



talking about...

August 2006

... *designing better relationships for better outcomes*

A newsletter for those interested in ontological coaching

Reaching Our Potential

Charles Darwin made an enormous contribution to our way of looking at the emergence of life on this planet when he developed his theory of evolution. Evolution can be said to be a process of growing complexity. As time has passed, life has developed from simple celled organisms through to human beings. As it developed, life forms were able to deal with greater complexity and this is particularly true of humankind as we have developed our minds to create and embrace an enormously complex world.

One of the fundamentals of coaching is that coaches help people develop their potential. Some theories of human development point to an expansion of consciousness to deal with the life conditions in which we find ourselves – a shift from ego-centric to ethno-centric to world-centric perspectives. In other words, we expand our ability to deal with greater complexity. These three perspectives have been broken down in sub-levels by various theorists, but one thing seems to be constant in the theories. We move from level to level without jumping over them. For example, we could not move from an ego-centric level to world-centric level without passing through the ethno-centric level. We can also see that we have healthy and unhealthy ways of being within each level.

The potential for each of us is a world-centric view (and beyond) embracing a global and holistic perspective, yet most people never get close to fulfilling that potential. They get stuck at a certain level of development and do not go beyond it. Life conditions are the key here. People live at a level of development that allows them to live with the life conditions in which they find themselves. As the complexity of the life conditions grow, then an individual seeks to utilise their current way of being until the point that they realise they must do something differently in order to continue. This might mean developing new skills, but often means a transformation of consciousness to a new level. As people develop their levels of consciousness, they also come to understand the impact they can have on their life conditions such that they can design those conditions to support themselves and others to more readily reach higher levels of development. We do not have to be a prisoner of our life conditions.

From an organisational perspective, the life conditions can be seen as the culture. In other words, an organisational culture is the conditions in which people must live. Different cultures promote or hinder people's development. The lower levels of development are found in life conditions where fear and insecurity reign. Such cultures, which can be seen as more aggressive/defensive or passive/defensive in nature, minimise people's ability to deal with complexity leading to more simplistic solutions that are generally less effective. More constructive cultures minimise insecurity and allow for higher levels of development to be attained and therefore better solutions in a complex world.

If you want to develop the people who work with you, consider the life conditions (culture) in which they live and what you can do to promote more complex thinking.

"We don't only perceive and interpret selectively; we remember and forget selectively, as well."

... **Hugh Mackay, "The Good Listener"**

A Bit of Logic ...

Thanks to Julie who sent this one our way ...

Two farmers, Jim and Bob, are sitting at their favorite bar, drinking beer.

Jim turns to Bob and says, "You know, I'm tired of going through life without an education. Tomorrow I think I'll go to the Community College and sign up for some classes."

Bob thinks it's a good idea, and the two leave.

The next day Jim goes down to the college and meets the dean of admissions, who signs him up for the four basic classes: math, English, history, and logic.

"Logic?" Jim says. "What's that?"

The dean says, "I'll show you. Do you own a weed-eater?"

"Yeah."

"Then logically because you own a weed-eater, I think that you have a yard."

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"That's true, I do have a yard."

"I'm not done," the dean says. "Because you have a yard, I think logically that you would have a house."

"Yes, I do have a house."

"And because you have a house, I think that you might logically have a family."

"I have a family."

"I'm not done yet. Because you have a family, then logically you must have a wife."

"Yes, I do have a wife."

"And because you have a wife, then logically you must be a heterosexual."

"I am a heterosexual. That's amazing; you were able to find out all of that because I have a weed-eater."

Excited to take the class now, Jim shakes the dean's hand and leaves to meet Bob at the bar.

He tells Bob about his classes, how he is signed up for math, English, history and logic.

"Logic?" Bob says, "What's that?"

Jim says, "I'll show you. Do you have a weed-eater?"

"No."

"Then you're gay."

Nothing like skipping a few steps to come with a simple answer!

"Life is bigger than our explanations of it. To be in touch with life, go beyond your explanations."

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

More Interesting Links

This month, we would like to introduce you to a web site that is close to our hearts. For some time, one of our colleagues, Lisa Burnett, has been working on an holistic approach to "creating the life you want" known as the Optimal Performance Model. Through her organisation, TLA Consulting, Lisa has recently opened the TLA Consulting web site with a complete list of their offerings. We invite you to take a look at www.tlaconsulting.net.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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