of the future can be predicted. The past and present have already been set and cannot be changed.

STRATEGIC FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION:
Formulation and implementation are more interactive rather than sequential and discrete. This is a more interactive way to strategise and involves multiple levels of managerial roles, providing creative input and potentially improving the results.

MANAGERIAL ROLE IN STRATEGY MAKING:
Lower-level managers have a voice in strategy-making, as well as greater latitude to respond opportunistically to developing conditions. In the past, strategic thinking was generally reserved for closed-door meetings with upper management. This method employs feedback with lower-level management, who has direct contact with employees and clients.

CONTROL:
Relies on self-reference – a sense of strategic intent and purpose embedded in the minds of managers and employees throughout the organisation that guides their choices on a daily basis in a process that is often difficult to measure and monitor from above. This empowers managers and employees to think strategically about their actions and resulting outcomes.

**MANAGERIAL ROLE IN IMPLEMENTATION:**

All managers understand the larger system, the connection between their roles and the functioning of that system, as well as the interdependence between the various roles that comprise the system. With an understanding, they will be able to recognise actions that support the system, and lead others to do the same.

**STRATEGY MAKING:**

Sees strategy and change as inescapably linked and assumes that finding new strategic options and implementing them successfully is harder and more important than evaluating them. This rule puts ideas into action and places the importance of the application rather than extensive and time-consuming evaluation before action. Change is happening all the time, so the time to implement the strategy is now – not later. So you can capitalise on the benefits.

**PROCESS AND OUTCOME:**

Sees the planning process itself as a critical value-adding element. As a business owner, you know the importance of planning, but getting there can sometimes seem tedious. The process is seen as a valuable piece, since it brings greater creativity and potential with its broader managerial scope.

Whether you run a small business or a large corporation, strategic thinking can help your business run more efficiently and effectively. Here are five steps to implementing Strategic Thinking in your business.

**STEP #1**  
Have a vision for your business.  
This is the basis for all strategic thinking. If you don’t know where your business is going, how do you know what to do to get there? Write out a mission statement for your business – remember to think big! Businesses that achieve great success always have great visionaries behind them.

**STEP #2**  
Have clear and focused goals and milestones.  
Once you’ve written your mission statement, you have the big picture. From there, create smaller milestones or goals that are very focused and specific. Be sure they include target dates. Your entire team should be on the same page in order to be in the highest probability position to achieve all the goals.

**STEP #3**  
Learn to work efficiently and effectively.  
This takes a combination of building the right team, creating the right systems and documenting them, and delegating for optimal results. When your business runs at its optimal level, it’s easier to see the positive results of leverage.

**STEP #4**  
Remain aware of the direction your team is headed.  
This does not mean you should micro-manage, but you, as a leader, should always have an understanding of how the actions of your team affects the future of your business. Look for ways to keep the team focused on the goals. Come up with creative ideas for supporting them, which will help them to remain enthused and go the extra mile.

**STEP #5**  
Keep your eyes open for golden opportunities.  
When you are prepared, you can take advantage of opportunities that your competition may not be ready to take. Support creative input from your team and teach them how to spot an opportunity that will create more opportunity and growth.

Strategic Thinking is not a new way of thinking; many successful large organisations have used these practices to establish a clear and precise path on which to carry out their vision. It is essentially a critical thinking process in which all business details are written down in black and white, so that all team members work cooperatively to drive success in the most direct path with the least resistance. Applying Strategic Thinking practices to your small business will accelerate your success by allowing a crystal clear focus to drive daily tasks - for you and your team.

To download a complimentary sample of The Strategic Thinking Model that can help you apply being an even better strategic thinker, go to [http://www.accountabilitycoach.com/strategic-thinking-model/](http://www.accountabilitycoach.com/strategic-thinking-model/).

**ABOUT ANNE M. BACHRACH**

Anne M. Bachrach is known as The Accountability Coach™. She has 23 years of experience training and coaching. Business owners and entrepreneurs who utilize Anne’s proven systems and processes work less, make more money, and have a more balanced and successful life. Anne is the author of the books, Excuses Don’t Count; Results Rule!, and Live Life with No Regrets; How the Choices We Make Impact Our Lives, and The Work Life Balance Emergency Kit.
Liberating Intelligence into Performance through Coaching!

by Dr. Paddy Pampallis (South Africa)

"I believe that if you show people the problems and you show them the solutions they will be moved to act."

-Bill Gates

In today’s fast-paced and demanding world of business, organisations, leaders and employees are constantly being asked to, “up their game” and manage more complex and interrelated systems to achieve results and meet ever-increasing targets.

Organisations are run by people. People like you and me who are being asked (and often told) to increase our capacity using what we have and sometimes, even less than we had to begin with in terms of resources and support! We are expected to perform and meet targets and manage ourselves, others, systems and culture. This is a complex challenge.

• How do you engage with your potential and that of your team, to cultivate and liberate the existing intelligence into the performance?

• How do you take care of self, others, systems and the culture of the organisation by having crucial and clear conversations?

• How do you empower your people to manage their roles, tasks, lives and their work through transition and change, while connecting to the purpose of your company?

You listen, explore, engage, liberate, crystallise and get commitment to action. You coach!

Coaching is a professional, collaborative and outcomes driven method of learning that seeks to develop an individual and raise self awareness so that s/he might achieve specific goals and perform at a more effective level.

