

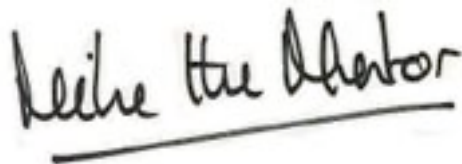
Mentoring for Change

leadership, coaching, mentoring, storytelling

Welcome to the Mentoring for Change newsletter. In this issue:

- The Future Landscape of Coaching
- "I turned my face for a moment ..."
- Happiness

With best wishes




The Future Landscape of Coaching

A couple of weeks ago at the School of Coaching Tricia Bey, our MD, led an alumni discussion looking at the current market for executive coaching services in the UK and making some predictions for how it might develop. These are some of her observations about the market:

- Coaching is clearly very much in vogue and, with low entry barriers, new entrants are rushing in to the market. For example, at this year's HRD Conference in April, around 25% of the 300 exhibitors were offering coaching as part of their services.
- Many buyers are unable to distinguish good from indifferent coaching and coach training – and indeed some lack understanding of what coaching itself is.
- Buyers of executive coaching are becoming increasingly sophisticated – eg ensuring the coaching goals are aligned with organisational goals, introducing coaching lists, appointing 'Heads of Coaching', etc. At the same time there is a lot of confusion about standards.
- Executive coaching is now widely accepted as a mainstream source of management support
- Organisations are building 'lists' of coaches with demanding (but not necessarily effective) selection processes.
- There is a shift from a dependence on external coaches to building internal coaching capacity.
- Organisations are understanding better how to use coaching skills in line management and leadership roles.
- There is a growing interest in supervision but

differing views about what it involves and how much it should cost. Interestingly one public sector organisation recently updating its coaching book was only considering coaches who could provide evidence of regular supervision going back at least a year.

- There is a growing use of psychometrics, especially MBTI and Firo-B, in coaching.

Looking to the future:

- There will be increased professionalisation of the industry.
- The market will be increasingly crowded – leading the better coaching providers to set themselves apart with a distinctive message about what they offer.
- More sophisticated clients will require that their coaches have regular supervision.
- Individual coaches will increasingly need to be able to demonstrate real qualifications and experience to purchasers, raising the barriers to entry for individual coaches new to the market in particular.
- Larger corporates will rationalise their portfolio of coaches, making it more difficult for individuals to get work with them – but leading to more opportunities for coaching houses with clear positioning.
- Corporates will no longer allow external coaching to be used to hide failures by line managers to manage. They will continue to build their internal coaching capacity (internal coaches and coaching skills for managers).
- A clear role will remain for external coaches in value-added situations (eg, coaching senior leaders and

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“I turned my face for a moment ... “

I read these lines by David Whyte, the ‘corporate poet’, every so often to reconnect myself to what is important.

Sometime ago at AT&T I found myself working with a roomful of particularly thoughtful managers. We were looking at the way human beings find it necessary to sacrifice their own sacred desires and personal visions on the altar of work and success. Out of this a woman wrote the following lines. She read them slowly from the back of the room, unaware how stricken we all were by the silence she created.

Ten years ago...

*I turned my face for a moment
and it became my life.*

We have patience for everything but what is most important to us. We look at the life of our own most central imaginings and see it beckon. For the most part we have not the courage to follow it, but we do not have the courage to leave it. We turn our face for a moment and tell ourselves we will be sure to get back to it. When we look again ten years have passed and we wonder what in God's name happened to us.

*I turned my face for a moment
and it became my life.*

From “The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul at Work” by David Whyte, publ The Work Foundation, 1994, pages 196/7

high-potentials, transition coaching).

- There will be a downward price pressure on one-to-one work, particularly in the increasingly commoditised performance coaching area.
- Some of the froth in the market will blow away so that coaching becomes a serious management discipline and not a trendy thing to have.

Happiness

Many years ago whilst a student at University College London I used to walk past a large glass fronted case in which sat Jeremy Bentham (or at least his clothed skeleton topped by a waxwork head). In the 18th century Bentham proposed that the purpose of society be “the greatest happiness of the greatest number”. And maybe this is an idea whose time is coming. For although average incomes have more than doubled over the last 50 years, people are on average no happier today than they were then- and they’re realising it!

One country, Bhutan, has already set as its national goal maximising happiness and has put GNH (Gross National Happiness) at the heart of government policy – but then rather blew it the following year by deciding to licence TV for the first time – TV being a significant contributor to reduced happiness. Closer to home, the leader of the Tory party, David Cameron, recently said "Improving our society's sense of well-being is, I believe, the central political challenge of our times."

Though few commercial organisations make happiness their central goal, they do exist. The best known in the UK is the John Lewis Partnership (JLP). Its chairman, Sir Stuart Hampson, told me recently that he has 3 key jobs as the leader of the Partnership: to manage the culture; to hold the long-term vision; and to promote happiness. This last arises directly out of the JLP Constitution which states, "The Partnership's ultimate purpose is the happiness of all its members, through their worthwhile and satisfying employment in a successful business".

So, what are the secrets of happiness? Research shows that, on average, you will be happier if you:

- compare yourself with others who are less successful or fortunate than you are.
- settle for what is ‘good enough’ rather than seeking to have the most.
- seek to do things that have intrinsic meaning rather than live from one pleasure or reward to another.
- care about others rather than be preoccupied with yourself.
- absorb yourself in some goal outside yourself.
- recognise that happiness depends as much on your inner life as on your external circumstances – learn to accept yourself more fully.

One simple way to increase your happiness is simply to note down, several times a day, your level of happiness on a scale from 0 to 10. Simply focusing your attention in this way can in itself cause your overall level of happiness to increase. Try it! But do it with curiosity and without judgement.

If you’re interested in exploring this further, you might like to come the RSA Coffee House Challenge at Green & Away in north Gloucestershire on Sunday July 16 (www.greenandaway.org/page.cfm?pageid=ga-rsa) to discuss the topic "Practical Happiness or Impractical Consumption - changing the way we live to maximise wellbeing rather than economic growth".

(For more on happiness, including what affects happiness at the societal level, see “Happiness” by Richard Layard, Allen Lane, 2005)

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