

Mentoring for Change

leadership, coaching, mentoring, storytelling

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

- Creating Sustained Change – The Ideal Self
- MBTI and Coaching (3)
- Shifting Stuck Patterns

With best wishes

Mike the Mentor



Creating Sustained Change – The Ideal Self

Over the years I have worked as a coach, I have increasingly realised just how difficult it is to help people create sustained changes in their behaviours, attitudes and self-image. At the same time, I have also been amazed by the extent to which people do, on occasions, make sustained change in just such areas.

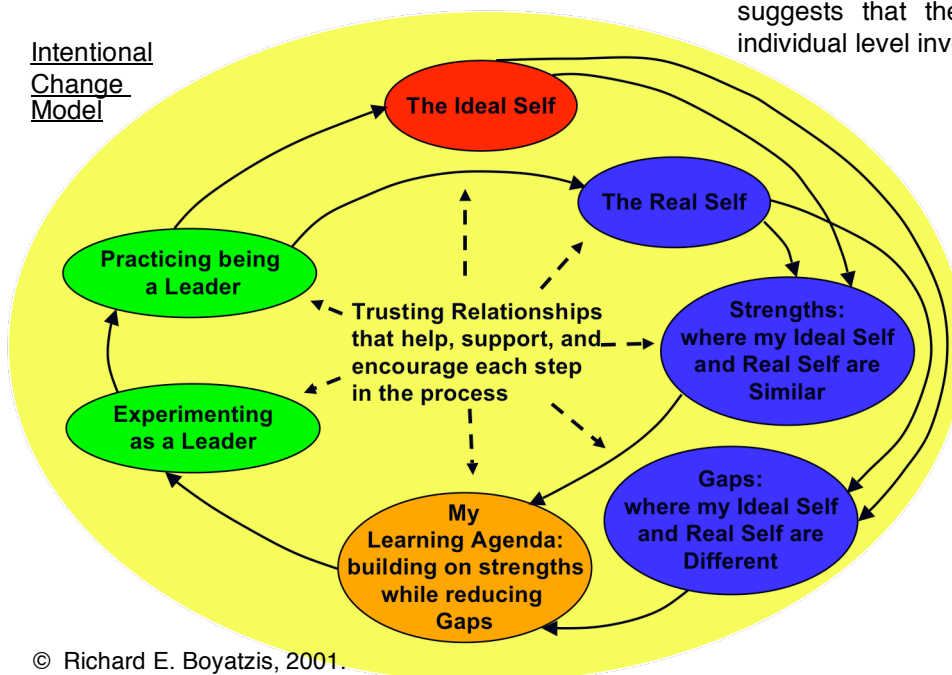
For example, for the past six years I have, most weeks, gone to a yoga class. Nothing unusual in that – except I don't actually enjoy yoga! I believe its good for me – but then there are many things that I believe would be good for me that I don't do. Knowing that something is good for me isn't enough in itself to cause me to do it.

So why do I do yoga? It is for a simple and powerful reason. I have made doing yoga a part of my identity. I like to think of myself as someone who does yoga. When, a year or so back, I thought about packing the yoga in, I noticed that just that thought created a real sense of loss, of something missing in my life.

So what I have learnt is that, if I am to successfully change my behaviours, I need to make them part of the Self I aspire to being.

I was interested to discover that this is a topic which Richard Boyatzis has given considerable thought to in developing his theory of Intentional Change, the core driver of which is what he refers to as the Ideal Self. He suggests that the creating sustained change at the individual level involves:

Intentional Change Model



1. identifying my Ideal Self – who do I want to be?
2. identifying my Real Self – who am I?
3. developing a Learning Agenda – to build on my strengths and work on my weaknesses
4. Experimenting and practicing the new behaviours, thoughts, feelings or perceptions
5. having trusting relationships that enable me to experience and process each discovery in the process.

The powerhouse in this process is the Ideal Self. It is made up of three

© Richard E. Boyatzis, 2001.

For further information contact Dr Mike Munro Turner, Jericho Partners, Antrobus House, 3 Manby Road, Great Malvern, Worcs, WR14 3BD
 Tel: +44(0) 1684 893380. E-mail: mike@mikethementor.co.uk
 Web site: <http://www.mikethementor.co.uk>

© Dr M H Munro Turner

Shifting Stuck Patterns

Chris Johnstone's excellent new book entitled "Find Your Power" (<http://www.chrisjohnstone.info/book.htm>) describes how to develop personal power – the ability to move in the direction you want to go. One key issue he addresses is how we can shift our stuck patterns – those habitual ways of thinking and acting that give us those "here I am again!" moments.

Chris suggests that every stuck pattern has 3 types of causes:

- **Predisposing causes:** which are those factors which predispose us to behave in particular ways, such as our genetics, family upbringing and cultural context.
- **Precipitating causes:** which trigger the pattern in the moment.
- **Perpetuating causes:** which keep the pattern going by creating a reinforcing circle.

To successfully change you have to:

- Change those **predisposing** causes of the stuck pattern that you can (eg if you know you tend to be more irritable when your blood sugar is low, ensure you eat regularly).
- Identify the **precipitating** causes by noticing which events trigger strong emotional responses. Then get curious about the needs such responses might be attempting to meet and find different ways of meeting those needs.
- If this doesn't work and you still find yourself getting caught by the old patterns, then you need

to tackle the perpetuating factors, the loops that keep the behaviours going.

For example, perhaps I micromanage my staff because I don't trust them to do a good job. There are 2 loops in play here. The first is a short-term balancing loop in which each journey round the loop makes me feel more in control and so reduces my tension. So my micromanaging brings me immediate relief and reinforces my behaviour.



Short-term – a balancing loop reducing tension

What I probably won't see is the second longer-term amplifying loop where, over time, each journey round the loop increases my tension. This is because, by micromanaging my staff, I prevent them from demonstrating their talents, and deny myself the opportunity to learn to trust them. My tension remains and so I keep micromanaging my staff.



Long-term – an amplifying loop increasing tension

One way to break the habit is to reframe the tension as something to be sought out – because when you're feeling the tension, you're not micromanaging!

major components:

1. a compelling image of a desired future articulating one's dreams, aspirations and fantasies;
2. hope caused by one's optimism and belief in one's general competence;
3. and a comprehensive sense of and acceptance of one's core identity (past strengths, traits and other enduring dispositions) .

More in "Resonant Leadership" by Boyatzis & McKee, Harvard Business School Press, 2005.

MBTI and Coaching (3)

In previous newsletters (#18 and #19) I have observed that, of the 60 or more coaches I have informally surveyed, almost every one has an N (Intuition) preference on the Sensing-Intuition scale of the Myers Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI). I had wondered if that was because people with an N preference tend to focus on future possibilities and so were more likely to be able to help others create new futures for themselves.

Richard Boyatzis in his paper "Core Competencies in Coaching Others to Overcome Dysfunctional Behavior" (http://www.eiconsortium.org/research/coaching_competencies.pdf) suggests that it may be the big picture, pattern recognition aspect of the N preference which is key. This research shows that effective coaches are able to notice a wide range of things about the coachee and their situation, and then to make sense of this initially unconnected information by recognising the patterns and themes.

In addition, the research showed that there are two competencies which have a more substantial and significant impact on coaches' effectiveness. These are Emotional Self-Awareness and Empathy. Emotional self-awareness is important because it helps us keep appropriate boundaries in the coaching relationship; empathy because it helps us understand the other person deeply.

This newsletter is free. Please copy it to others who might enjoy it. To subscribe or unsubscribe go to www.mikethementor.co.uk where previous issues of the newsletter are available.