



talking about...

May 2006

... **designing better relationships for better outcomes**

A newsletter for those interested in ontological coaching

The Value of Values

What is the value of values? Most substantial organisations have defined a set of organisational values, yet all the evidence suggests those values do not seem to play a major part in the day to day activities of people who work there. Indeed, when you ask most people what their organisation's values are, they do not know. They may know some of them but almost certainly they will not come readily to mind. Given that in most cases, a good deal of time and most likely money has been invested in arriving at a set of values what purpose do they really serve?

In order to explore this question it pays to look at values from a number of different perspectives. Firstly, we can consider values as "aspirational values". These are the values we would like to have. They can be seen as a means of speaking to the identity we would like to create. In other words, how we would like to be seen. From an organisational perspective, aspirational values help to establish a brand based on what the organisation believes is required to be a successful player in their market. This is not to say that some of those values do not also show up in practice, just that they may not always be present with any significance. Aspirational values may also be established to provide a context in which those who formed the values would like decisions to be made by themselves and others within the organisation.

A second way of looking at values is as a means of identifying what is important to us now. These are the "values in practice" and speak to what is important for people in their daily living. Values in practice show up in the decisions people make everyday. As our decisions are situational, "values in practice" will also be situational. For example, I may hold a value I will be competitive in an individual sporting event but not competitive in community building. Given that our values are based on the conditions we find ourselves in, this does not mean that other values no longer exist, just that they rise or recede given our situation. We also find that our values in practice change as we go through life. Whereas once someone might value rational thinking above compassion, this may change later in life if relationships become more important to that person.

What does all this mean from a leadership or organisational perspective? Well, values form the basis of decision-making and, as such, being clear about them has the greatest impact when they assist in making decisions. Since it seems likely that more effective decision-making will lead to better outcomes, a set of values that support daily decision-making in various situations can provide a valuable context in which to make those decisions. We can also see from this that some values will have more weight than others in certain situations and developing a shared recognition of this can also support decision-making.

If you are serious about establishing values for your team, group or organisation, an obvious starting place is to look at the decisions that have been taken in the past. How they were made will show up what was important to making them and will give you a feel for your values in practice.

"Make everything as simple as possible, but not simpler."

... **Albert Einstein**

This one just made us laugh

...

Three women, two younger, and one senior citizen, were sitting naked in a sauna.

Suddenly there was a beeping sound. One young woman pressed her forearm and the beep stopped. The others looked at her questioningly. "That was my pager" she said, "I have a microchip under the skin of my arm."

A few minutes later, a phone rang. The second young woman lifted her palm to her ear. When she finished, she explained, "That was my mobile phone. I have a microchip in my hand."

The older woman felt very "low tech". Not to be out done; she decided she had to do something just as impressive. She stepped out of the sauna and went to the bathroom. She returned with a piece of toilet paper hanging from her rear end.

The others raised their eyebrows and stared at her. The older woman finally said. "Well, will you look at that, I'm getting a fax!!"

Talking About Pty Ltd

PO Box 6652,
St Kilda Rd Central,
Victoria, 8008.

Ph: +613 9507 2464

info@talkingabout.com.au
www.talkingabout.com.au

"Remember, there are answers disguised as questions."

... **Julio Olalla, The Oracle of Coaching**

Our Coach Development Program

We have decided to open up some positions in our Coach Development program. If you are interested in the work we do or ideas and would like to learn more in terms of their practical application, you might like to consider being part of our coach development program. This program is designed for people who want to develop their coaching skills as they can be applied as a professional coach or as an internal coach. It is a two year program that is self-paced in relation to your progress.

If you are interested, you can find more information can be found at <http://www.talkingabout.com.au/Documents/TACP/CoachDevelopment.htm> or give us a call on 613 9507 2464.

More Interesting Links

This month, we would like to introduce you to two interesting web sites that are rather different in nature.

Firstly, have you ever felt that you were being stared at then turned around only to find someone staring at you? Or have you ever been thinking of someone only to have the phone ring and it is them on the phone. Well if you have you are decidedly not alone. The vast majority of people report similar experiences. Rupert Sheldrake has been studying this area for some time and on his web site, www.sheldrake.org, you will find some interesting articles and tests that you can use for yourself.

A number of years ago, we had the pleasure of meeting and working with Robert Crow. We were introduced to Robert in a professional capacity but quickly found out about his creative side as a poet and speaker. We have used a number of his poems at various times and in various contexts and his views on "pondering" and the words he creates to go with that are insightful and has given us cause for reflection. With his permission, we have published one of his poems below. We invite you to read and reflect ...

"The Experience of Life"

*So much of it is on your own
Un-communicate able...
Not necessarily a lonely experience
Simply individual
...by our
and its very nature.
This major component
amazingly overlook able
In an environment
where we are encouraged
to measure ourselves
predominately
through what we are capable of languaging
in relationship
with those...
and that which we encounter.*

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If you would like to explore his further, you can find him on the web at www.poetryinmotion.com.au.

Our Web Site

More articles and information about our work can be found at our web site, www.talkingabout.com.au. We invite you to take a look.

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