- COMENSA

(Comkeeping and Mentors of South Africa)

Introduction to Coaching & Managing Performance

Coaching has at its’ core, helping an individual or team to look at where they are currently situated, and where they want to be, as well as the barriers, and the opportunities for getting there. This process engages self-awareness, judgement, maturity, and will, to catalyse critical observation practices and action that can bring about the desired reality and the outcomes or objectives that are critical to the work we do and the lives we live.

Coaching has evolved over the last two decades, as one of the key modalities of support and growth of individuals within the organisational setting. There are many different types of coaching which address different areas of work and levels of leadership, management and performance.

We distinguish between:

1. Transactional coaching (and management): This entails doing what needs to be done - only better and more effectively;

2. Transitional coaching (and management/leadership): This enables leaders to shift the way they do things and the roles they play to hold more complexity so they can be more skilful;

3. Transformational coaching (and leadership): This facilitates development through increasing the individual’s capacity and ways of thinking about the business to be more inclusive and systemic while growing, self, others and the business.

Coaching can thus be a skill using a simple questioning framework, or it can be a deeply transformative process that addresses the very structures of the way we do things in the business world, and importantly, the way we think about things. This in turn forms our very habits of action. Whatever level of coaching that we engage in, we know that the ‘espoused and lived’ values of our own lives enhance the work that we do if these are congruent. Most of us have favoured ways of thinking and doing things: some useful and others not so much!

Coaching is about asking people questions to encourage them to come up with the answers themselves, thus gaining insight and taking
ownership of the situation. Performance management is about setting objectives in collaboration with people who need to improve, and working with them to determine how to best achieve those objectives.

Management is the process of planning, organising, leading and controlling the resources of a business to achieve goals as efficiently as possible.

(Smith and de Cronje, 1997).

Organisations that are achieving success have done so by moving away from a command and control mindset towards one of self-empowerment and collective responsibility: a stance that suggests that people operate along a continuum of needing direction (transactional work) to include skills that can equally manage people who are able to be more self-authoring, self-managing and self-generating. An effective manager changes their approach, according to what the situation and the team member needs. Coaching that is developmental will work with the specific needs and capacities of each individual employee or team member to achieve needed results.

"We believe that if you work with people to understand the challenges being faced, and then co-create the solutions, they will be moved to act and take ownership of the learning it has offered them. It moves people from dependency to independence and creates the pathway to becoming interdependent."

- Dr Paddy Pampallis.

To wrap up: Coaching positions itself from an action inquiry stance that is able to tap into each individual coachee’s mode of operating to elicit self-accountability towards high-performance. Effective coaching will ensure that you have quality conversations that create accountability, motivation and performance in line with your company strategy at a broad level and translate this into your organisational goals!
**10 TIPS on being a Good Leader**

by Andy Johnson (South Africa)

What? More Advice! There are undoubtedly more books, articles and quotes about leadership than almost any other topic. However, The template for the “ideal leader” in any organisation is not the same today as it was five years ago, and it will not be a good fit for the needs of five years hence – not least because leadership is inextricably linked to situations. Those situations which leaders encounter is often novel, and usually unpredictable. Leadership does, after all, involve dealing with one of the most complex organisms on this planet – the human being!

Even if some basic leadership characteristics remain constant, the ways in which those needs to be manifested are subject to change – personal style is a major factor and authenticity remains an essential factor. Leading is one of life’s most intense personal experiences. It develops better and faster when learned than when taught – so that while advice provided by books, courses and webinars can provide some clues, it is putting that knowledge into action, and reflecting on the results, then taking steps to improve the outcome on the next occasion, which will develop the truly successful leader.

So here are some thoughts to aid that process of applied leadership. To introduce them, I have used some inspiring quotes.

1. “It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership.”

   —Nelson Mandela

   This sentiment has often been expressed, but is so valuable it bears repeating. When there are plaudits to be handed out, make sure they go to your followers. When there is blame to be accepted or difficult challenges to be faced, step up!

2. “One of the tests of leadership is the ability to recognise a problem before it becomes an emergency.”

   —Arnold Glasow

   One of the particularly important leadership traits is, I believe, the ability to look ahead – scan the horizon for possible storm clouds when everyone else is basking in the sunshine. A great leader needs to be optimistic in the sense of providing confidence and assurance to their followers, but that does not mean that privately, they should be regularly asking the question “What could go wrong now?”

3. “What you do has far greater impact than what you say.”

   —Stephen Covey

   Never underestimate the degree to which, as a leader, you are under continuous scrutiny. Everything you do – or do not do – will be analysed and interpreted by your followers. Furthermore, if you are not congruent in word and deed, those interpretations will often be far from the messages you intended to communicate.

4. “Leaders must be close enough to relate to others, but far enough ahead to motivate them.”

   —John C. Maxwell

   As a leader, you may typically spend a lot of time thinking around an issue before you reach a position when you can share your thinking with others. There is a risk that you overlook that time when you come to share your conclusion, and jump too far ahead too quickly for your followers to keep pace or understand. Remember always to make sure that your followers are still with you – share your thinking and motives, and check for understanding before rushing ahead.

5. “Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.”

   —John F. Kennedy

   Leaders often talk about leaving a legacy – what better than to leave a group of well developed, competent and confident people who can continue to deliver excellence after you, as their leader, has moved on?
"When I give a minister an order, I leave it to him to find the means to carry it out."

—Napoleon Bonaparte

A leader has to be able to recognise the things that he or she uniquely can do, and devote time to doing them. The corollary of this is being able to recognise the things the leader does not need to do – and stopping doing them. This often means getting out of our comfort zone and dealing with the tricky stuff.

"A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be."

