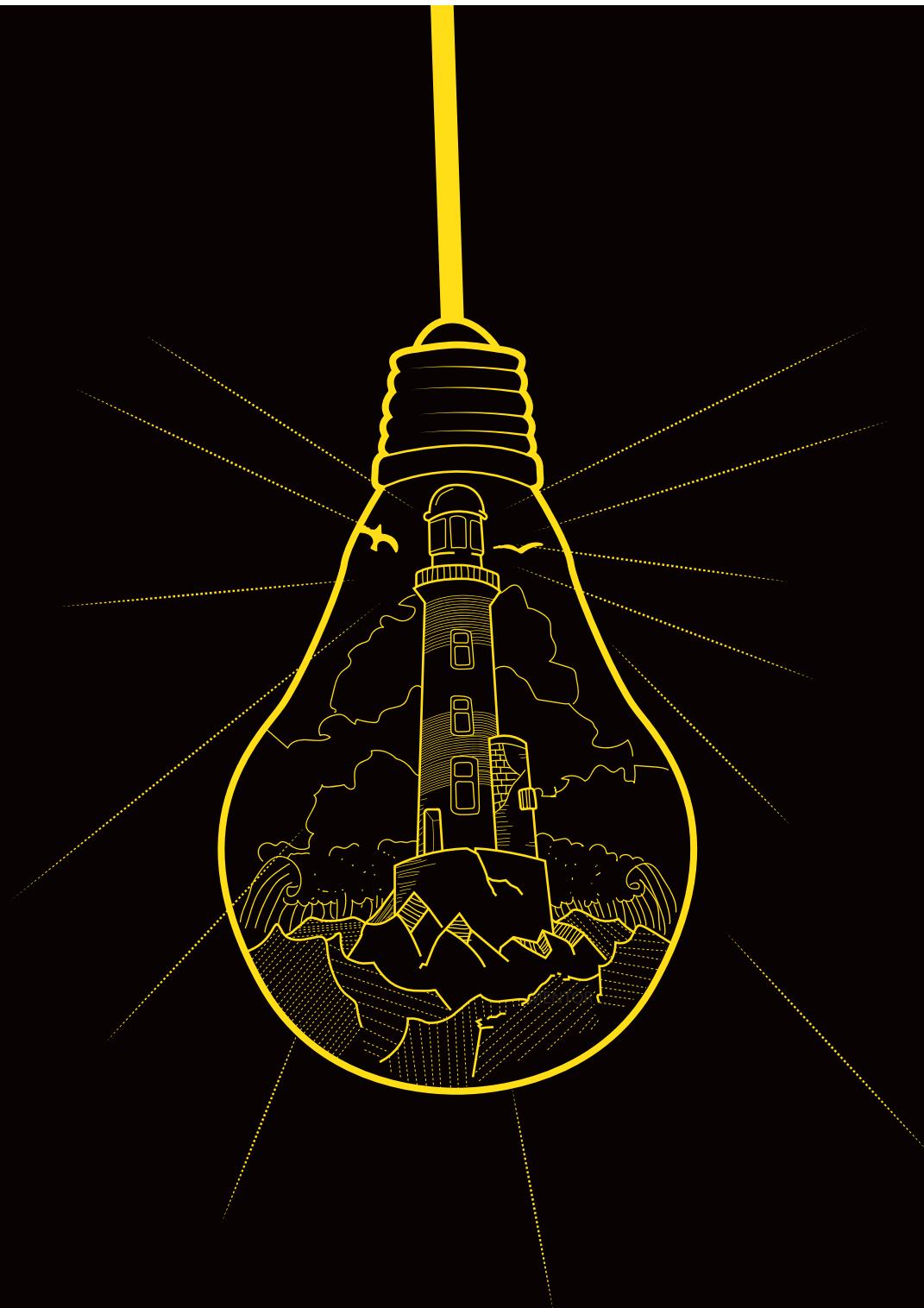


MICHAEL DONOVAN

THE ART
OF THE
BUSINESS - **MENTOR**



Executive/Business-Mentors Handbook (Self-instructing Training Edition)

Techniques, skills and observations assembled by

MICHAEL DONOVAN



A catalogue record for this
book is available from the
National Library of Australia

Copyright © 2008-2019 Michael Donovan

All rights reserved worldwide.

No part of the book may be copied or changed in any format, sold,
or used in a way other than what is outlined in this book, under any
circumstances, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Publisher:

ASPG (Australian Self Publishing Group)
P.O. Box 159, Calwell, ACT Australia 2905
Email: publishaspg@gmail.com
<http://www.inspiringpublishers.com>

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Author: Donovan, Michael

Title: **The Art of the Business-Mentor!/Michael Donovan.**

ISBN: 978-1-922327-00-0 (pbk)
978-1-922327-01-7 (ebook) Michael - art of mentor - 2

Table of Contents

Module 1

A Short History of Mentoring	7
Definitions, opinions and positioning.....	8
How coaching differs from mentoring.....	10
The advent of the business-mentor	15
Mentor or Coach – Variations on Themes.....	18
The Corporation as Mentor Sponsor	19
Benefits of Mentoring for an Organisation	24
Overview of Research into Mentoring Results.....	28
Factors Impacting Effectiveness.....	29
Value of Executive Management retention in the Business and Political Cycle	30

Module 2

It's not for everyone – being a <i>mentor</i> – or being <i>mentored</i>	31
What makes for good ~ Personal Leadership Style	36
Qualities of a good mentor.....	37
Characteristics of Good Leadership Driven Working Relationships	38
Achievement Characteristics.....	40
Personal Work Values – Generic Interpretations	40
Mechanics of a Good Mentoring Process	42
Features of mentoring	44
Comparisons - some <i>strengths</i> and <i>weaknesses</i> of 'internal' and 'external' mentoring.....	46

Module 3

Preparing, Negotiating, Enabling and Transitioning	48
The Transitional Approach to the mentoring relationship	50
Identifying the terrain – possible discussions to explore	51
Fostering Innovation and Creativity using Mentoring.....	53

Place, time, note taking- what works best!.....	58
Confidentiality and the Chatham House Rule.....	59
Some Do's and Don'ts	61
Chemistry	61
Engaging and Assessing.....	62
Emotional Intelligence	68
Champion and Advocate Roles.....	70
Advising, developing and challenging.....	71

Module 4

The Role of Intuition in Decision-making	73
Relaxation Technique.....	76
Aspects of human communication	76
Effective Communication.....	78
Align your actions with your words	80
Basic behaviours of Great Communicators	81
Working in and around personality types.....	81
Active and Adaptive listening.....	83
Questions that Reveal.....	88
Setting Worthwhile Goals	93
Giving valued feedback.....	95
Confessing Error and Confusion.....	97
Dealing with 'angry and frustrated' people	100
Managing Mentee Thinking to Reduce Stress.....	102
Mentoring 'intelligent' people.....	105
Avoid dependency and proxy scenarios	109

Addenda Items ~ Tools that are a bit different..... 111

Lessons for life according to wild geese.....	114
ROCKS of LIFE	116
An extra bit of fun	118
Socrates' Triple Validation Test	119
How to use the Brain Game with a group.....	121

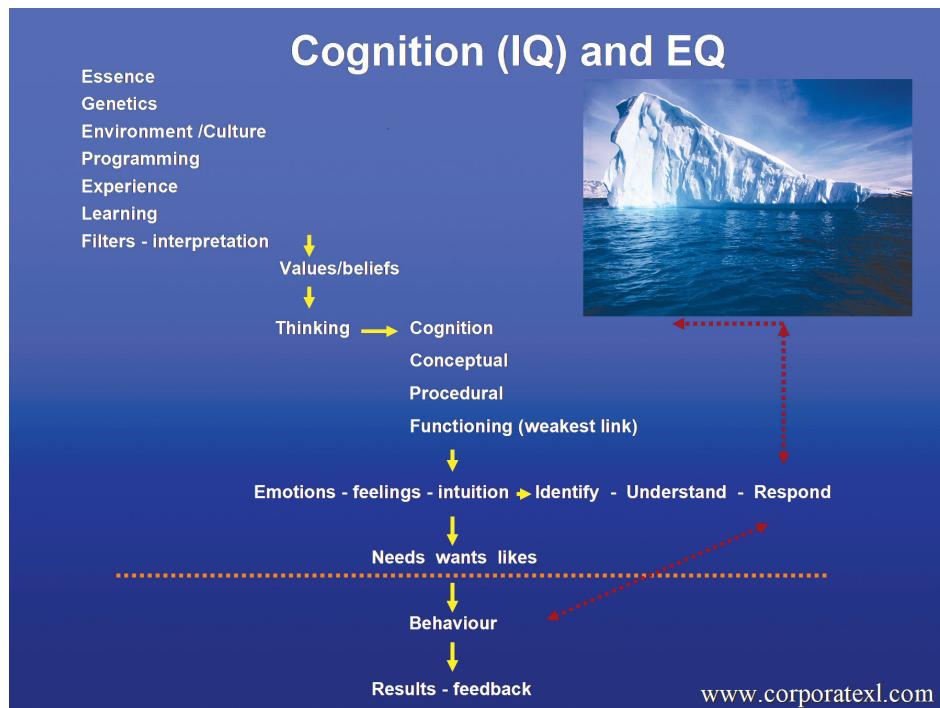
Credits and Acknowledgements..... 126

Notes page..... 127

The Role of Intuition in Decision-making

We frequently recall that we knew information about other people or situations in advance and sometimes call it a 'hunch' or a 'gut feeling'. Often this comes to us as a flash of information, even a warning of an immediate danger. We have not arrived at this conclusion by use of logic or detailed analysis. This is intuition. However, it must be sensibly used and not an excuse to undertake rash ill-conceived decisions when evidence points to the contrary.

