



# talking about...

December 2007

... designing better relationships for better outcomes

## On A Personal Note

*This is our last newsletter for the year and as with each year, we like to look back on what we valued during the year and express our gratitude to those who helped us or shared our journey.*

*As a regularly recipient of "talking about", we would like to thank you for letting us and our ideas into your world each month. We feel privileged that you allow us to share our thoughts with you each month. We hope that you will continue to allow us to share a little part your world in the future.*

*For those of you who have engaged Talking About to work with you and your organisation during the year, we would like to thank you for your trust and support during the year. Obviously without you we would not be able to continue.*

*For those of you with whom we have personally worked in groups or as individuals, we would like to thank you for sharing your thoughts with us and trusting in us to take care of you and assist you in your learning and journey through life. Your active engagement in our work together makes it a delight for us and, hopefully, a great learning experience for you.*

*Finally, for those of you who have taken up the challenge and studied ontological coaching with us, Graeme, Jacqui, Desley and I would like thank you for your enthusiasm in embracing your study with us. Seeing you progress through your journey to becoming an ontological coach gives us great joy and satisfaction.*

*Jacqui and I would like to extend to each one of you a fun-filled celebration for the end of 2007 and a healthy, happy and successful 2008. May it bring you greater self-awareness, more fulfilling relationships and the outcomes you desire.*

Warmest Regards ... Chris Chittenden

## A Leadership Vision

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

... Theodore M. Hesburgh (1917 - ) clergy, university administrator

Leadership can be defined as taking others into a future they would not go by themselves. One key, if not the key, aspect of this approach to leadership lies in the leader having a vision of that future – a "leadership vision". Most organisations have a vision of some sort. It is the norm in the corporate world. Most of these visions represent an image of the organisation's future, yet these visions may not represent an effective "leadership vision". When creating a "leadership vision", it can be useful to ask the question, "How well does this vision establish a vehicle for effective leadership?"

From a leadership perspective, an effective "leadership vision" encapsulates four things. Firstly it is created with a view to those within the organi-

sation. Many visions are created with a different or varied audience in mind, such as shareholders, customers and the market place. Although it is important to create an image and direction to those and other stakeholders, from a leadership perspective a vision has to connect those within the organisation to a future. People within an organisation generally have a different context for the future than those outside the organisation. Generally they are not so interested in the perfect image or future most organisations seek to present to the world. Profit margins and share price play little role in their day to day life and certainly do not seem to motivate them to action, unless of course they have a significant shareholding. They are more in touch with what the organisation does on a day to day basis and so an effective leadership vision speaks to that. In other words, an effective "leadership vision" **connects** the individuals within an organisation to a future to which they can relate.

Secondly, an effective leadership vision allows the leader to connect others to a **realisable future**. If the vision seems unrealistic or unattainable, people will not connect to it. The work of Human Synergetics and others has clearly established that a stronger drive for achievement is created when people feel they can attain a specific outcome. Despite the temptation of perfection, ideal outcomes can actually be demotivating as the outcomes seem unattainable and people give up more easily.

Thirdly, an effective "leadership vi-

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sion" is one where the **organisation has great influence over the realisation of the vision**. Visions have to be attainable as a direct result of organisational actions and so those visions that create a comparison to others, such as "We will be the best ..." do not fit this view and establish a competitive focus rather than an achievement focus. Although it is important to be aware of what others in the market place are doing, an organisation cannot directly influence what their competitors do. As a result, other organisations, which may have greater resources and established market share may continue to be the best despite an organisation optimising its own resources and making marked progress.

Finally, an effective "leadership vision" is succinct enough to be used as a **context in many everyday conversations**. A "leadership vision" is one that is simple and often repeated as a context for action. The leader can always be asking themselves and others, "How does *this* help us establish our vision?" In doing so, they are continually bringing the vision to life for themselves and those around them.

Do you have a vision for yourself and the group you lead? Does it help you lead each day or merely play a bit role? Traditionally, the start of a new year is a time for new resolutions – visions of something new. Maybe now is the time to create a new vision for yourself as a leader.

**"Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world."**

... Joel A. Barker, scholar, futurist

## Wisdom of the Young ...

Thanks to our friend Anita Payne who sent us this for reflection at the start of the New Year ... **Slow down for a few minutes to read this.**

A group of professional people posed this question to a group of 4 to 8 year-olds, "What does love mean?" The answers they got were broader and deeper than anyone could have imagined. See what you think:

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails any more. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love." Rebecca - age 8

"When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth." Billy - age 4

"Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other." Karl - age 5

"Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any of theirs." Chrissy - age 6

"Love is what makes you smile when you're tired." Terri - age 4

"Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK." Danny - age 7

"Love is when you kiss all the time. Then when you get tired of kissing, you still want to be together and you talk more. My Mommy and Daddy are like that. They look gross when they kiss." Emily - age 8

"Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen." Bobby - age 7

"If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate." Nikka - age 6

"Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it everyday." Noelle - age 7

"Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends

even after they know each other so well." Tommy - age 6

"During my piano recital, I was on a stage and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore."

Cindy - age 8

"My mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night."

Clare - age 6

"Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken."

Elaine - age 5

"Love is when Mommy sees Daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford."

Chris - age 7

"Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day." Mary Ann - age 4

"I know my older sister loves me because she gives me all her old clothes and has to go out and buy new ones." Lauren - age 4

"When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you."

Karen - age 7

"Love is when Mommy sees Daddy on the toilet and she doesn't think it's gross." Mark - age 6

"You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget." Jessica - age 8

And the final one - Author and lecturer Leo Buscaglia once talked about a contest he was asked to judge. The purpose of the contest was to find the most caring child. The winner was a four year old child whose next door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife.

Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there.

When his Mother asked what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing. I just helped him cry"