—Rosalynn Carter

A leader often has to take decisions and act in complex situations when there is no obvious single course of action. However, a word of caution – beware of the 'leader always knows best' syndrome. The leader may always have to make the final decision and take responsibility for it, but that does not mean that soliciting the views of others is a sign of weakness or poor leadership.

"Management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success; leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall."

—Stephen Covey

A slightly different take on ‘doing things right’ as opposed to ‘doing the right things’. However, it is the leader’s responsibility to make sure that the direction or vision of the team is thoroughly tested and regularly reviewed to make sure, in this rapidly changing environment, that it remains relevant and appropriate.

The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority."

—Kenneth Blanchard

Leadership today is certainly an activity that succeeds with the permission of one’s followers, not by some assumed or traditional authoritarian right. Being able to encourage, support and guide in equal measure, and being able to understand what style is required at various times, are key skills for any good leader.

"Whatever you are, be a good one."

—Abraham Lincoln

What an excellent objective – as a leader, you can only be yourself, so focus your energies on being the best you can be, and continuing to improve, rather than comparing yourself with others. So get feedback whenever possible on your effectiveness, and act on it.

Energy is a currency we exchange every day. Indeed, humans, like any other species, are intrinsically energetic beings that have taken on a material form. We are directly connected to each other emotionally and instinctively via electro-magnetic wave forms which are a fundamental dynamic of our universe and which provide subconscious communications bridges between us.

To understand this better, we need to briefly consider the evolution of the human brain. The instinctive and emotional systems of our brains were established well before the human neocortex gave us the capability of rational thought and language. For many thousands of years, humans communicated in the same way that most mammals did: it was more body to body communication than mind to mind. The mental capacities and communication skills we have today were simply not available to the primitive human mind. Instead, the successful human cooperation depended entirely on having a mutual sensitivity to our body states, positioning and the basic noises we could make. If we could not talk through language to communicate, we could at least see, hear and sense each other.

We all love to be energised by the people we choose to follow and associate with; and organisational leaders who can sustain a positive energetic impact on their people are worth their weight in gold. Yet, so often, our lack of understanding of interpersonal energetic dynamics means that such outcomes are left to chance and many opportunities missed.

The natural communication medium available to humans was energy, and we learned to communicate through transmitting and receiving of our respective energetic states. Many emotional states were (and are still) universal to all humans and could therefore be shared to achieve collective understanding. Laughter is an obvious example of a primal communication behaviour which allowed the sharing of a universal emotion, that of happiness. Similarly, we developed non-verbal gestures and energetic postures to communicate fear, anger, sadness, disgust and shame. These were the fundamental building blocks of human interaction long before language came along.

Why is this relevant now? Because we are not “just” humans, we are humans who were once mammals and who, in turn, were once reptiles and the mammalian and reptilian parts of our brain are still with us, still doing what they are supposed to do and still doing it as actively as ever.

The reptilian brain, more specifically the basal system, is the source of our instinctive responses and constantly serves to protect us from threat;
the mammalian brain (the limbic system) looks for emotional connection and social bonding. The “problem” is that all of this goes on below the level of our conscious awareness. We are constantly communicating heart to heart and gut to gut, but our rational brain cannot directly access these networks. The fact that the electro-magnetic dimension is not visible to us, and that all of this exchange has been going on at a subconscious level, have combined to mean that it has been all too easy for us to assume that the source of human behaviour is conscious thought, something we could at least recognise and acknowledge.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The speed of the unconscious regions of our brain is significantly quicker than the regions where we process conscious thought. Consequently, our thoughts and reflections can only ever trail in the wake of our instincts and emotions. The best our rational thoughts can hope for are making sense of what has already happened and attempting to moderate how we will encounter and experience similar future events.

We have all been in situations where we can sense the mood of another person or group before anything is said or overtly displayed. We have all met people who have an energetic impact on us: the confident manner of a successful leader who transmits a feeling of assurance and conviction; the contagious enthusiasm of the extravert who wants to liven up proceedings; the leader who transmits a feeling of assurance and control of what has already happened and attempting to moderate how we will encounter and experience similar future events.

Our bodies are communicating before the conscious mind has yet had a chance to make sense of it. Our hearts have their own neurological network which operates without significant dependence on the human brain. This is sometimes referred to as the “cardiac brain” and has a critical role in our experience of emotions. Similarly, located within our gut is the “enteric brain”, another sophisticated neural network which is central to our instincts.

This is the world of unconscious interpersonal impact, a potential that can be effectively harnessed as energetic priming, the hidden dimension of effective leadership. Leaders who have an energising effect on their people are far more likely to get a successful response than those who drain energy or create defensive energy. If leaders go into a situation feeling tense or defeated, there is a great chance that they will create exactly the same response in their colleagues. Those who approach similar challenges with clarity and confidence are far more likely to succeed.

This is a deeper challenge than simply controlling our behaviour. We can learn to behave “professionally” but if our feelings are transmitting negativity, our colleagues will see the behaviour as simply “toeing the line” or “putting on a brave face”. In these circumstances, the heart will determine what is true and the mind will follow.

This is not a nuance or simple irritation; it strikes at the core of organisational effectiveness. Insensitive leadership drives people into defensive behaviour, where they feel the need to put their own survival needs above those of the organisation because there is a lack of collective integrity and trust. The term “sensitivity” would itself not necessarily resonate well with modern corporate parlance; it smacks of being “soft” and indecisive. Sensitivity here should not imply panicking to emotional weakness or distraction; it should represent a true awareness of people dynamics and how they can be best influenced to achieve successful outcomes.