When we lived in tribal communities, intuition was highly valued. Intuition is regaining its credibility as science has recently confirmed its validity in all aspects of decision-making. Intuition called the 'smart guess' according to Daniel Goleman, (author of numerous books on Emotional Intelligence) is an essential component of self awareness, our ability to understand ourselves which enables to be more empathetic, to understand other people and their situations.



These skills are mandatory for both mentors and mentees in their working relationship. Mentors provide guidance and direction for business leaders about how to think about business issues and their careers. Yet how well do we understand the decision-making process? Perhaps the famous quote: "We do not see things as they are, we see them as we are" is a first step to acknowledge that our assumptions, beliefs, values and our emotions influence our decision-making far more than we realise.

Think of it like the iceberg shown below, who we are (essence), genetics (our family inherited qualities), environment, culture, programming, experience, learning, filters (how we interpret information) are just the tip of the iceberg. The real action occurs below the surface.

Our emotional brain, often called the primitive brain and the amygdala, is the 'activator' of the flight/fight mechanism that ensures our survival. The amygdala often plays a major role by hi-jacking our emotions. We do not make decisions logically - the left-brain hemisphere, the home of logic and analysis is connected to the right brain where intuition, creativity and spatial abilities reside. They work together, not separately. The other factors below the surface of the iceberg, our emotions, feelings, intuition are the primary factors in decision-making. Of course, we can master the art of ignoring these feelings, often to our detriment. This can result in stress in the body.

Intuition is critical to success in a mentoring relationship:

As a mentee or as a mentor, your intuition is a tool which continually provides invaluable information. How many times have you ignored your intuition, later to recognise its correctness? Your intuitive mind is alive and active at all times, ignoring it is foolhardy. The hard data can provide facts that must be considered, creating a balance between factual information and intuition will always lead to better quality decision-making.

The information overload that we experience daily, combined with less time for planning and development of new strategies and products, mean that decision-making is stressful, with little time for analysis. Intuition is particularly suited in environments of rapid change where innovation and creativity are encouraged to thrive. Successful visionary leaders rely on their intuition. Researchers have discovered that the higher up the corporate ladder a business leader progresses, the more they do rely on intuition and that 80% of successful CEOs have a highly developed intuitive decision-making style.

Further, 2003 research by the US based Miller Heiman organisation and Harvard Business School reveals that when complexities create pressure, very senior executives' 'default' to a decision-making style closely aligned to their intuitive sense.

You can activate your intuition on demand:

Intuition is a skill that we are all born with and that can be accessed *intentionally*, if you choose to work with it. In our fast-paced world there is simply not enough time to digest all the information that is available. Decisions have to be made. The analysts have ruled our decision-making relying on the hard facts yet this has not served our needs. Research tells us that 50% of decisions made logically are later proven to be wrong. The business leader making a decision is ultimately held accountable for the outcome.

So how do you get in touch with your intuition? The first step is to acknowledge that it exists and to recognise how your intuition shows up for you. We are all different and each one of us has their own dominant intuitive response. The willingness to slow down and take the time to access your intuition is essential to listening to your inner voice. Many business leaders today actively practice meditation and creative visualisation techniques. These methods are excellent ways to get in touch with your intuition. The best ideas that you have rarely occur when sitting at the desk or in a meeting. Many business leaders say that when their active mind is more relaxed in another activity, for example, walking, working out or in the shower, then 'Aha' moments occur. Sounds simple, does it not? Many people are so stressed and with their schedules constantly overloaded they have lost touch with their own innate wisdom of intuition.

Remember that Archimedes found his most famous solution while in the bath, and shouted, '*Eureka!*', meaning '*I have found it*'.

The University of Queensland Business School has studied the role of intuition in management decision-making. UQ PhD student, Marta Sinclair began her research by reviewing the factors that influence managerial choice of decision - making styles. Cognitive research tells us we process information in parallel, using rational analysis on the conscious level, whilst relying on emotional cues on the non-conscious level.

We are capable of using intuition and analysis simultaneously and interchangeably, without being aware of it. The integration of analytical/intuitive management styles has been highlighted in many management texts - Herbert Simons' idea that 'analytical and intuitive management styles are complementary components of effective decision-making styles' is one example.

The context of the problem, the type of decision and the person making the decision determined what type of decision-making style was adopted. For example, if the problem had complex, contradictory or little information surrounding the facts, the intuitive decision-making style was more useful than the logical approach.

The organisational culture has a major impact on whether intuition is acceptable, for example a 'command and control' structure is unlikely to entice employees to feel confident in expressing their intuitive thinking.

Would you be willing to listen to an employee who said to you: '*I just have a gut feeling about this project?*' Some companies have done so with great success. DuPont discovered that their product development time shortened from three years to just less than three months by actively engaging their intuition in their product planning.

Management students at Harvard Business School are taught the importance of recognising intuition and its role in the decision-making process. Intuition is particularly relevant when the 'hard' data is contradictory or is not accessible. Relationships with people your staff, your customers, peers and associates can be easily enhanced using your intuitive mind.

As Henry Mintzberg of the McGill University Faculty of Management proposes:

'Organisational effectiveness lies in a blend of clear-headed logic and powerful intuition'.

Activate your intuition now:

Activating your intuition *intentionally* brain requires a quiet mind. The constantly active mind (likened to a mumbling tramp) blocks your intuition. So, the first step is to learn to relax, taking yourself out of your busy mind set into a more relaxed state.

Try this technique to totally relax your body and to quieten your busy mind. It will take 10 minutes the first few times you use the technique. With more frequent practice, you will find that you access the state of relaxation quickly and with ease.

Relaxation Technique

Sit in a comfortable chair, with your hands on your lap. Make sure you will not be disturbed during this time – turn off the telephones, place a 'Do Not Disturb – Relaxation at Work' sign on your door.

Become aware of your breathing, become aware of your breath. Inhale deeply through your nose and exhale deeply through your mouth. Slow down your rate of breathing counting to 5 silently on the in breath and exhaling to the count of 10 silently on the out breath. Imagine that you are standing under a waterfall with water slowly running down over your body from the top of the head to your toes. Visualise the top of your head, relaxing, your eyes relaxing, cheekbones relaxing, the jaw relaxing, the neck and shoulders

relaxing. Remove all tension from these areas. Arms relaxing, your hands in your lap relaxing. Relax your throat, your chest, abdomen, legs, to the toes every part of your body is now relaxed continuing to visualise the waterfall washing away any tension any anxiety or stress in your body

Feel the relaxation of the waterfall – become aware how relaxed you can be. Use this technique whenever you feel tense or stressed during the day. You can also use this technique to help you fall asleep to experience a peaceful night's rest.

In Summary:

- ✓ Your intuition can be deliberately accessed and is an invaluable tool for higher quality decision-making.
- ✓ Using your intuitive mind will ensure that you experience greater understanding and empathy with other people.
- ✓ Choosing to relax and de-stress will enable you to become more intuitive
- ✓ Your Intuition is a skill that can be trained and strengthened
- ✓ The ability to balance intuition with logical analysis is your 'secret weapon'

Aspects of human communication

- Everything we do is Communication
 - The way the message is *delivered* affects the way the message is *received*
 - The *real* communication is the message received not the message intended
 - The way we begin our message often determines the *outcome*
 - Communication is two-way - give & get
 - Communication occurs *between* people - not something we do *to* people
1. It is not what the message does to the listener; it is what the listener does with the message that determines our success as a communicator.
 2. Listeners generally interpret messages in ways, which make them feel comfortable and secure with the information.
 3. When people's attitudes are attacked full on, they are likely to defend those attitudes and, in the process, they reinforce them.
 4. People pay most attention to messages which are relevant to their own circumstances and point of view.
 5. People who feel insecure in a job (or a new task) or a relationship are unlikely to be good listeners.
 6. People are more likely to listen to us if they perceive that we listen to them.
 7. People are more likely to change in response to a combination of new experience and communication rather than just to communication alone.
 8. People are more likely to support change that affects them if they are consulted before the change is made.
 9. The message or underlying communication in what is said will be interpreted in the light of how, when, where and by whom, it was said.
 10. Lack of self-knowledge and an unwillingness to resolve our own internal conflicts make it much harder for us to communicate with other people.

