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DTC Customer Events

- **Melbourne**
'The use of Coaching as an Effective Management Development Tool'
Wednesday 30 June 2004
Enquiries: Cheryl Goldsmith (03) 9211 8500
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- **Adelaide**
'Performance Management: Changing the Paradigm'
Thursday 22 July 2004
Enquiries: Julie Andrews (08) 8361 9188
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- 'Managing Psychological Disorders in the Workplace'*
Thursday 16 September 2004
Enquiries: Donna Harden (08) 8361 9188
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- **Brisbane**
'Addressing Depression in the Workplace'
Wednesday 21 July 2004
Enquiries: Alison Frostick (07) 3211 7111
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Coaching and Mentoring

The pace of modern work life requires people in organisations to be able to respond to an ever increasing range of professional skills and personal qualities. These skills are becoming more diverse and may include:

- Professional skills such as financial management, administration, knowledge management, strategy and planning; and
- Personal qualities such as communication skills, negotiation skills, time management and organisational skills.

It is little wonder that many organisations are investing considerable amounts of time and money on mentors and coaches to develop and maximise the potential of their staff. Some organisations combine mentoring and coaching and some organisations confuse what the intention of each is. So what is mentoring and what is coaching?

A mentor 'is one who offers knowledge, insight, perspective or wisdom that is especially useful to the other person'¹. The mentor is always more experienced than the mentee, is knowledgeable about the field, and has considerable experience at the level of management of the mentee. Without this experience there is no experience to share. The mentee in this relationship has the confidence that the mentor has travelled on this stage of the journey before, and has successfully negotiated similar or greater challenges.

Coaching, on the other hand, 'is about developing and practising expertise through enhancement of skill sets.'² A coach, therefore, may not have similar or extensive experience necessarily in leadership or management. He or she does, however, have a suite of communication; self-management and other strategies that will assist a person manage themselves, their work situation and their interpersonal communication more effectively.

¹Shea, 1996

²Merryck & Co., 2002

Coaching is an ongoing exchange between a coach and a coachee that is focused on results. The coaching process helps individuals to access and understand what they already know, or can discover for themselves with support, assistance and encouragement.

In addition to having a powerful suite of skills and strategies that individual clients can use, it is vitally important that a coach can actually coach and impart these skills with skill. It is also critically important for a coach to be able to impart these skills appropriately for the particular context that their individual client is in.

Good mentors and coaches will assist their clients develop attitudes that ensure continuing success. The true test of a successful mentoring or coaching program, however, is the action that is generated, and the tangible results and outcomes that are achieved.

Benefits you should expect from a Mentoring program

- Enhanced leadership capacity
- Ability to reflect on the big picture of both work and life
- Confirmation of what is working, and provision of options and strategies to better manage what is not
- Shift of focus from the past – and empowerment and encouragement to change
- Enhanced personal development
- Improved performance against defined key performance areas and other measures
- Provision of a 'sounding board' – the opportunity to communicate openly about work outside of your immediate work structure

Benefits you should expect from a coaching program

- Progressive development of efficient self management skills
- Development of advanced communication skills
- A relationship that 'keeps you on track' towards certain defined goals or outcomes

- Education in strategies, techniques and processes that assist in effective management and leadership of teams and individuals
- A coaching relationship may assist you in a specific area requiring improvement or increase your awareness of a blind spot
- May assist you to actualise life, business or career ambitions and dreams
- Can assist you to learn personal development strategies that will influence professional advancement such as increased personal confidence and reduced performance anxiety

Choosing a Coach or Mentor

For those considering employing a mentor or a coach, it is important that you choose a person that you like and trust together with appropriate skills and experience. In addition, there are a few simple questions to consider:

- What is the professional background of the person you are considering?
- What level of experience do they have in your field and at your level?
- What level of comfort and trust do you have with the person?
- Is there a cost involved, and if so, what is the return/value offered?
- What code of conduct/ethics is the person bound by?
- How will the success of the relationship be measured?