The result of insensitive leadership is a constant undercurrent of misalignment and tension: the cost of this conflict, if measured, would feature in big red numbers in any profit and loss statement or balance sheet. On the other hand, directly impacting the energy of others and creating the right level of positive intensity has always been vital to high performance in the world of professional athletes; the same principle applies in organisations.

The real challenge here for leaders is being able to transmit the right sort of energy. We have learned that we cannot “con” people on an energetic level; the words may sound ok but integrity can only be transmitted if we are convinced ourselves. It follows therefore that handling our own energy as leaders is as crucial as any attempt to manage the energy of others. We often hear references to exceptional leaders having “gravitas”, so what is this? People who are seen to have gravitas have learned (probably intuitively) to “centre” their own energy. By understanding and trusting the internal source of their own energy (alignment between heart, brain and gut) they transmit energy rather than take it from others. They therefore become a source of energy supply and others in their presence will sense this and tap into it. In this state they are transmitting a strong electro-magnetic signal and group engagement can amplify this effect.

This challenge presents a significant opportunity for coaches. Coaches who can heighten the awareness of their clients to energy dynamics can open up a whole new level of connection and purpose. The coaching journey is an ideal opportunity to explore this, given the highly personal nature of the experience. Supporting a coachee to become more aware, not only of the significance of interpersonal energetic exchange, but also of his or her own world of bodily sensations and responses, is a rich vein of emotional and instinctive intelligence to explore with the real promise of golden nuggets to be found for those who search the hardest.
When the Going Gets Tough (Part 1)

Executive Coaching for Career Enhancement of Senior MBA Awarded Managers

by Sylvia Pavlova (Bulgaria)

Wheeling the clock back 6 years ago, it came to pass during one of the coffee breaks between lectures. There circulated in the air small talks among people whom I met for the first, and may be the last, time. Typically, we were shifting subjects all too quickly. So there we were happening to look into the effect that MBA program had produced. The lady I was in talk with – an OUB official, was stating quotes referring to the data delivered by the regular research run amidst MBA students. One of whom, myself actually. Speaking of which, this subject stirred extremely high interest. That said, my high interest scaled up into an astonishment given the outcome. The majority of the OUBS students, 95% of whom senior managers, undertake an about-turn in both their career path and personal life, still in the course of their studies!

That was the bottom line of the research. Moreover, this fact has been there to keep with us for all these years!

It is most sure to keep on this very track, given that the MBA education is one of those particular steps in life which are undertaken only TO bring about a real change in one’s life. Notably, that change is the MBA credo. The specific shapes and colours that change is going to assume is going to vary. Typically, we were shifting subjects all too quickly. That is why we need to keep on track, given that the MBA education is one of those particular steps in life which are undertaken only TO bring about a real change in one’s life. Notably, that change is the MBA credo. The specific shapes and colours that change is going to assume is going to vary.

Regardless of whether one has set his sights at some personal enhancement and accomplishment – which is truly the most frequent reason underpinning the MBA studies undertaken by female, or one has set his sights on climbing upstairs the hierarchy – as happens to be the most frequently admitted reason underpinning the MBA enrolment by male – the MBA education must by inference be translated into a verbal change of life!

There are cases where the change comes about by way of a fresh job proposal extended by another employer. Still, there are cases where the change turns up as a promotion supposing climbing up the hierarchy/particularly true whenever the employer has set the MBA program as a premise to one’s career development.

However, there are cases, to be sure, where no change is coming up, or at least it does not click into place so easily. There are cases where MBAs part of their employer geared toward souring out a more flattering proposal. There are even some MBAs who are prepared to run a greater risk facing the decision to shift from the corporate area to entrepreneurship.

Now, in a couple of articles we are going to study the most frequent hypothesis – scenarios experiencing the unwilling variance of the preferences of the MBA professional holding a high corporate office, from the hard facts – the real circumstances of his/her life. Given that variance, no change has been triggered following the MBA, or such a change has rather happened to be negative. We are going to have a closer look upon several ways to overcome such ‘dead-end street’ situations.

The 3 dimensions of career change

All the way down my experience as Executive Career Coach, I have assisted the career change of tens of senior managers holding the MBA degree. Despite of the fact that each case has its deep specifics, the solutions gravitate around any of the following three dimensions:

1. Change of one’s functional area
2. Change of one’s industry
3. Change by way of climbing up one’s hierarchy or a change by way of coupling any 2 or 3 of the said dimensions

The more dimensions you are set on changing, all the more complex the change to be effectuated. That said, I am far from saying ‘impossible’, rather ‘complex’. In other words, you would want a career development strategy, plus, you shall be supposed to go through the change pursuing a step-by-step approach.

HYPOTHESIS 1: Following a comfortable long experience within a particular functional area / such as, for example, accountancy, human resources, etc./ you end up feeling like that is not exactly your area. As such, you would want to shift into an entirely new area.

HYPOTHESIS 2: The MBA education has supplied you a most valuable view, thus you feel you are all there and up to climbing up to the next level. Despite, you have no such arrangements made with your employer.

HYPOTHESIS 3: You come to the decision that your change of company would necessarily entail a change of your industry also.

HYPOTHESIS 4: You feel the corporate life lays constraints upon you, therefore it is high time you set up a business of your own.