Effective Communication

Look for common ground

The goal of communication is to connect with another person. To do so means that you must know where that person is and where they're coming from. Consider the 3 1/2 year-old boy eating an apple in the back seat of the car when he asked, "Daddy, why is my apple turning brown?" "Because," his dad explained, "after you ate the skin off, the meat of the apple came into contact with the air, which caused it to oxidize, thus changing its

molecular structure and turning it into a different colour." There was a long silence. Then the boy asked softly, "Daddy, are you talking to me?" Accept the fact that everybody has his or her own agenda and there is little you can do to change it. Talk to them on their own level and watch the effectiveness of your conversation skyrocket.

Really listen

Seek first to understand, then to be understood. Get rid of the personal filters, assumptions, judgments and beliefs that colour what you hear and the way you hear it. Concentrate totally on what the other person is saying verbally, physically and emotionally. (A full chapter follows on this subject alone.)

Avoid distractions

To really hear what the other person is saying takes discipline. Avoid interrupting. Let the other person finish their thought. Don't finish their sentences or put words in their mouth. Be patient and show genuine respect for them. Avoid the temptation to give unwanted advice. That can be perceived as patronizing and will stifle the flow of conversation. There will be a time to share your perspective. Just remember that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Clarify

There are numerous ways to tactfully keep the conversation moving. Reframe the speaker's content to ensure you heard what you thought you heard. Don't assume anything. Ask broad, open-ended questions that will elicit more information and engage both of you more fully. Be sincere. Ask questions that get to the bottom of someone's real concern or agenda.

Maintain credibility

Be sincere in your dialogue. Say what you mean and mean what you say. Be open, honest and candid. If you don't know the answer, say so. If you say you're going to do something, do it. Let your actions support your words. In other words, under promise and over deliver. What you do shouts in other people's ears much louder than what you say.

Stay cool

In the face of what might be perceived as a personal attack, remain calm and collected. Don't take such assaults personally. The other person's mood or response is more likely about fear or frustration than it is about you as an individual. Don't respond in kind, but try to drill down to the root of the problem and address it.

Align your actions with your words

It's not just what you say but how you say it. Studies show that what you say (your words) accounts for only 7% of what others perceive of you. The balance—93%—stems from body language, facial expression, and voice tone. Recognize the nonverbal barriers to effective communication, and make sure the tone of your voice, your posture, your gestures and your movements support your words.

Credibility in Leadership is about bringing people together and uniting them in a common purpose - over and over again.

To do this you need to be undertaking *dialogue*

- Seeking out your people's ideas and listening to concerns is essential
- Establish the *key values* of the team
- Connect *values with reasons*
- Structure co-operative goals
- Make sure everyone knows the business
- *Sell the common purpose*
- Divide up complex tasks into small actions that can be handled successfully
- Provide resources
- Set time limits

Three Separations of Interpersonal Business Communication



Conflict:

- confusion
- emotion
- masks reality
- does not progress
- residual anger remains

Skilful discussion:

- polite
- social greasing
- goes no-where
- maintains relationship status

Dialogue:

- open
- identify the facts and / or the issues
- describes the emotions involved
- sets actions to resolve



Basic behaviours of Great Communicators

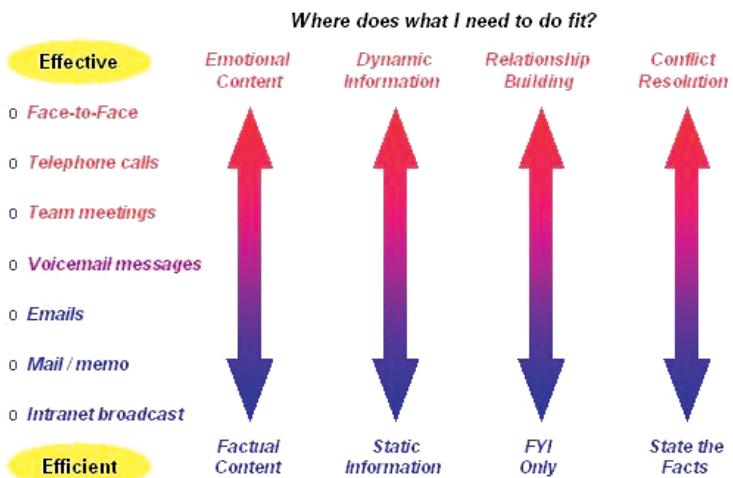
1. They are Interested and interesting
2. They relate experiences as stories
3. They connect with their body language
4. Firm, open handshake – not a crusher
5. They look you in the eye and use deep-sight to link to you
6. They are confident but not arrogant
7. They give compliments and link these to the subject matter
8. They repeat what you said and extend it by questioning
9. They and encourage strong relationships

Working in and around personality types.

When we interact and work with others, we form, build or maintain relationships; we organise our lives, work and behaviour around eight recognised elements which in combination form what are known as personality preferences. You would be aware of these commonly branded under the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator:

Depending on how the energy of interaction is received and processed you will find the 'type' exhibited is clustered in group of four elements of the following eight types, expressed for example as ENTJ:

Communication Effectiveness



How the energy of interaction is received and used

- Introverts (I)** Prefer their own space, and are most comfortable when alone, or with a close friend. They don't tend to show much of themselves to others, and withdraw in situations of stress. They can be hard to get to know.
- Extraverts (E)** Prefer the company of others. They are generally quite open, and don't tend to withhold information about themselves. They can generally transition between different situations easily and quickly.

How information is gathered and taken in

- Sensing (S)** Are realists. They pay attention to details – including their physical surroundings – and are usually very practical. They tend to be loyal to organisations and are good followers if they are appreciated.
- Intuitive (N)** Conceptualise and dream about possibilities. They see everything in terms of what it means, rather than present consequences, and while they like to plan, organise and form relationships, they like to try new and different things.

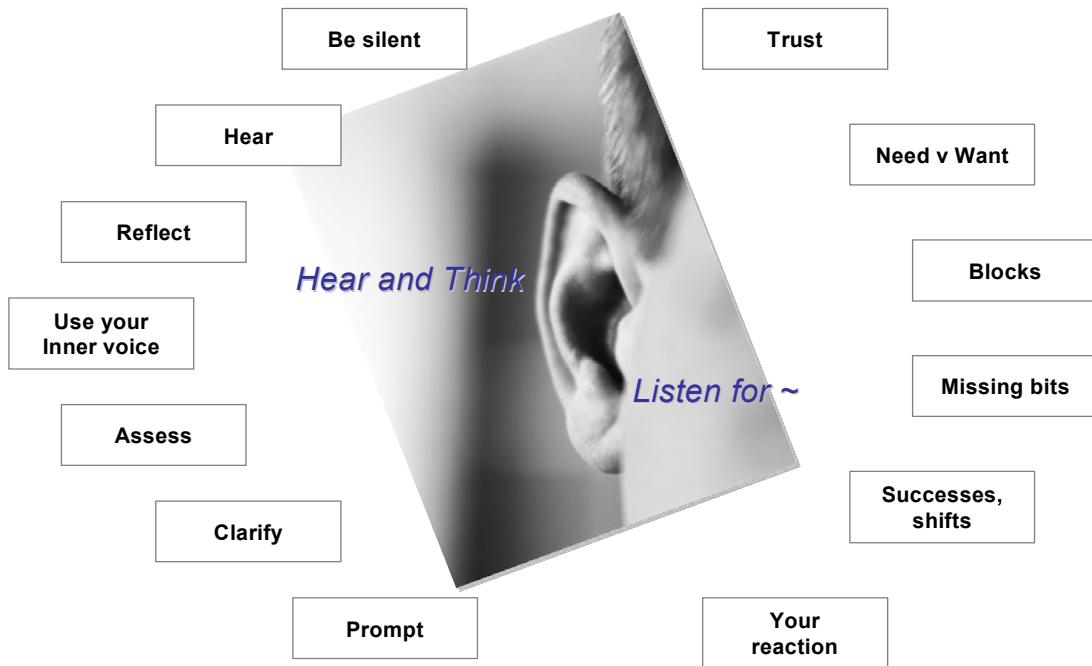
How decisions are made

- Thinkers (T)** See everything in light of reason and logic. They value intellect and reasonable thinking above all else, and the emotions of others – or themselves – are a secondary consideration. They do not understand why others react the way they do.
- Feelers (F)** Make decisions based on instinct, or gut feel, and the way they perceive others are feeling. They are sometimes illogical and unreasonable, deciding action based on the pain they or others are feeling.

