

Welcome to **The EDGE**

Your occasional e-zine on **LEADING, LEARNING** and **CREATING**

December 2007

Issue 4

"Do not fear risk.
All exploration, all growth is calculated.
Without challenge people cannot reach their higher selves.
Only if we are willing to walk over the **edge** can we become winners."

KIA ORA and SEASON'S GREETINGS

Its been 6 months since my last newsletter – sounds like the beginning of an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting – and I really can't account for where all the time has gone. The marketing people say you need to be in contact with people at least every 90 days – oh well - Just as well I'm not selling anything!!

On the work front its been busy since the last newsletter:

- a leadership programme in the dairy industry
- a competitive manufacturing programme in the pulp and paper industry
- a contract to write delivery and assessment material for communication training modules
- a heap of one on one coaching
- a communications programme in the timber industry
- a staff development programme at a polytechnic
- a nation wide train the trainer programme for the forest industry training organisation
- a 'gaggle' of facilitation projects
- a 'herd' of team building programmes
- and still being a partner and director of a private training establishment – the School of Business Ltd www.schoolofbusiness.co.nz

Whew – no wonder I'm feeling a little tired this time of the year!!!!

On the creative front . . .

- playing drums with Gumboot Tango continues to be fun. We just started busking on a Sunday morning in a farmers market – its great fun!
- time in a recording studio with my friend Tracey working on her new CD. www.traceyhaskell.co.nz. We recorded this at what is probably the best acoustic recording studio in the country – Robbie Duncan's Braeburn Studio in Wellington – that's in New Zealand.



Tracey



Bob on the bass



The weary drummer

- an exhibition of art works and a commission
- playing drums in a friends band – great music. Check her out at www.carolbean.com
- developing the Creativity Diamond – a creativity assessment tool and workbook. Let me know if you want a look at it. More under creating!
- Gumboot Tango were guests at the Wellington Folk Festival along with some of these lovely folk below!!



Emily, Mike and Lott



BB – and her banjo

And then there's my lovely long suffering family.

Amidst all of the above we have still managed to have a holiday in the beautiful Bay of Islands, get to Australia for a family wedding and find the greatest little craft gallery in Australia – more about this later – and are planning a camper-van trip this January.



Sarah and Stu



Stu on the left!



The 'Hole in The Rock'

LEADING

The extract below comes from my friend and colleague, Bruce Hammonds. His web site is www.leading-learning.co.nz His blogs are really great and he is a prolific blog writer – check them out!

"I found an article I cut out of the paper last year about leadership and its ideas are worth sharing.

Leadership, it says, is as much an overused term as it is vague.

What is more interesting the writings on leadership has changed over the decades.

Thirty years ago the thinkers were talking mainly about outcomes and management by objectives. This will still sound familiar in education today. Fifteen years there was a heavy emphasis ago on processes such as Total Quality Management (TQM) and such thing as re-engineering. Quality management collapsed into measuring everything and nothing. Again another familiar idea to schools with the current emphasis on 'targets' and 'evidence based

teaching'.

Today the references are towards 'imaginative capital', 'dialogue', 'realizing not yet enacted realities', 'co-creation' and 'distributed, shared, or inverted leadership'.

The emphasis now is not doing what you do well (and spending endless time and energy proving it) but now leaders have to think forward rather than project the past. 'The new requirement', the article states, 'is to be creative – in the sense of creating something not seen before'.

This leaves leaders with two problems. One is how to come up with ways of developing new ways of doing things and the other is to do this while still keeping the organization well managed and on course. Teachers in creative classrooms will know the feeling.

Leadership must now be 'entrepreneurial' and this may mean getting younger members to lead teams ('inverted' leadership) or projects because the more established managers are past it. Just think of who has the ICT knowledge in our schools.

Even though creativity and innovation are felt important few leaders have any idea of what it means in reality, or how to go about doing it. All too often incremental improvement is the result.

How to create the conditions to release creativity is the challenge; any organization that is heavy on checking up, or evaluation, will find it impossible. Creativity requires an environment that encourages 'risk taking and mistake making' and this requires considerable leadership courage.

It is far easier to fallback on ensuring efficiency; proving what you are doing is done well. This will really feel familiar to principals' particularity with the possibility of an Education Review Visit on the horizon. This leads into a timid, 'blind following the blind', mentality.

Future leaders will have to become more skilled at developing creativity and living with the complexity and uncertainty that goes with it. Leadership will have to be a more exploratory than analytical process.

Final advice offered in the article:

Value creativity and trusting those with expertise but don't throw away established structure until new ideas are worth the risk.