HYPOTHESIS 5: Once you have tried out/brought about one or more of the hypotheses,
Today – almost four years later, I can realise the change was coming round from numerous and various unexpected ways. One of which, in particular, the one which would have been precluded from effectuation, if I had not held the MBA degree, was an opening for me to get in on the mentoring scheme and the Executive Coaching of OUBS MBA students and managers constituents of CMI (The Chartered Management Institute, UK), who were striving at effectuating the Change of their life (change noted for its capital ‘C’) in a way to enjoy a return on their investment in MBA within shortest possible terms, thus well bringing this investment of theirs to good use.

First, it came about as a welcome surprise. For the last year of my MBA studies, I was extended a job proposal in the business department of a world media in an English-speaking country. The only requirement I was set, was to pack my papers, and take the plane. The thing was, I had to keep bases in Bulgaria. And so did I.

Next, it came about as an unwelcome surprise. On my first business day following the ceremony about in my case.

In our next article we will focus upon the ways, introducing a change in any of the hypotheses.

You are certainly curious to know the way the change happened to be brought about in my case.

Sylvia Pavlova graduated the international MBA program with OUBS, UK, 4 years ago. The program stands amidst the 1% top MBA programs in terms of accreditation worldwide. For the last year of her studies, Sylvia got acknowledged by her colleagues as one of the five most influential MBA students in OUBS. Immediately after her graduation, Sylvia has been chosen to accede the 42 MBA international mentors and executive coaches with the university. She has acted as the executive coach of senior MBA managers from OUBS, Henley Business School, University of Leicester, Bocconi.

Since 2017, she has been an international Certified Management Consultant in Business Development and Operational Effectiveness. She is a managing shareholder on the start-up SP Business Lab. She is responsible for the international development of a technological start-up established in Bulgaria.

ABOUT SYLVIA PAVLOVA

1 Patience

A manager is a person who is trained to act accordingly to the numbers of the business. On the other hand, the leader has the patience of a parent. A leader understands the process of learning, of making mistakes and then trying again. A leader trusts his team, and he knows that at the end of the process of learning there is performance. Remember the patience your parents used to have when you were little? Even though they were tired they knew that one day you will walk by yourself. Remember this type of patience next time you see a new colleague that does not fit in the first weeks or your team member doesn’t “produce” within the first days. Give them time, space, encourage them like a parent. A leader understands the process of learning, of making mistakes and then trying again. A leader trusts his team, and he knows that at the end of the process of learning there is performance. Remember the patience your parents used to have when you were little? Even though they were tired they knew that one day you will walk by yourself. Remember this type of patience next time you see a new colleague that does not fit in the first weeks or your team member doesn’t “produce” within the first days. Give them time, space, encourage them like a parent.

2 Offers the very best

A leader offers the best for his team – the best environment for performance, the best learning opportunities, clear procedures, etc. This is because a leader knows how performance is made. Remember the first day of school when your parents offered you the best clothes they could afford, best pen, best notebooks? They were the first leaders you have ever met.

More than this, they offered you support – helped you with your homework, answered your questions listened to your dilemmas. Leaders offer their very best and, more than that, they offer support & help every step of the way ‘till you handle it by yourself.

3 Freedom to fly when you are ready

We all learn our lessons. And when we learn the main lessons that life offers us, we call ourselves “grown-ups”.

There is a similar process in leadership – you “grow” people, teach them the best, help them until one day you realise that they are “professional grownups” and it’s time to offer them freedom, but also more responsibilities. Leadership is the art of growing people, knowing when to leave them to fly and that eventually help them outgrow you and be okay with that.

ABOUT LORAND SOARES SZASZ

Business Coach & Speaker

One of the most appreciated experts in the accelerated growth of Romanian companies. He is the author of several books on business development. Lorand supports seminars, entrepreneurship courses and sales every month across the country and abroad.

Why Leadership is pretty much like Parenting

Leadership Tips from Parenting

by Lorand Soares Szasz

(Romania)
Executive Coaching for Inspiring Leadership
Why leaders need Executive Coaching and how will it benefit them

by Nadia Themis – iCN Journalist (Cyprus)

We all go through immense changes in our work and personal lives all the time. Think of yourself where you were two years back and observe yourself today. Your reaction is probably, Oh my! Lots have changed, you have changed and you are most likely gone through various shifts and realizations about yourself. People in leadership positions go through the same motions and notions like you and I. I had the chance to interview Eleni Demosthenous, founder and Executive Coach of REFLECT.

NT: What about Leadership Development today? What are the issues?

People who take on the responsibility to lead others are usually in the spotlight of their organizations. Everyone expects them to have the answers, provide direction, manage a crisis, empower others to lead, have a clear vision for the future, set up systems and do all of that with courage and integrity. The truth of the matter is that people in leadership positions do not possess the experience or the competency framework of these expectations from before they were given the opportunity.

That’s why so much energy and resources go into leadership development programs as good investment for outstanding business results. The issue with leadership development is that most CEO’s have a challenging time to translate knowledge into experience and practical execution of concepts. Leadership development programs are short-lived and the impact of the material and the experience can be easily forgotten. As a result of ineffective leadership 38% of CEO’s leave their role within the first 18 months, as reported by the Centre for Creative Leadership.

NT: Why Executive Coaching? What is EC?

Yes, I am proposing Executive Coaching as a developmental solution for leadership development. Executive Coaching is an individual process of professional development aiming to support, empower and unlock the infinite potential of the individual to bring positive change and achieve desirable results. It signifies the relationship that develops between coach and coachee; which is one of synergistic and catalysing nature. With coaching, self-awareness is enhanced and personal and professional development is further triggered and stimulated. It is a collaborative process which identifies purpose and living of that purpose and provides a nurturing and fertile ground for creative thinking.