How lives are organised

- Perceivers (P)** Are comfortable with a crisis, and do not need to have things ordered, scheduled or planned. They can “drink in” a situation without feeling any need to make decisions – or conclusions – about it.
- Judgers (J)** Are most comfortable with order and schedule and knowing what to expect of themselves and others. They like a schedule (but not necessarily a routine), and find it difficult to function in an atmosphere they perceive as disordered. If they understand what is expected of them, they can be flexible.

Active and Adaptive listening



Precision Listening: You Will Offer Better Feedback and Gain Better Interaction

For a manager, listening is the basic tool for collecting information needed for timely and effective decision making. Whether your talents are in sales, systems engineering, administration, a support centre or headquarters staff, gathering and effectively assessing relevant information is key to your success.

The listening mind is never blank or impartial. Our listening is influenced by events, relationships, and experiences - all adding to what we hear and changing the meaning. As objective as we would like to be in our listening, we are subject to the effects of our physical and emotional states. Being tired, angry, elated or stressful predisposes us to selectively attend to what we hear.

Did you listen to facts or to specific words? Did you paraphrase these words in your mind? Were you affected by the speaker's voice, dress, demeanor, mood, or attitude? Were you judging his or her ideas? Or, were you so preoccupied that you didn't listen at all?

Since we can't attend to everything we hear, we listen selectively. But what guides our listening? Why do people who hear the same speech often walk away with different impressions. Obviously, they didn't 'hear' the same thing.

We hear one-sixth as fast as we think, and so the mind has time to construct questions, inferences, and associations.

Listening Behaviours

Consider the four common types of listening behaviour in business:

- 1. Noise-in-the-attic Listening.** We may think that being a good listener is merely sitting silently while others talk. Outwardly, we appear to be listening. Inwardly, however, we are listening to 'noise-in-the-attic'. When we listen with this posture, we are disengaged from the speaker's ideas and involved in our own mental processes.

Noise-in-the-attic listening tends to develop from childhood experiences. As youngsters, how many of us heard: "Don't talk while I'm speaking!" "Don't interrupt me!" "Don't ask so many questions!" "Why? Because I said so!"

Conditioned by these warnings, many of us turn off our minds and habits of inquiry. Instead of clarifying the speaker's intent, we are preoccupied with our own internalisations: "Who does she think she is?" "I can do his job better than he can." Or, we may find ourselves planning a trip, remembering a pleasant experience, or even completing a thought - returning from time to time to listen to what is being said. Sound familiar?

- 2. Face-value Listening.** We think we are hearing facts, when the words we are hearing are interpretations. In face-value listening, the listener isn't mentally 'checking back' into the real world to see whether the words explain what they purport to explain. Words are heard more for their literal meanings, not as tools for understanding. This explains why executives, managers, and staff can differ dramatically in their perceptions. Children use face-value listening, since their experiences are so limited. Our experiences should add depth to our listening. Sadly, many of us hear, rather than listen. Good listening requires guided thought.

- 3. Position Listening.** Business has its own listening problems. Employees, alert for clues to their performance, are often victims of position listening, a highly partial form of listening. For example: A manager might listen to her president's annual report to determine whether her division will be growing. What she hears in that talk could easily affect their performance during the year as well as her relationships with co-workers.

She will listen to immediate superiors to determine her role. Obviously, position listening can lead to faulty assumptions and destroy the morale of a high-performing team.

- 4. Precision Listening.** Precision listening is the art of knowing how to listen and how listening affects performance. Listening is not an end in itself, but part of a chain of processes that end in a decision, strategy, or change in behaviour or point of view.

Why we listen determines the type of information we listen for. Salespeople listen for customer concerns. Lawyers listen for the opposing speaker's faulty logic. Psychiatrists listen for unconscious motivations. These bits of information are important for the listeners to do their jobs successfully.

Training has taught them not to listen at face value, and to use the time lag between their hearing and speaking to evaluate what is said. At the same time, they don't dismiss their emotional response to the speaker, their 'feel' for the situation, or their hunch of what might happen next. A framework telling them how to influence a person also guides these professionals.

In sales, the marketing rep wants to influence a customer from a point of no interest, to a commitment to buy. The lawyer tries to influence the jury to his or her point of view. The psychiatrist works to influence the patient toward new insights about personal behaviour, motivations or view of the world.

Listening and Engaging within a Narrative Context

Narrative or story-telling is a most effective way of uncovering or exchanging information, transferring ideas and experiences, de-sensitising issues and guiding conversations. The storyline or narration allows both parties to step away from themselves and place the *telling* in a safer environment. Therefore, encourage narrative, story-telling or the like:

- Listen for the form of the story-telling as much as for the content.
- Listen for how they characterized themselves as well as others, amidst the circumstances and relationships they relate. Listen for hints of the guiding myth that underlies their sense of self.
- Listen for the plot lines by which the events they recount are connected, the main turning points on which they turn, and the conflicts they reflect.
- Listen for clues concerning the different larger stories in which their personal one has been set.

- Listen for what they do *not* say as much as for what they do. Listen for what is in the silences: the missing details, the omitted events, the unmentioned characters and these - and be alert to the significance of such omissions, for the ‘narrative secrets’* to which they might point.
- Listen not to change the life story or fix it. Rather, listen to enlarge the story, to expand and deepen it, in the way ‘releasing’ the energy bound within it* and helping to increase their respect for their own storied depths. We are all proud of our stories. They ground us and give us a reality on which to depend.
- Listen less for the facts of their life than for the interpretations they place on them. And listen for the beginnings of different, possibly more positive interpretations, for alternative versions (sub-versions) that may be trying to break out between the lines of what they are saying, versions that you could midwife into being, thus putting a perhaps previously unimagined spin on the stuff of their experience, which means opening the door for a new version of who they are or can be.
- We must listen above and below what is being said, hearing the metaphors that are being used and their implications, as well as what is not being said and should be. By listening that closely and then articulating the story fully, we help the client become what they desire within their potential.
- *Story vectors:* An opening line of a story from them can go almost anywhere. Check in with yourself, “*What assumptions do I unconsciously make as a listener trying to narrow down the vector so it matches one of my schemas? Where are my narrative comfort zones? What do I miss?*
- Get clear about how you tend to participate as a listener and co-producer with the stories clients tell you? What are your habits? Strengths? Blind spots?

The Executive as The Precision Listener

In practicing precision listening, the executive listens carefully to the employee’s answers - to phrasing, context, and words used to get clues to the real meanings behind the words. To reduce the ambiguity of meaning and intent, the executive will ask questions, rephrase and restate what was heard.

Executives need to focus on interpersonal influence. Who is being influenced and why? What ideas, beliefs, and behaviours need to be influenced for the person to be more effective? What do I know about this person that will help me better understand her and what is being said? Are her problems or concerns such that we can effect real changes,

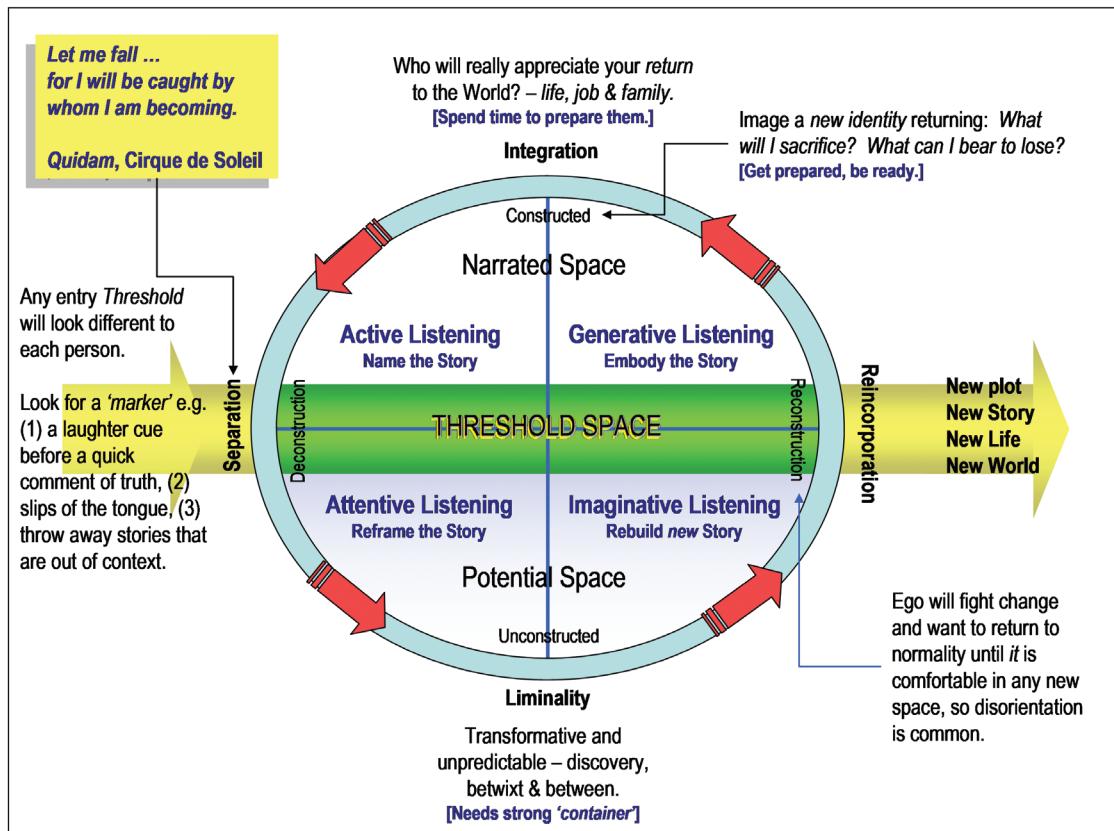
or are they out of reach in the business context? Precision listening helps us peer into the minds of others, enabling us to set more helpful, meaningful, and satisfying objectives for action.