When new idea throw up complexity or confusion (which they will) keep an open mind and pursue operational simplicity. Don't let things get too complex. Judge things on their potential to be of real advantage to future success.

It would seem to me that future leaders will have to trust their intuition (something not valued in our technocratic era). If everyone in the organization has a stake in the success of the organization they will make the best decisions they can to ensure its success. This will require a strong culture of experimentation and trust, and an ability to learn from mistakes. People, one writer says, will make the right decision if the 'shadow of the future is strong enough'!

Advice given to me many years ago, by a friend of mine, was to remember the motto of the wing walkers (who rode the wings of bi planes after World War One), 'Don't let go of something until you have a firm grip of something else.'

Good advice when you are taking risks?"

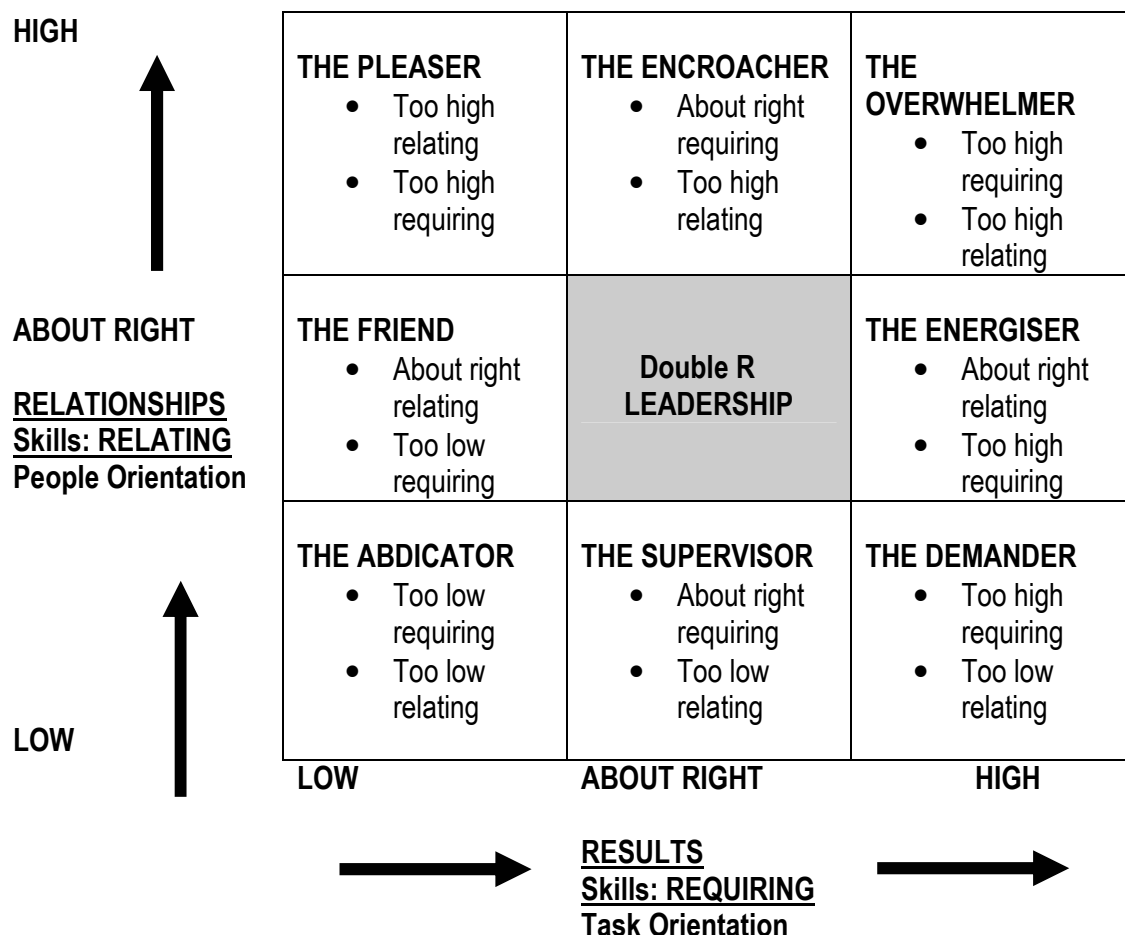
Double R Leadership

To be effective in leading others we must know how to 'require' people to deliver results. We must also, however, do this in a way that 'relates' to the same people.

This is not a new concept. Others have written about this calling the dimensions 'task-orientation' and 'people-orientation'.