Important elements of coaching are the accountability which is developed and enhanced and the ownership for decision making and action on behalf of the Executive with the support, empowerment and acknowledgement of the coach.

NT: How will it benefit them?

Executive Coaching maximized potential and unlocks latent sources of productivity. A study conducted by the International Coaching Federation reported that people undergoing Executive Coaching observed 70% improved overall work performance, 61% improved business management, 57% improved time management, and 51% improved teamwork effectiveness.

Based on my professional observations the impact of Executive Coaching is evident in the increase of the individual’s self confidence, effectiveness of communication, motivation and overall happiness. Then these executives inevitably become a source of Inspiring Leadership as they develop a more empowering and positive mindset.

NT: How is Eleni Demosthenous, Executive Coach?

I am an Executive Coach, passionate in supporting and empowering successful individuals transform into inspiring leaders. For the past 12 years I have been coaching executives, business leaders and entrepreneurs on utilizing their unique talents and reaching high levels of performance. My work experience expands from the USA, Europe and the Middle East with a portfolio of clients ranging from Fortune 500 companies to Government, Regional and Local Private for Profit and Non-for Profit organizations.
My background is in Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Human Resources and Organisational Development. In 2011 I founded The Advance Institute, a Talent Management firm specialising in the use of psychometric testing for selecting and developing talent. Currently, I am thrilled to introduce my new business venture Reflect, which uniquely specializes in Coaching Executives and Executive teams, and facilitating Mastermind groups.

Furthermore, I am committed to serving the greater good and I serve as the President of the European Mentoring and Coaching Council - EMCC Cyprus. I volunteer annually as a mentor and coach to non-for-profit organisations and I am now a contributor on the sponsorship funding committee of EMCC International.

**NT: Who makes an effective EC?**

An effective Executive Coach is the one that is mindful of what she brings to the coaching meeting and one that is fully present mind, body and spirit. An effective coach has the courage to challenge the client for the sake of broadening his awareness and expanding capabilities.

**NT: What drives/motivates an Executive Coach?**

What motivates me as a Coach is observing the growth and results in their clients. Executive Coaching programs may range from five to 12 month period and the bond and the relationship that gets developed between the coach and coachee is truly very rewarding and satisfying.

**NT: Who are your clients and how do you work with them?**

My clients are people in powerful and influential positions. They tend to be C Level Executives, Entrepreneurs, Directors, Teams and Business Leaders. We enter into fixed coaching contracts to do one-to-one coaching meetings either physically or online. Additionally, I do team coaching in groups of maximum 10 people. We work on their common goal and we support each other to accomplish collective goals and individual goals. I insist that the Coaching is conducted away from the everyday working environment of the individual, in order to allow distancing themselves from the everyday and choose serene places to enhance reflection.

**NT: What are your recommendations for the inspiring leaders of today?**

I recommend they accept themselves fully and unconditionally. I suggest they get out of their comfort zone and attempt to apply themselves differently as many times as possible in order to gain new insights and learning. I suggest they sit in silence and observe their breath and sensations in the body, only to discover that when they ask the question the answer has been within them all along.

When one observes motivational speakers from Tony Robbins to those at TED and checks the reaction of the audience, this is more often than not a combination of amusement, awe, rhapsodic applause, humour or scepticism. These emotional responses are revealing in that they imply that the audience wants to DO something, they are being moved. It is well-known that getting people to do something more physically engaging is sometimes a barrier that - once breached - is likely to bring home the realisations that otherwise make sense one minute but can be forgotten the next. This “anchoring” experience is crucial with leaders and managers and anyone who has to be seen actively engaged in their work on a performance stage of some sort. As Paul Linden¹ has said, “Our body is not just a cart that carries our head around”.

How do we involve the body in processing a task rather than just skipping direct from the idea to the execution of it? Children love to be given tasks to do that involve them creatively and often these allow them through their free movement to make important steps in their learning; but how do we do such exercises with adults without them seeming like a children’s game or something out of the Vince Vaughn/Owen Wilson comedy “The Internship”?

As national director of CSI (Consumer Strategic Insights) for PFM, Rubio’s intention with the CSI support centre, was to align the insights team which designs and executes, with qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, in-house customer studies to support marketing and sales strategies; this area was to “become a change agent in PFM’s commercial area, leading to faster reactions to meet their consumers’ requirements, preferences and likes”¹⁴

The usual steps were followed: “(i) establish the vision; (ii) define core strategies; (iii) build a team; (iv) assign positions and responsibilities (structure); (v) execution” (ibid)

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In this, Rubio’s dynamic approach was radical in the sense that the Brain spa had a creative feel to it. Nothing in the office was uniform; there were different kinds of chairs, pillows, futons and all in different colours and forms. There were no furniture or tables. On one side of the room there was a bookcase with creative books and tablet games to promote creative thinking processes; all in all, something that resembled an activity room in a typical summer school!

As an “invitation” to get physical and involved in creative exercises, this seems fine. However, next to the bookcase, there was a poster which explained the “rules of the brain spa”: (a) strictly business—consumer’s creativity and innovation; (b) keep it cool and keep it clean; (c) be a stranger, leave your I/D at the door; (d) thank you for not smoking; (e) spread the word, talk to someone about it; (f) practice curiosity; (g) takes risks, make mistakes; (h) be polite, don’t be loud.

The creative mind was brought screaming back to normality and TOLD what to do, given instructions as how and how not to behave and act.