When we adopt the framework of navigational questioning and use precision listening as a tool, we improve our ability to communicate and make more timely and better feedback.

Type of Listening	What is listened for	Focus of Listening	Leads to ...
Active	What IS being said	Narrator	Separation
Attentive	What is NOT being said	Story	Transition
Imaginative	What WANTS to be said	Narration	Reincorporation
Generative	What is NOW being said	Change	Integration

A framework adopted by Melbourne Business School Mt Eliza Centre for Executive Education is from Drake's Narrative Rites of Passage Model as displayed in this diagram (which needs lecturer interpretation). An understanding of this model is very useful to anyone undertaking executive mentoring where new outcomes require an anchor in the past. This occurs because we all seek to remain consistent within our sense of self and sense of World. Therefore, doing new things in new ways requires rebuilding our own story as we proceed based on the mentoring exchange.

Remember that it is often said “**You cannot speak and listen at the same time!**”



Questions that Reveal

Good questioning is the key to the Socratic Method or Principal. Conversations that always receive a Yes or No responses lead no-where. They close off avenues of exploration, reflection and decision-making. Honest, open and robust discussion by way of questions that reveal more information to both parties have much greater usefulness. The process of constructing open-ended questions is a craft to be practiced. The next page has some samples but remember the best questions are contextualised to focus on the issue being discussed. Your active listening skills provide the clues from which the question structure, flow and guidance follows. A good mentor is providing crumbs to allow the mentee to find their own resolution or solution. Plan conversations with say chess in mind. Work a few questions ahead in your mind to work out a play that guides but requires your mentee to think.

<p>Questions that Reveal (probing and revealing):</p> <p>Please continue ...</p> <p>Tell me more about ...</p> <p>Illustrate a typical example ...</p> <p>What precisely happened?</p> <p>How did you react?</p> <p>What specifically did you say?</p> <p>What was the outcome?</p> <p>What else could you have been done to ...?</p> <p>Re the circumstances that gave rise to ...?</p> <p>How did you handle it?</p> <p>In what way was it resolved?</p> <p>How often did this happen?</p> <p>How significant is this to you?</p> <p>How strongly do you feel about this?</p> <p>How could you have been handled better?</p> <p>Explain to me what you mean?</p> <p>When did this take place?</p> <p>Who was involved in ...?</p> <p>Which others were affected?</p> <p>Why do you think that?</p>	<p>Reminder questions (reflective):</p> <p>I recall you saying ...</p> <p>Remind me again about...?</p>
	<p>Linking questions (reflective or specific):</p> <p>You mentioned that ...</p> <p>How do you see this happening if ...?</p>
	<p>Leading questions (directional or reflective):</p> <p>Don't you think that ...?</p> <p>Shouldn't you have perhaps ...?</p>
	<p>Open questions (exploratory):</p> <p>How are you feeling about all this?</p> <p>What might happen if you ...?</p>
<p>Limited choice questions (actions):</p> <p>Are you going to ... or?</p> <p>To whom should I speak to ... or will I?</p>	<p>Closed questions (Yes or No option as a response):</p> <p>Would you agree that ...?</p> <p>Is it this ...?</p> <p>Can you do that?</p> <p>Did you ...?</p>

Navigational questions include:	
<i>What is the situation?</i>	<i>What are your strategies for moving forward?</i>
<i>How are you approaching it?</i>	<i>How will your desired outcome impact you and the others?</i>
<i>What outcomes do you want to create?</i>	<i>How will you prepare everyone for the potential changes?</i>
<i>What are you focusing on?</i>	<i>How will you reduce fear?</i>
<i>What resources do you need?</i>	<i>What new ideas and approaches are you considering?</i>
<i>What assumptions do you hold?</i>	<i>How will you introduce them to others?</i>
<i>What does success look like?</i>	<i>How will you engage people in creating the new outcomes?</i>
<i>How will you measure success?</i>	<i>What would you like to see happen?</i>
<i>What is holding you back?</i>	<i>How important are these changes to you?</i>
<i>What are the implications if they do take place?</i>	<i>What would happen if these changes did not take place?</i>
<i>Who will benefit from the changes?</i>	
<i>How can you ensure the right people are engaged?</i>	

Improving future performance

Exploring their role

- How do you anticipate your job should develop over the next three months?
- How would you like to see your working relationships develop?
- What do you think can be done to improve things for you?
- What do you feel should be given priority attention?

Exploring personal vision:

- How do you see your future with this organisation?
- What particular career aspirations do you have?
- What do you see as the next steps in your personal development?

Job/Relationships

Use the following questions to reflect on both their job and their work relationships.

- What could you do to help things along?
- How will you go about it?
- What help do you need from me?
- What additional knowledge or skills do you need?
- What training would help?
- What do you see as appropriate goals for the next three months?
- How will you measure your success?
- What could get in the way?
- What has to be done to overcome these obstacles?
- What alternatives are available?

Concluding

- What other issues would you like to raise?
- How do you feel about what we have discussed?
- What do you see as the main action plans we need to agree to?

How might this scenario have played out if the right questions had been asked up front?



The following is the transcript of an actual radio conversation in October 1995 between a US Navy Ship and British Authorities off the Scottish North Coast.

British: Please divert your course 15 degrees to the south, to avoid collision.

U.S. Navy: Recommend you divert YOUR course 15 degrees to the north, to avoid collision.

British: Negative. You will have to divert your course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision.

U.S. Navy: This is the captain of US Navy Ship. I say again divert YOUR course.

British: Negative. I say again you will have to divert your course.

U.S. Navy: THIS IS THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER USS LINCOLN, THE SECOND LARGEST SHIP IN THE UNITED STATES' ATLANTIC FLEET. WE ARE ACCCOMPANIED BY THREE DESTROYERS, THREE CRUISERS AND NUMEROUS SUPPORT VESSELS. I DEMAND THAT YOU CHANGE YOUR COURSE 15 DEGREES NORTH OR COUNTER MEASURES WILL BE UNDERTAKEN TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THIS SHIP!

British: We are a lighthouse. Your call.

Discuss what might have been the difference in this exchange if either had listened and asked some simple questions first?

- What might have been the first question?

Setting Worthwhile Goals

SMART goals are a coaching and mentoring universal process that is widely used to provide a simple framework into which ideas, actions and thoughts are put as a checklist.

Try to have only three to five Goals at any one time. Less and there is reduced challenge. More and the complexity acts against success. This planning sheet may assist.

ONE PAGE PLAN - SMART Goal:		
NOW	Why	
Factor & Comments giving rise to the Goal	Realistic outcome or result	
WHERE		
	Achievable objective	Key Performance Measures
1		
2		
3		

Giving valued feedback

- Give with Care** A feedback method that is underpinned with care and concern for the receiver. Language is chosen carefully and thoughtfully.
- By invitation** The most effective means of receiving is by inviting the comments. This allows the giver to be open and frank. It also allows the receiver to explore specific areas of concern or interest. This is also known as *permission framing*
- Freedom to change** Feedback is most readily accepted when there is no compulsion to change, but positive change is supported.
- Direct expression** Effective feedback is very specific, very clear and concise, and deals with behavioural matters.
- Fullness** Withholding feedback does not allow the receiver to judge the full impact of the behaviour. Full disclosure is needed.
- Non-judgemental** Specific behaviour is commented on, not judged.
- Timing** The best feedback is given when the subject is topical and the receiver is receptive.
- Readily actionable** Effective feedback is focused on what can be changed. Feedback about matters outside the control of the giver or receiver is useless and frustrating.
- Clarification** If possible, feedback should be clarified to eliminate differences in perception.