This particular way of looking at leadership comes from The 2R Manager by Peter Friedes, [Josey Bass, 2002].

Where do you fit?



Source: Friedes, P. (2002) The 2R Manager. Josey Bass

LEARNING

I have been thinking a lot about learning lately.

My 13 year old is off to High School next year and like any parent I am wondering how he will find it and what he will learn. Seems to me that for a lot of people real learning doesn't happen often. Think back if you will to your school days and I am willing to bet that what you have learned – by that I mean what you have retained and remembered – is likely to fit into two categories. What you have really learned either appealed to an emotion or was unique in some way. My understanding is that our brains sort by difference so if what you were taught was delivered in the same way, perhaps a boring way then it is not going to be retained. Likewise you are likely to remember the stuff that gave you an emotional hit – good or bad. **Does this mean that if we want people to learn we have to make our delivery unique and appeal to a 'high' emotion?** Maybe the advertisers have got it right! Any comments?

For those interested in school learning check out www.edutopia.org It's a site established by George Lucas of Star Wars fame.

Did you know that

- the average concentration span is about 7 minutes?
- WE RETAIN 7 -9 BITS OF INFORMATION?
- more learning happens at the beginning and the end of any learning session?
- **we each have an individual learning style?**
- THE WAY WE USE OUR BRAINS HEMISPHERES AFFECTS THE WAY WE LEARN?
- **some learn best by seeing, others by listening and others by doing?**
- **we have at least 8 intelligences?**
- **our memories retain only 10% of what we read and up to 90% of what we see, hear, say and do?**
- OUR MEMORIES LOSE UP TO 50% IN 24 HOURS AND UP TO 85% IN 72 HOURS?

- *our brain sorts by difference, not sameness?*
- *most course notes are so boring they never get looked at after they've been given out?*
- **real learning involves the emotions?**
- **up to 85% of training is ineffective in that in neither changes behaviour nor improves performance?**

It useful from time to **time to reflect on your job and the level of satisfaction** it gives you, after we all spend a lot of time doing it! This also seems the right time of year to be doing it. I find these questions useful when doing that. They may lead to some personal insights. It may be even time for a change – a new position, a new job, perhaps even a new you!

1. What contributions do you think you are making to your organisation?
2. How do you view your role in the organisation at this time?
3. What are some key milestones that you have experienced in your life that you can look back on and feel proud of?
4. When your association with your organisation comes to a close at some time in the future what can you envision will be the key milestones and accomplishments you will have achieved? What will you leave the organisation as a result of your innovation and effort?
5. What will people say about you at your farewell?
6. What were the three key factors that attracted you to this organisation and your present job? Are they still attractive?
7. What skills have you developed during your time with the organisation? What other skills do you need to develop? How do you envision using and obtaining these skills?
8. Under what conditions do you learn best?
9. What conditions, based on your experience, are counter-productive for you?
10. If you had an opportunity what advice would you give your supervisor / manager to help unleash your fullest potential?

11. Based on your past experience and your knowledge of yourself, what factors are important to keep you motivated and happy in your job?
 12. What words would you use to describe an ideal working relationship with a] your supervisor/manager and b] your team members?
 13. What differences in working or communication styles do you have when compared to your supervisor/manager? What might you do to address them? How can you use them to your advantage?
 14. When you are stressed or overwhelmed, how does this show up in your observable behaviours? What can you do to reduce your stress?
 15. List some books or films that have had an impact on your thinking or your life, and explain why they had this effect on you.
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WORK – Great? Good? Bad?

How much of each do you do?

Great Work defined:

Work that brings you both exhilaration and terror. You are delighted and challenged when asked to do it. You tap into reserves to get done what needs to be done. It honours your skills, your passion and your experience. You probably will remember it in years to come.

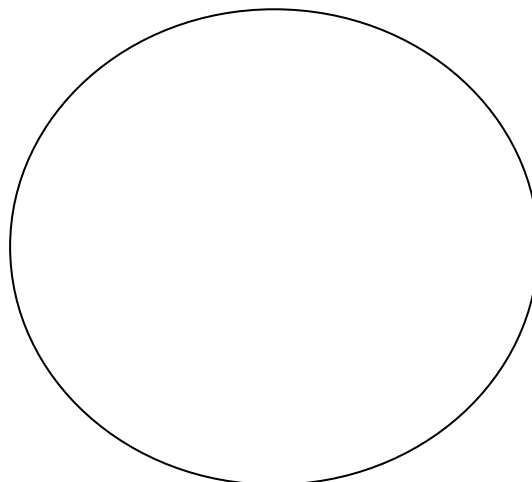
Good Work defined:

You are doing work that uses your skills, it gets stuff done and pays the bills. It's not that you are having a bad time but you are not hugely excited by it. You are unlikely to recall it in years to come.