I found it interesting to compare this to Pepsi’s own marketing for the World Cup that, with the Jesse Terredo film “Pura Vida” where young boys and girls are picked up from defeat to become victorious through the combination of empathetic listening (the actor Wilmer Valderama) and inspired, directed nurturing (the model and dancer Alessa Bravo) – is crucial to getting good outcomes, be it for health, relationships, work or other reasons, when we can allow people to DO things they enjoy.

If we want the fluidity of which Georg Schreyogg has written, and the transformational aspects of the transaction that meets “the emotional needs of each employee” that Berin Koskas (first pointed out - a way of differentiating between change leaders and managers, between “competent” and “inspiring” attributes; or the “neuro-plasticity” of N Dodge we need to see how ideas are translated into real physical action.

The thing is, you don’t go from reading a book about the rules and techniques for improving your tennis serve or golf swing, to just “doing it” - there is an interim stage. The behaviourist approach was to teach the new behaviour and train salivating directly to the conditioned reflex of the brain. In a company, how do we know what has happened to the idea-in-a-box that has so expensively been conveyed in memos and training sessions and conferences, unless we open the box to see? How do we stop getting bogged down in theory and just get active with good approaches? And how do we avoid the confusing paralysis that results from complexity?

Yesterday, I asked the librarian for a book about Pavlov’s dog & Schroedinger’s cat. She said it rang a bell, but wasn’t sure if it was there or not....

Having worked using language coaching methods for so long, I have an understanding of how context, tonality, attentive listening, self-listening and inner dialogue and inner rehearsal are necessary stages before the performance. These “practice stages” that serve to anchor the reality of the new idea, are often missing from conventional executive coaching. Going on a team-building exercise to the top of a mountain or “Going Ape” for a day may bring benefits, but do they open the box and reveal real changes? Reading dozens of books may pose questions, but when do they get answered? Teachers can teach, but do learners “really” learn, do they acquire what they need?

In training – for example a language - we want a person to speak using a common syntax and lexis. We supply the tools for this and instruct the trainee in what to do. Coaching takes a somewhat different route. To reach the goal, the “learner” works through levels of understanding, processing, composition (internal dialogue and inner rehearsal) and performance. One interesting technical, called Total Response, developed by James Asher, (later popularised in EFL teaching by Mario Rinvolucri and others) expressed the view that the first goal of a trainer, using TPR, is to help the learners develop listening fluency. The other skills are supposed to be learned in a later stage. There are practical ways in which many of these perceptions can be used as a real cornerstone for acquisition, a way that allows the learner to quickly identify and internalise a helpful syntax and begin to master this quickly. It all has to do with how we listen and how we then visualise and construct meaning internally through our inner dialogue (rehearsal).

The foundations of TPR (in language training) are essentially neurological and have to do with our scientific understanding of the hemispheres of the brain. Most learning methods are directed at the left brain hemisphere, however, both hemispheres need to play a role, and, in parallel to how a child learns its mother tongue, a learner needs motor movements (which are controlled by the right brain hemisphere). In this way, the movements made when following commands given by the coach help prepare them for processing the language. These ideas of TPR are, needless to say, also based on behaviourism, the theory developed by B.F. Skinner, which sees learning as being a result of imitation, practice, reinforcement and habit formation. A command to the theatre, with positive feedback, a person will continue to exhibit the new behaviour and eventually this action will develop into a habit. (So, for example, in order to learn a foreign language, a language student only needs to imitate the language he/she hears from the coach and react to feedback; language development is seen as a result of this habit formation.) The connection to ‘trace theory’ in psychology - which claims that the more often and intensively a memory connection is traced, the stronger the personal association will be and therefore the more likely that it will be recalled - is clear here.

I feel however that getting to a deeper level means going through the stages mentioned above of understanding,
processing, composition (internal dialogue and visualisation) and performance, to connect with the values of the individual or group - Otto Scharmer’s U-theory(9) focuses heavily on the collective experience for example in breaking down old attitudes and allowing the new collective vision to emerge.

We cannot jump from “understanding” something to doing it perfectly – or even slightly well, as any sports person will tell you. In embodied leadership and coaching techniques, we are seeing other aspects of the person becoming involved, and I personally do not favour “group values” experiences that cause the participant to conform to the collective “rules” when that individual has not aligned with their own sense of uniqueness. Like the football team in the Pepsi ad, the players are all unique, but often unsure of their unique skills.

The emphasis in “embodied” techniques is the authenticity of the individual. Mark Walsh’s Integration training(10) develops the notions of height, depth, width, and base. He stresses moving from the heart with grace, alignment, relaxation, responsiveness. The practice of coordination, better fitness, recognising the importance of immunity, sleep, digestion, and managing emotions - our gut instinct – that our ideas are part of our body, from inside out and not outside in, are strongly emphasised, the aim being to make us fit for the goals and values we want to meet.

In order to attain this, rhythms like breathing and movement, the feeling of our relationships (beginnings, middles and endings all but not clinging to one) - using both tac and tactics - restfulness and aloneness (learning in a cultural way) are all experienced. Vulnerability, curiosity and other embodied states, whatever they are, are recognised and the use of time to have gotten that sense, is maximised. WHO are you in your body and where does that lead you? These are important questions.