A four step Feedback process

A means by which mentors you can give your feedback may be summarised below:

- Step 1.** To give them the opportunity to identify their own strengths and weaknesses, ask the mentee what they think/feel they did/do well?
- Step 2.** To enable them to self-direct, as they choose, a different strategy next time around, ask them what they would do differently?
- Step 3.** To provide encouragement with positive feedback and in the case of negative feedback to offer alternative suggestions, mix a blend of constructive feedback, both positive and negative.
- Step 4.** To leave the mentee with the knowledge, skills and confidence to continue practising a particular task, always aim to end on a positive note.

Examples of an approach to the mentee when discussing their **team performance** that will often also improve personal response.

What to Do	How to Do It	Examples
Align your feedback with your team agenda	Make the feedback practical & realistic – use examples and provide options	<i>"I have a few ideas that might help ..."</i> <i>"What works for me is ..."</i>
Provide feedback about behaviour that your team can modify	Avoid the team personal behaviour and do not attempt to evaluate it	<i>"Tell me about the impact of that behaviour ..."</i> <i>"How might someone else see and respond to that behaviour ..."</i>
When you talk from your perspective, always remember that your reality is not the team reality or frame of reference.	When using your own experience, set the context, be descriptive and provide parallels as examples.	<i>"In my experience, which was ..., I found that ..."</i> <i>"This may not be your situation but it may show you something to consider."</i>
Be very aware of what is being said by both of you – the telling and the response.	Be an active listener. Make eye contact. Clarify and summarize to show interest and understanding.	<i>"If I understand what you are saying ..."</i> <i>"Assist me to understand what you mean .."</i>
Be respectful. Use a moderate tone. Be careful of body language.	Be careful not to undermine your team self-esteem.	<i>"I liked the way you ..."</i> <i>"I am curious to ..."</i> <i>"I wonder if..."</i> <i>"Have you considered ...?"</i>
Be conscious of your own communication style and its effect on your team. What works best for them?	Share information about communication styles and discuss the implication of this in providing feedback.	<i>"I find that I get defensive when ..."</i> <i>"I react positively to ..."</i>
DO NOT attempt feedback if you are unprepared or do not have all of the information needed to be fair.	Never wing it if you do not have the answer or information.	<i>"To be honest, I haven't a clue but I will find out with more time."</i>
Encourage your team to regard feedback as progress.	Keep linking progress to the big picture outcome that is wanted by your team.	<i>"When we started our journey ... And then we ... And now we ..."</i>

Confessing Error and Confusion

Confusion is not a weakness to be ashamed of but a regular and inevitable condition of leadership. ” This extract describes a five-step process for taking advantage of “Oh, no!” moments to ‘embrace confusion’, open up better lines of communication, test old assumptions and values against changing realities, and develop more creative approaches to problem solving.

The advice here is based around a case study of a business leader hit with unexpectedly low team feedback 360 score followed by demands from the CEO to do something and defensive reactions from team members who are not about to be blamed for the leader’s poor achievement. Like others in this kind of predicament, the leader feels under tremendous pressure to act and churns with the following thoughts and emotions:

- Shame and loss of face: “I’ll look like a fool!”
- Panic and loss of control: “I’ve let this get out of hand!”
- Incompetence and incapacitation: “I don’t know what I’m doing!”
- Shame: “I’m at a loss here. I’m not fit to lead.”

The last thing the leader is inclined to do is admit confusion, which seems like weakness.

Looking at this situation from the point of view of the school leader’s subordinates, the last thing they want is a boss who:

- Instinctively blames circumstances or other people when things go wrong;
- Claims to be open to input but sees feedback as criticism and doesn’t listen;
- Hates uncertainty and opts for action even when totally confused;
- Believes that anything less than take-charge decision making is weak;
- Habitually resorts to the “art of the bluff” to avoid looking stupid.

Yet, when leaders are disoriented and confused by developments that just don’t make sense and have no idea what to do, these tendencies often take hold. After all, leaders are supposed to know what to do! In a crisis, they tend to deny their confusion and reflexively and unilaterally impose quick fixes to solve the problem. These kinds of shoot-from-the-hip decisions, rarely address underlying causes. More often, they lead to bad decision making, undermine crucial communication with colleagues and subordinates, and make executives seem distant and out of touch. In the long run, executives who hide their confusion also damage their organizations’ ability to learn from experience and grow.

How can a leader get out of this box? Here are some suggestions in a five-step process for turning confusion into a resource, maintaining authority, avoiding premature closure, and enlisting the team in finding the best way to move forward:

Step 1 – Embrace your confusion. When confronted with disorienting problems, you need to do the one thing you least want to do -- acknowledge to yourself that you are confused and that you see this condition as a weakness... You might take a deep breath and say to yourself, 'I'm confused and that makes me feel weak.' Paradoxically, fully embracing where you start will not lead you to wallow in your confusion, but rather frees you to move beyond your inner conflict. Doing this is difficult, and it is recommended that you develop a personal mantra for crisis moments, for example, '*Leadership is not about pretending to have all the answers but about having the courage to search with others to discover solutions.*'

Step 2 – Assert your need to make sense. Sit down with your colleagues and say something like, '*This new information just doesn't make sense to me. Before I can decide, I need help in understanding this situation and our options for dealing with it.*' It's critically important to 'fess up to your confusion. Unless you unambiguously assert, with conviction and without apology, your sense of being confused, others will fulfil your worst expectations -- concluding that you are weak -- and they will be less willing to engage in a shared process of interpersonal learning. If the leader is faking confidence and competence as the ship goes down, the crew will be in no mood to admit their own distress and find new ways to plug the leaks.

Step 3 – Structure the interaction. Without skipping a beat, you must next provide a structure for the search for new bearings that both asserts your authority and creates the conditions for others to join you. The leader needs to state the purpose for the joint inquiry, lay out specific steps to fulfil that purpose, provide a timetable, and identify the criteria and methods by which decisions will be made. These actions show team members that although you have admitted you are confused, you are not incapacitated; you may not know what course to take, but you know the next step, you are *asking for directions* (difficult for some males!) but you are still in charge of a process that will produce a clear outcome, and you give suggestions about the type of data you need to clarify and resolve the problem.

Step 4 – Listen reflectively and learn. As your team begins to respond with data, ideas, and push-back, the leader needs to shift gears and engage in what Thomas Gordon called 'active listening' -- putting yourself in other people's shoes and, with an open mind, really listening to what they are saying (often reflecting it back to be sure you have heard it accurately). Reflective listening doesn't come naturally and takes lots of practice, like hitting a backhand in a fast-paced tennis game.

The opposite of active listening is what bad listeners do all the time: reflexive responding. This happens when people immediately judge the worth of what was said and say whether they agree or disagree. This typically leads to a confrontation, not a joint inquiry. Indeed, our habit of responding in kind is such a powerful force that it has a name: The Norm of Reciprocity. ('If you don't listen to me, I'll be damned if I'll listen to you.')

Step 5 – Openly process your effort to make sense. Having heard what your colleagues have to say (some of which may be puzzling and upsetting), it's important to think through your responses out loud. This works much better than what we usually do, which is think it through silently and then announce our decision. Here are some examples of open processing:

"That's news to me. I haven't heard that before."

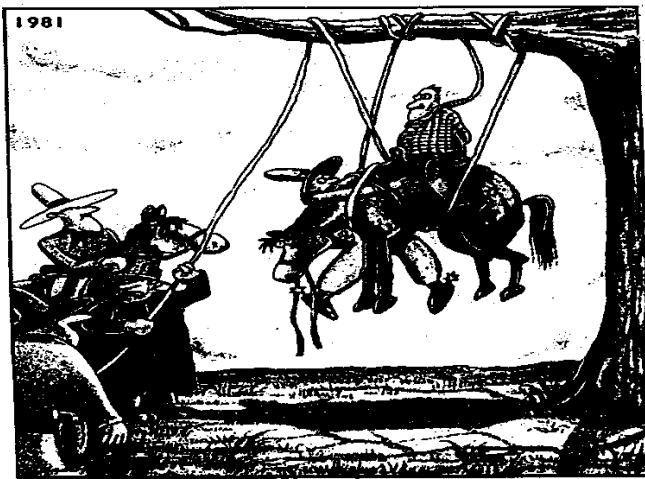
"That really throws me. How did you get to that from what you were saying?"

"That helps me a lot by pointing out x."

When you find the courage to externalize your intellectual process, you invite others to engage in interpersonal learning. Working together, you can discover the limitations of one another's thinking -- limitations that you cannot know as long as you process privately

Dealing with 'angry and frustrated' people

SOMETIMES WE NEED TO MAKE SEVERAL ATTEMPTS TO SUCCEED



"OK, OK, OK. ... Everyone just calm down and we'll try this thing one more time."

