



# talking about...

April 2009

... *designing better relationships for better outcomes*

## Welcoming Paula Rucker

In late 2004, Jacqui and I formed Talking About Pty Ltd as a vehicle for us to do what we love to do the most. That is to make a significant difference for the people with whom we work. Whilst we feel that we have been very successful in this endeavour, every once in a while an opportunity to expand our capacity to make a difference presents itself (or them self) in a way that is difficult to ignore.



A few years ago, we were doing some coaching work and workshops with Westpac Bank. As part of that experience we were privileged to meet Paula Rucker, who has since spent a couple of years learning with us in our training program and who has very much impressed us with her ability as a coach and workshop facilitator and with her integrity around the ontological approach to coaching. When Paula recently parted ways with Westpac, Jacqui and I were keen to offer her the chance to work with us under the Talking About umbrella and we are delighted to tell you that she enthusiastically accepted our offer and is now part of the TA family.

With a strong background in sales, finance and coaching business leaders, we feel that Paula is a wonderful addition to our group and that she will greatly expand our coaching offer. We will take various opportunities as they arise to personally introduce Paula to our network and we anticipate that she will impress you as much as she has us. Welcome Paula!

## The Essence of Your Leadership

***"The very essence of leadership is that you have to have a vision. You can't blow an uncertain trumpet."***

... Theodore M. Hesburgh (1917 - ) US clergy & university administrator

Those who come to coaching, come to learn and develop themselves in some way. One thing I have observed over time is that these people will fall loosely into two categories: those who recognise the core of who they are and who they want to be and want to develop this and those who come along to pick up tips and techniques. Whereas there is no doubt value in the second approach, the first approach seems to be far more successful as it provides for a more coherent approach to a person's development and personal growth.

Leadership is much the same. When we ask people to speak to the essence of themselves as a leader, the vast majority of people will generally search for words and come up with some nebulous ideas of what leadership is all about. The essence of their leadership is appears to be not readily there for them. This presents an interesting challenge when it

comes to their leadership approach. How can a person create coherence for others when they do not have a ready to hand coherence themselves? What follows from this lack of coherence is nearly always at best a disjointed attempt to create direction and meaning for those who are meant to be led. At worst, it manifests itself as a complete lack of contextual conversations about direction and meaning and a single focus on what has to be done.

So why do so many leaders not readily know the essence of what they are doing when it comes to leading others? After all, you would not seek to build a house without first establishing and then maintaining the foundations and frame. It just doesn't work. One obvious answer is that people charged with leadership do not know where to start. There are so many different theories about leadership that it seems that leadership must require a very complex approach, yet in many ways leadership is very simple. People want to know where they are going, how they are going to go about getting there and how they fit into that. They are seeking direction and meaning in the everyday experience of their work.

Here is a simple way of starting to think about this. The Human Synergistics constructive styles of Achievement, Self-Actualising, Humastic Encouraging and Affiliative form the basis of what people fundamentally seek in an organisational culture, so why not use them as the foundations of your leadership. Here is a simple exercise to establish your leadership

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essence. Just provide a one word answer or theme to these four questions and see what this might provide as a foundation for your leadership:

What is one word that relates to what are you seeking to objectively achieve?

What is one word that describes who are you seeking to become?

What is one word that describes how you perceive your own and other's learning?

What is one word that describes how you want be in relationship with others?

Give it a go and you may well be able to define the essence of your leadership! You may even like to follow this thought process further and ask yourself, "What possibilities are available to me to live my essence now?" Who knows a new leadership approach may show up in the process.

***"I am where I am because I believe in all possibilities."***

... Whoopi Goldberg (1949 - ) US actress & comedienne

## Dealing with Stress ...

*Thanks to Rebecca for sending trough some thought starters wrapped in gentle humour:*

Accept that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue.

Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.

Always read stuff that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.

Drive carefully. It's not only cars that can be recalled by their Maker.

If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.

If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.

It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.

Never buy a car you can't push.

Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you won't have a leg to stand on.

Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.

Since it's the early worm that gets eaten by the bird, sleep late.

The second mouse gets the cheese.

When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.

Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.

You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.

Some mistakes are too much fun to only make once.

We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and

some are dull. Some have weird names and all are different colors, but they all have to live in the same box.

A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.

***"The essence of all art is to have pleasure in giving pleasure."***

... Mikhail Baryshnikov (1948 - ) Latvian (US) ballet dancer

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