Note: Continue Reading HERE

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Situatii mult prea des intalnite

Intru in legatura cu persoane, chiar personalitati, care-si deplang viata. Vorbesc despre lipsa de sens pe care o simt in legatura cu activitatea profesionala, despre continua cautare a menirii proprii, despre relatiile din familie care nu se diferentiaza de celelalte decat prin proximitatea impusa de traiul in comun, despre frica de a recunoste ca nu stiu sau nu pot sa duca la capat o sarcina impusa, despre faptul ca, nici macar in vacanta, nu se relaxeaza, despre lehamitea cu care isi incep ziua si pastilele cu care adorm. Au intrebari legate de increderea pe care sa o acorde intențiilor bune avute de oamenii cu care intra in contact. Sunt zbuciumati din cauza indeciziilor prelungi sau a deciziilor spontane.  Se feresc sa-si recunoasca oboseala pentru ca sa nu auda comentarii legate de faptul ca sunt decrepiti. Nu rad de ilara pitiei atunci cand acestea sunt integrate de tot felul de emotii care simt. Oamenii vin si pleaca din viata ta, obiectele se strica, ideile au valoare atunci cand le impartasesi cu semenii ta.

''Ce pot sa fac?'' intreaba.
''Ce ai vrea sa faci?'' intreb eu.
Raspunsul este intuitiv: ''Nu stiu.''

Invataturile lui Buddha – sursa de inspiratie in relatia de coaching

by Monica Lacramioara Barbulescu (Romania)

Buddha exprima ideea conform careia suferinta incepea atunci cand apare dragostea neconditionata fata de tot ce ne inconjoara.

Invata sa accepti ca a fi in viata inseamna a trai fericirea si nefericirea. Recunoaste si supune-te ritmului firesc al naturii in care orice forma de energie se manifesta si apoi dispares. Priveste toate acestea CU DRAGOSTE.
3 Vorbirea perfecta

Prin acest al treilea brat Buddha ne conectează cu exteriorul nostru. A vorbi este o modalitate prin care ne putem face cunoscute Intelegerii si Gandirea perfecte.

“Nu rostii cuvinte aspre, căci se vor indrepta împotriva ta. Cuvintele spuse la mânie rănesc, iar râul se întoarce.”
- Buddha

4 Actiunea (conduita) perfecta


“Când vezi ca ai actionat, vorbit sau gândit într-un mod iscusit – ce conduc la fericire și nu îți face rau nici tie, nici aitora – bucura-te de acest lucru și continua sa te disciplinezi în acest fel.”
- Buddha

5 Modul de viața perfect

Un mod de viața perfect inseamna sa ne castigam traful într-un mod iscusit, sa nu depindem de altii pentru sursele de existența, sa ne asumăm responsabilitatea dobândirii mijloacelor prin care sa obtinem securitatea si prosperitatea. Modul de viața perfect ne fereste de dependentele psihologice care ne transforma in sclavi si ne golește de putere personală.

“Tot ceea ce suntem este rezultatul a ce am gândit. Mintea este totul. Devenim ceea ce gândim.”
- Buddha

6 Efortul perfect

In această perioadă a civilizației umane simpla singură a necesitatii depunerii unui efort vine in contradicție cu valul de confort care ne este oferit. Efortul perfect este lipsit de excesele care aduc cu sine degradarea psihica si fizica. Efortul perfect se naste si traieste din intenții pozitive.

- Buddha

7 Atentia perfecta

Atentia perfecta este o abilitate extrem de importanta prin care putem dobândi cunoaștere. Ea reprezinta capacitatea intelectului de a vedea lucrurile exact asa cum sunt, inlaturand valul de confort care ne este oferit. Atentia perfecta este fidelă Realității. Regina atentiei perfecte este orientarea pe viata interioara. Atentia perfecta apripe de VIATA pura si ne orienteaza catre solutii in sinergie cu existenta concreta. Atentia perfecta este o abilitate extrem de importanta prin care putem dobândi cunoaștere. Ea reprezinta capacitatea intelectului de a vedea lucrurile exact asa cum sunt, inlaturand valul de confort care ne este oferit. Atentia perfecta este fidelă Realității. Regina atentiei perfecte este orientarea pe viata interioara. Atentia perfecta apripe de VIATA pura si ne orienteaza catre solutii in sinergie cu existenta concreta.

“‘Toate greșelile se ivesc din pricina mintii. Daca mintea este transformata, pot oare ca teraresi greșelile?’”
- Buddha

8 Concentrarea perfecta

Concentrarea perfecta este monofocalizare – atentia indreptata asupra lucrului care reprezinta INTERESUL specific in acel moment. Atunci cand stim cu exacitate care este intenția noastră si ne-am ales calea pe care sa o pare pentru a o împlini, concentrarea perfecta ne ajuta sa nu ne abatem de la drum. Calitatea aceasta presupune staruita, vointa, credinta in intenția avuta, placerea de a face ce ne-am propus.

“‘Virturile ca si muzele apar mereu in grup. Niciodata un principiu bun nu a fost gasit solitar in niciun suflet.’”
- Buddha

APLICATIA PRACTICA

Aceste opt cai pot fi folosite in intalnirile de coaching pentru situatiile in care coachee-ul se descrie ca fiind lipsit de putere personala. Fiecare cai poate reprezenta tema unei sedinte in care clientul sa analizeze modalitatea in care
- Intelege realitatea,
- isi formeaza Gandurile utile,
- isi asuma Modul de viata,
- depune Efort pentru ca intențiile sa fie realizate,
- acorda Atentie elementelor care-i impacteaza existent si
- se Concentreaza pe ce doresc sa obtina.

Pornind de la ideile citite, coach-ul poate adresa intrebari care sa-i determine pe client sa constantizeze perceptiile distorsionate si comportamentele daunatoare astfel incat sa faca schimbarile potrivite obtinerii echilibrului personal.
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