At some time, you, as a mentor, will be faced with an angry and frustrated mentee. These notes might assist in having a discussion with them towards understanding their motivation and possible resolution. For a start show them the cartoon.

It is not the events of this world that make us angry. It is our "hot thoughts" that create our anger. Even when a genuinely negative event occurs, it is the meaning we attach to it that determines our emotional response and the resultant level of frustration.

- The idea that we are responsible for our anger is ultimately to our advantage because it gives us the opportunity to achieve control and make a free choice about how we want to feel. If it were not for this, we would be helpless to control our emotions; they would be bound up with every external event, most of which are ultimately out of our control.
- Most of the time our anger will not help us. It will immobilize us, and we will become frozen in our hostility to no productive purpose. We will feel better if we place our emphasis on the active search for creative solutions. What can we do to correct the difficulty or at least reduce the chance that we'll get burned in the same way in the future? This

attitude will eliminate, to a certain extent, the helplessness and frustration when we feel we can't deal with a situation effectively.

- If no solution is possible because the provocation is totally beyond our control, we will only make ourselves miserable with our resentment, so why not get rid of it? It's difficult if not impossible to feel anger and joy simultaneously. If we think our angry feelings are especially precious and important, then think about one of the happiest moments of your life. Now ask yourself, how many minutes of that period of peace or jubilation would I be willing to trade in for feeling frustration and irritation instead?
- The thoughts that generate anger more often than not will contain distortions. Correcting these distortions will reduce our anger.
- Ultimately our anger is caused by our belief that someone is acting unfairly or some event is unjust. The intensity of the anger will increase in proportion to the severity of the maliciousness perceived and whether the act is seen as intentional.
- If we learn to see the world through other people's eyes, we will often be surprised to realize their actions are *not* unfair from their point of view. The unfairness in these cases turns out to be an illusion that exists *only in our mind!* If we are willing to let go of the unrealistic notion that everyone shares our concepts of truth, justice, and fairness, much of our resentment and frustration will vanish.
- Other people usually do not feel they deserve our punishment. Therefore, our retaliation is unlikely to help us achieve any positive goals in our interactions with them. Our rage will often just cause further deterioration and polarization, and will function as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Even if we temporarily get what we want, any short-term gains from such hostile manipulation will often be more than counterbalanced by a long-term resentment and retaliation from the people we are coercing. No one likes to be controlled or forced. A positive reward system works better.
- A great deal of our anger involves our defence against loss of self-esteem when people criticize us, disagree with us, or fail to behave as we want them to. Such anger is *always* inappropriate because only our own negative distorted thoughts can cause us to lose self-esteem. When we blame the other person for our feelings of worthlessness, we are *always* fooling yourself.
- Frustration results from unmet expectations. Since the event that disappointed us was a part of "reality," it was "realistic." Thus, our frustration always results from our *unrealistic* expectation. We have the right to try to influence reality to bring it more in line with

our expectations, but this is not always practical, especially when these expectations represent ideals that don't correspond to everyone else's concept of human nature. The simplest solution would be to *change our expectations*. For example, some unrealistic expectations that lead to frustration include:

- o if I want something (love, happiness, a promotion, etc.), I deserve it.
- o If I work hard at something, I *should* be successful.
- o Other people *should* try to measure up to my standards and believe in my concept of "fairness."
- o I *should* be able to solve any problems quickly and easily.
- o If I'm a good boss, my staff are *bound* to like me.
- o People *should* think and act the way I do.
- o If I'm nice to someone, they *should* reciprocate.
- It is just childish pouting to insist we have the *right* to be angry. Of course, we do! Anger is legally permissible. The crucial issue is - is it to our advantage to feel angry? Will we or the world really benefit from our rage?
- We rarely need our anger in order to be human. It is not true that we will be an unfeeling robot without it. In fact, when we rid yourself of that sour irritability, we will feel greater zest, joy and productivity.

Managing Mentee Thinking to Reduce Stress

There is a common myth today that stress can be almost alleviated by adjusting your work/life balance. Be aware that some mentees may have this viewpoint. Changing work/life balance is unrealistic - and is in itself stressful! Recent statistics from the OECD show that Australians are amongst the hardest workers (in the total number of hours worked per week) compared to workers in any other country. Senior executives and CEO's regularly work in excess of 70 hours per week. When work accounts for 70 hours or more the remaining activities are inevitably compromised. Many executives work longer hours if you include extensive international travel in different time zones that interfere with their rest and recovery cycle.

Physical exercise and relaxation strategies such as meditation will help the mentee reduce stress levels however; stress is a fact of life. Stress cannot be alleviated; it can be managed. As a mentor, you have to be comfortable with tackling the issue of stress with your

mentee. Many business people live with stress constantly! They have too little time, too much or too little information, more competitors to contend with, issues with the management of staff, their peers and the Board.

In times past, when we were hunter/gatherers, the activation of the 'fight/flight' mechanism, the 'on switch' for stress, acted as a warning signal – move on or be eaten by predators! The 'predators' are now in differing guises yet our primitive brain still activates the stress response. The 'fight/flight' mechanism releases powerful neuro-chemicals and hormones when this response is activated. This release happens automatically, without our full awareness. It is 'hard wired' into our physiology. By addressing the individuals thinking behind the stress response, you can help your client reduce their stress levels.

When stress is a constant in working life, for example a long-term illness or anxiety about job performance then the physical body has no opportunity to replenish its lost reserves and the 'flight/fight' mechanism remains 'on'. Continual stress leads to ill-health even life-threatening disease such as heart attacks and is proven to contribute to some cancers. The most potent way to reduce your mentees stress is to guide them to manage their thinking. As a mentor it is your decision whether to address the issue of stress directly with them, otherwise you may refer them to a specialist in the field.

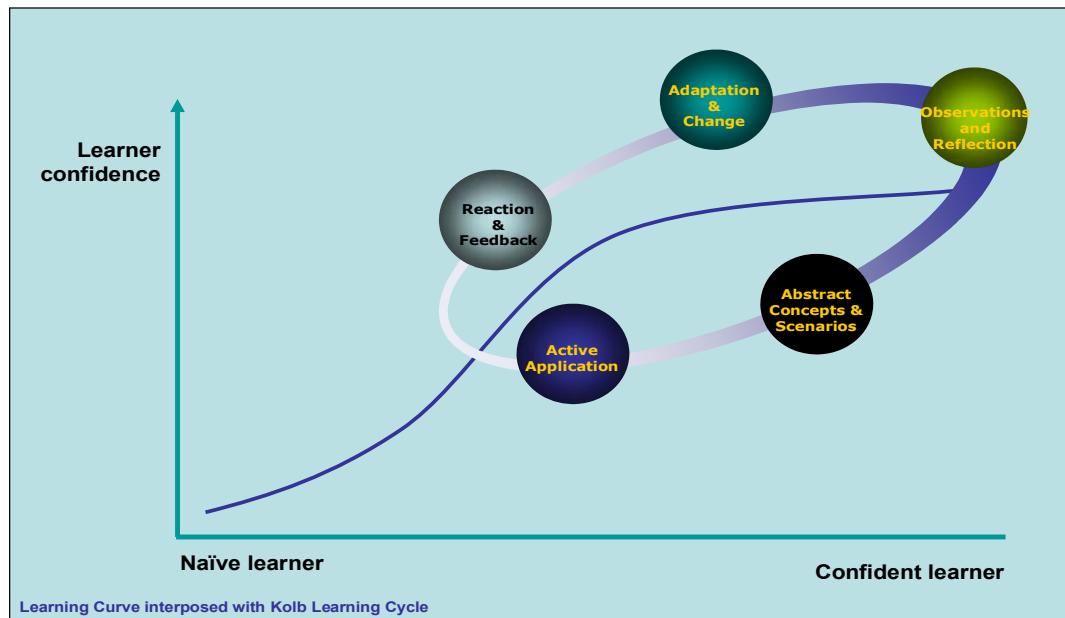
Consider and discuss as a series of questions, "*What is their usual response when a working scenario presents with a series of challenges? How do they think about the issues? How much of their thinking contributes to the stress experienced every day?*" Ask: *Do you react or respond, to stressful situations?* The words easily conjure up the meaning. Reaction is fiery, sudden, without deep thought; response is more measured, more deliberate. Think about how you act - do react or respond?

Managing thinking requires awareness of the type of thoughts being experienced. People who experience high levels of stress may have a less than optimistic view of what *might* happen. Do they usually have a negative view of situations generally? Do they worry constantly perhaps lying awake at night? How often is their worry justified by the reality of the final outcome? What steps do they clearly see are needed to change the situation?

One technique that can easily be used is to question or challenge their own thinking. By asking them, 'Is this thought justified?' 'Is the outcome a possibility or does it represent my fear?' 'Who or what is really behind this thought?' Often negative thinking emanates from inherited belief systems. Challenge presumptive thinking by asking - 'Just how likely is this situation to occur in reality?

