



The Human Dimension

THE LEADER WITHIN

September 2007

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"We help both people and productivity flourish by developing a positive culture of shared leadership."

We find improved performance is the reward for your investing in people.

The emphasis in THE LEADER WITHIN is on the changes and growth we make within ourselves, as leadership is basically a personal growth experience over time.

'For things to change first I must change.'

Getting Others to Change:

Getting someone else to change their thinking, ideas, approach or behaviour is not easy at the best of times, and yet this is precisely what we often need to be able to achieve in order to co-deliver on important outcomes.

At the weekend I was in Sydney, and as well as having a day to ourselves, Lyn and I attended a seminar and workshop on 'The Science of Changing your Mind' organised by Nibbana www.nibbana.com.au and featuring Dr. Joe Dispenza. Joe is a visiting American scientist who specializes in Neurology, Neurophysiology and brain functions. While he did not specifically address changing other people's minds he did talk a lot about how we can change our own minds to make fundamental changes in our lives and he did remind us of the importance of knowing more about the science of human behaviour and how important this is in today's complex and fast changing world. www.drjoedispenza.net

The extent to which you can influence others to change is dependent on three important qualities and they are all to do with you and ones which you have complete control over. These are to do with:

1. your willingness to make changes in your self
2. the quality of your relationships and,
3. the depth of your listening.

1. Personal Change

Dr Joe really challenged us to believe in the power of our thinking to basically change every aspect of our lives. When we change our mind our life changes. When we successfully apply this new paradigm, our brain is no longer a record of the past but the map to our new future. Quantum physics research indicates that the environment is an extension of the mind and in this framework; some of the key messages from the Joe Dispenza workshop on personal change were to:

- break the habit of 'being yourself' ,
- think and act *differently* in the same environment,
- think *greater* than how you feel and '*greater*' than the current circumstances in your life
- be conscious, aware and attentive
- have your thinking controlling your feelings, not the other way around,
- think and act *beyond your memories* (present thoughts, attitudes, beliefs and perceptions).

If we change the way we think, feel and behave we change the nature of our world. Firstly, we demonstrate to others that change is possible. Secondly, we influence each and every relationship we are in by being different ourselves. Thirdly, we allow others to make changes if our 'problematic behaviour' gets out of the way.

2. Quality Relationships

The features of a quality relationship contain trust, love, honesty, integrity, belief, wisdom and openness. Relationships need to be nurtured, encouraged and honoured. They require investment of time, energy, commitment and care. If we give attention to the relationships around us (colleagues, clients as well with our family and friends) and put more of our mental and emotional focus on them, they will grow, develop and flourish. Our current state of happiness is in correlation to the quality of relationships that we have.

When people around us trust and respect us they are more likely also to be influenced by us as they are prepared to listen and take seriously our ideas and our challenges. This works both ways. We also become more open to be influenced by their ideas and creativity and to take seriously their challenges to us. Our relationships become a profound and enjoyable 'dance' and interchange where we can collaborate, co-create and co-deliver on the important things that matter to us both.

3. Deep Listening

Common understanding decrees that hearing and listening are two different activities and abilities. Hearing requires functioning ears. Listening, on the other hand, requires comprehension, minimal distraction and a release from your opinions while the other person(s) is speaking. It also requires listening with the heart.

I read recently that we spend about 45 percent of our time listening, but we are distracted, preoccupied, or forgetful about 75 percent of that time. The average attention span for adults is about 22 seconds. Immediately after listening to someone talk, we usually recall only about half of what we've heard; within a few hours, only about 20 percent.

And then there's deep listening...

To listen deeply is to *really being* with another. That means hearing beyond the spoken words to their essence and to the feelings behind them. You're in a state of presence where your mind is not cluttered with past judgments or thoughts of the future. You feel no urgency or impatience, and you let go of beliefs and prejudices you may have about the other person. It's like listening to your favourite music, the sound of a rushing stream or a bird singing. You get 'purposefully absorbed' in that moment. You're not analysing or figuring it out, you're simply letting the feelings and sounds affect you. It is where you are focussing your attention.

Deep listening can take many forms. When speaking with someone who is listening deeply, you may feel as if you are the only person in the world. The listener gives you the impression that she is completely rapt by your words and thoughts. The experience of deep listening seems kind, understanding and meaningful. Deep listening engenders a powerful interaction, a stronger relationship and mutual understanding that helps decrease friction and conflict.

Chinese writing contains pictures and symbols to communicate meaning and the word 'listen' contains a picture of "eyes, ears and heart" indicating we need to use all our senses when we truly listen to someone else.

The greatest gift we can give to another is our real and sincere 'attention'. We do this by listening respectfully and deeply to them. In that very sacred space that gets created when we truly listen to one another 'magic happens'. Ideas get generated. Creativity is born. People feel truly heard and 'arrive fully' in relationships where previously they may have just been 'visiting'. Life gets better.

Call to Action:

"What great companies have always done is to find ways to appeal to another side of human nature, wanting to be associated with something that's great," says John P. Kotter, an expert in leadership and culture and a retired Harvard Business School professor. "You want to find the nature of what you're making exciting and believe that this product or service does something useful for humanity. Great companies institutionalize that, and you can't fake it".

"It's not just in your business model," Kotter says. "*It's in people's hearts.*"

So the challenge is to be allowed into people's hearts so that you can effect change.

Remember, getting others to change is predicated on three things which you control:

1. your willingness to make changes in your self first,
2. the quality of your relationships and,
3. the depth of your listening.

So over the coming month practice getting to know, hear and appreciate what is in people's hearts.

Ask better questions, which help those around you, reveal more of what is important to them.

Questions such as:

"I am interested in what you think about this, can you talk more about...?"

"What is important to you?"

"What are your aspirations and personal vision?"

"What is holding you back right now?"

"What does your heart tell you about your choices right now?"

... and then listen deeply to their answers!

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