Bad Work defined:

You may remember this in years to come but for all the wrong reasons. This is when you sit back and ask yourself "Why exactly am I wasting my life doing this?"

In the circle below divide it into 3 segments that represent the amount of each type of work in your life today.



Are you OK with the proportions of great, good and bad work in your life?

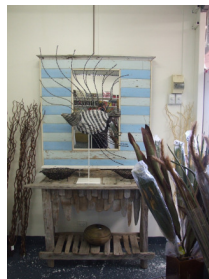
If you are not ask yourself these questions:

What would I have to say “no” to, to double the amount of ‘great work’ in my life?

What would I have to say “yes” to, to halve the amount of ‘bad work’ in my life?

CREATING

The best little craft gallery in Australia – well that’s my opinion after having only seen a little wee bit of Australia. I go to craft shops and galleries whenever I travel and I’m often disappointed – not this time. It goes by the intriguing name of Seagull Droppings www.seagulldroppings.com.au and is run by Andrew and Maggie Munn. I know why I liked it so much – Andrew makes stuff that I would like to make!! Using found materials and creating from them has got to be good for the planet.



The Creativity Diamond

I have been fiddling. For the past 18 months I have been researching the characteristics of creative people – its been an interest for a long time. An American by the name of Peter Koestenbaum www.pib.net developed a diamond model of leadership that made a lot of sense to me so I played with a similar model and developed the Creativity Diamond.

The Creativity Diamond offers a model of the creative life orientation and a methodology for expanding creative characteristics.

The Creativity Diamond distinguishes 4 interdependent creativity ‘dimensions’ – vision, reality, courage and curiosity.

The relationship between the four dimensions determines the shape and size of your Creativity Diamond – the size and shape of the diamond identifying your creative capacity and your potential for the extraordinary in your life. The larger and more balanced your diamond the greater your potential for the extraordinary.

I shared it with the members of the Creative Skills Training Council www.cstc-apa.com and asked for feedback. The feedback arrived and I made some changes. If you are interested in the Diamond and the accompanying workbook drop me an email. You are welcome to look but I expect feedback in return!!

Seasons greetings – I wish you all best wishes for the end of one year and the beginning of the next. For those who are getting a break I trust it will be a safe and relaxing one and may all that you wish for come true.

Recommended book:



Orbiting the Giant hairball:

A Corporate Fools Guide to Surviving with Grace by Gordon Mackenzie.

This is as much as of a "how to revive your creative side" as it is a leadership book. MacKenzie worked for 30 years in the Hallmark Card Company, considered to be a place where you would find many creative people at work. But even a "creative" company has its ingrained corporate structure. The hairball of the title is actually a simile for the bureaucracy of the organization or institution for which you work. The theme of the book is to explain how you can orbit far enough away from the hairball without getting entangled in it while at the same time not straying too far away as to become unemployed.

From a review of the book: "The two most profound insights, insights every teacher and CEO should be required to repeat every day, are that our schools beat creativity out of our children, and our corporations suppress individual ideas and any attempts at diversity."

QUOTES

A vision is not just a picture of what could be; it is an appeal to our better selves, a call to become something more.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter

Most people are not really free. They are confined by the niche in the world that they carve out for themselves. They limit themselves to fewer possibilities by the narrowness of their vision.

V.S. Naipul

How do we know that the sky is not green and we are all colour-blind?

Author Unknown

Reality leaves a lot to the imagination.

John Lennon

Few people have the imagination for reality.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says I'll try again tomorrow.

Mary Anne Radmacher

Courage is doing what you're afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you're scared.

Edward Vernon Rickenbacker

Millions saw the apple fall, but Newton asked why.

Bernard Baruch

The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity.

Dorothy Parker

I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious.

Albert Einstein

HUMOUR

From my friend Lynne Dragovich at the School of Business

After an exhaustive review of the research literature, here's the final word on nutrition and health:

1. Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
2. Mexicans eat a lot of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
3. Chinese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
4. Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
5. Germans drink beer and eat lots of sausages and fats and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.

CONCLUSION:

Eat and drink what you like. Speaking English is apparently what kills you

A million downloads can't be wrong. If you haven't seen this yet, watch it now. It's beyond brilliant. Cut and paste this into your browser.

[The Zimmers do "My Generation"](#)

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