When we face the possible outcome of a situation – “What is the worst thing that can happen?”, we begin to take charge of the situation and not become a victim to it. There are many powerful tools to reduce stress, the most potent one we have is to manage our own thoughts. In business, we plan and strategise – we attempt to anticipate. Thinking rationally about the strategic possibilities puts the possible options into the *real and unreal* categories. The pneumonic – Anticipate, Think and Act, is therefore a useful reminder tool to approach a stressful situation and resolve it.

Mentoring 'intelligent' people



As a mentor to other executives, you need to understand that intelligent people often push back with what is called *defensive reasoning*. Their position, experience, ego and knowledge positions what they are hearing in a way that they defend their position against challenge.

Sometimes, this *defensive reasoning* position comes about because they have never failed and therefore have no experience in handling failure. The reason to be aware of this is because some mentees may regard the early stages of the mentoring process as remedial. The mentor has to work to change this view if it is detected.

If *defensive reasoning* is encountered, focusing on an individual's attitudes or commitment is never enough to produce real change. Neither is creating new organisational structures or systems. The problem is that even when people are genuinely committed to improving their performance and management has changed its structures in order to encourage the 'right' kind of behaviour, people still remain locked in *defensive reasoning*. Either they remain unaware of this fact, or if they do become aware of it, they blame others.

Mentors need to be on the alert for this *push-back* and not be afraid to address it.

Despite the strength of *defensive reasoning*, people genuinely strive to produce what they intend. They value acting competently. Their self-esteem is intimately tied up with behaving consistently and performing effectively. Mentors can use these universal human tendencies to guide their mentee in how to reason in a new way—in effect, to change the standard approach in their heads and thus reshape their behaviour.

People can be taught how to recognise the reasoning they use when they design and implement their actions. They can begin to identify the inconsistencies between their espoused and actual theories of action. They can face up to the fact that they unconsciously design and implement actions that they do not intend. Finally, people can learn how to identify what individuals and groups do to create organizational defences and how these defences contribute to a problem.

Change has to start at the top because otherwise defensive senior executives are likely to disown any transformation in reasoning patterns coming from below. If professionals or middle executives begin to change the way they reason and act, such changes are likely to appear strange – if not actually dangerous – to those at the top. The result is an unstable situation where senior executives still believe that it is a sign of caring and sensitivity to bypass and cover up difficult issues, while their subordinates see the very same actions as defensive.

The key to any educational experience designed to teach senior executives how to reason productively is to connect the program to real business problems. This is why business-mentoring works so well. The best demonstration of the usefulness of *productive reasoning* is for busy executives to see how it can make a direct difference in their own performance and in that of the organization.

This will not happen overnight. Your mentee will need plenty of opportunity to practice the new skills. But once they grasp the powerful impact that *productive reasoning* can have on actual performance, they will have a strong incentive to reason productively not just in each mentoring session but in all their work relationships.

One simple approach to get this process started is to have mentees produce a kind of rudimentary case study. The subject is a real business problem that the executive either wants to deal with or has tried unsuccessfully to address in the past. Writing the actual case usually takes less than an hour. But then the case becomes the focal point of an extended mentoring session.

For example, a senior executive at a large organizational-development consulting company was preoccupied with the problems caused by the intense

competition among the various business functions represented by his four direct reports. Not only was he tired of having the problems dumped in his lap, but he was also worried about the impact the inter-functional conflicts were having on the organization's flexibility. He had even calculated that the money being spent to iron out disagreements amounted to hundreds of thousands of dollars every year. And the more fights there were, the more defensive people became, which only increased the costs to the organization.

In a paragraph or so, the senior executive described a meeting he intended to have with his direct reports to address the problem. Next, he divided the paper in half, and on the right-hand side of the page, he wrote a scenario for the meeting – much like the script for a movie or play – describing what he would say and how his subordinates would likely respond. On the left-hand side of the page, he wrote down any thoughts and feelings that he would be likely to have during the meeting but that he wouldn't express for fear they would derail the discussion.

But instead of holding the meeting, the senior executive analysed this scenario with his direct reports. The case became the catalyst for a discussion in which the senior executive learned several things about the way he acted with his management team.

He discovered that his four direct reports often perceived his conversations as counterproductive. In the guise of being 'diplomatic,' he would pretend that a consensus about the problem existed, when in fact none existed. The unintended result: instead of feeling reassured, his subordinates felt wary and tried to figure out 'What is he really getting at?'

The senior executive also realized that the way he dealt with the competitiveness among department heads was completely contradictory. On the one hand, he kept urging them to 'think of the organization as a whole.' On the other, he kept calling for actions – department budget cuts, for example – that placed them directly in competition with each other.

Finally, the senior executive discovered that many of the tacit evaluations and attributions he had listed turned out to be wrong. Since he had never expressed these assumptions, he had never found out just how wrong they were. What's more, he learned that much of what he thought he was hiding came through to his subordinates anyway – but with the added message that the boss was covering up.

The senior executive's colleagues also learned about their own ineffective behaviour. They learned by examining their own behaviour as they tried to help the senior executive analyse his case. They also learned by writing and analysing cases of their own. They began to see that they too tended to bypass and cover up the real issues and that the senior executive was often aware of it but did not say so. They too made inaccurate attributions and evaluations that they did not express. Moreover, the belief that they had to hide important ideas and feelings from the senior executive and from each other in order not to upset anyone turned out to be mistaken. In the context of the case discussions, the entire senior management team was quite willing to discuss what had always been undiscussable.

In effect, the case study exercise legitimizes talking about issues that people have never been able to address before. Such a discussion can be emotional – even painful. But for executives with the courage to persist, the payoff is great: management teams and entire organizations work more openly and more effectively and have greater options for behaving flexibly and adapting to particular situations.

When senior executives are trained in new reasoning skills, they can have a big impact on the performance of the entire organization – even when other employees are still reasoning defensively. The senior executive who led the meetings on the performance-evaluation procedure was able to defuse dissatisfaction because he didn't respond to professionals' criticisms in kind but instead gave a clear presentation of relevant data. Indeed, most participants took the senior executive's behaviour to be a sign that the company really acted on the values of participation and employee involvement that it espoused.

To question someone else's reasoning is not a sign of mistrust but a valuable opportunity for learning.

The following is a fun look at decision-making by strong willed intelligent people who will not admit error. A useful tool.

Avoid dependency and proxy scenarios

These are two Golden Rules.

A mentor is of no benefit to their mentee if they have created, tolerate or perpetuate dependency. You must resign as the mentor and explain why. The mentee can change mentors but it is unlikely that the original mentor will be able to reverse what has been created.

Allowing or promoting dependency is unfair and unethical behaviour. It corrupts the process of mentoring. A mentor to whom this happens should seek advice from a senior mentor to correct what slipped before they engage with any further mentees.

Doing the mentees job by proxy is akin to management consulting. Little if any experience is transferred, know-how is not shared, time is stolen and the learning experience withdrawn.

Proxy relationships in mentoring are a waste of time for all parties. No favours are being done. In fact, the opposite occurs because the process has to be undone and then restructured and replaced by the proper process.

Internal mentors can have considerable difficulty in handling these two issues.

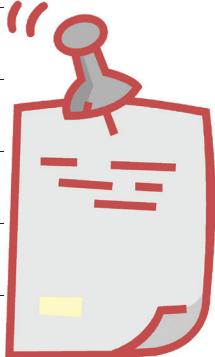
External mentors are partially protected from this paradigm of being influenced by internal cultural dominance and are divorced from the existing *internal politics* of the organisation.

How do you rate? Ask for feedback on your own performance.

Session Rating Scale - Mentee

I do not feel that I am being heard, understood and respected	Engagement	I was heard, understood and respected
We did not address the issues I needed to work on and talk about	Aims and Objectives	We got to the issue and talked it through well with detail
My mentor's approach is not a good fit with me	Making it work	My mentor's approach is just right for me
The session did not meet my expectations or needs	Summary	The session met my expectations and needs

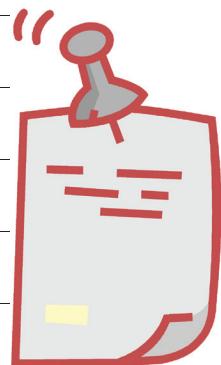
Notes page:



What actions will you discuss with your mentee around these learnings?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

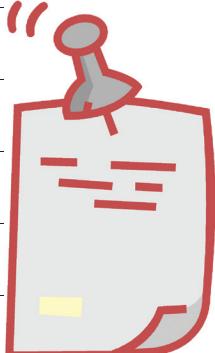
Notes page:



What actions will you discuss with your mentee around these learnings?

4.
5.
6.

Notes page:



What actions will you discuss with your mentee around these learnings?

- 7.
- 8.
- 9.