Useful resources

- Alder, H. 1995, *Think like a leader: 150 top business leaders show you how their minds work*, Piatkus, London
- Flaherty, J. 1998, *Coaching: evoking excellence in others*, Butterworth, Woburn, MA
- Friend, F. 1999, *Coaching at the executive level: how to coach the coach*, Center for Coaching and Mentoring www.coachingandmentoring.com

- Skiffington, S. and Zeus, P. 2000, *The Complete Guide to Coaching at Work*, McGraw-Hill Australia
- Skiffington, S. and Zeus, P. 2003, *Behavioural coaching: how to build sustainable personal and organizational strength*, McGraw-Hill Australia

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Coping with Separating

Many couples are faced with separating from their partner. For many couples this is an extremely distressing and upsetting time. Both people are often faced with loneliness, being afraid of what the future holds, and feeling anxious about the adjustment it will take to “be single” again. For many couples, there is also the consideration of children and how they will cope.

Often the first step is making the decision as to whether or not to call it quits. Here are a few practical guidelines when considering whether separation is the path to take.

Take your time making the decision

It often takes time for you to make constructive attempts to make it work or not. A hasty decision to separate made in anger or hurt is quite likely to be regretted later.

Keep using your communication skills

It is just as important to use good communication skills more than ever. You can still provide each other with support and understanding while you work together to separate. This is the time to really listen to each other.

Set aside time to talk

Separation and divorce are often hurtful, thus there is strong temptation not to talk to the other person. If you avoid the painful issues you may well find that the situation worsens. Whereas if you face up to the problems they are often not as bad as you once imagined.

Accept that it hurts

It nearly always hurts! Even when it is clear that the relationship has been very bad and has no chance of working, the decision to end it still comes with hurt and disappointment. Be wary that you do not fall into the trap of seeing it as a personal failure. You can help yourself cope with the hurt by rehearsing a coping statement. Something like the example below is very effective.

“I expect to feel hurt thinking or talking about the end of our relationship, but I can cope with that. I don't have to deny that feeling, but I also don't have to exaggerate it by dwelling on the negative aspects of the situation, or by increasing any tension between us.”

Accept mixed feelings

Nearly everyone has them. Again, no matter how bad the relationship has been, the final decision to separate will come with some doubts.

Notice your self talk

How you feel about your separation will have a lot to do with how you think about it. Be aware of the popular ‘myths’ of separation or divorce. For example ‘divorce is a cop out’, or ‘divorce is a catastrophe’.

Make your own decisions

Be aware of the well intended people who want to tell you how to run your life does this sound familiar? We all have people around us who mean well, and care for us, but at the same time can make us miserable.

Welcome emotional support from family and friends, but take advice with a pinch of salt. In the end, it is your life and you need to make the final decision, and take responsibility for how it is run.

Tell your children the truth

Even if you are trying to hide that there is something wrong, your children will find out. Worrying about the unknown is harder to cope with than the truth. If you decide to separate, tell your children. Explain simply and directly that mum and dad don't want to live together anymore and that the decision has nothing to do with them, or their behaviour, and that they are loved.

If you go through this process and decide to separate, these are some other suggestions that you may find useful.

Avoid going back over the past

Going over and over past mistakes has only one effect – it makes you feel bad **now**. Even if there are lessons to be learned, wait until you are over the hurt before you start to address those issues.

Stop blaming – yourself or others

There is no value in blaming anybody for anything. Blaming is a value judgement. Instead try to understand why something has gone wrong, because that understanding may help you to fix up, or avoid the same mistake in the future.

Get professional legal advice

Only a legal professional can provide you with all of the information you need. While it is usually well intentioned, try and stay clear of legal advice from family, friends or your partner.

Decide on custody issues

Set aside time to sit down and talk about where the children will live. Below are some questions that you might find useful.

- Who really wants responsibility for the children?
- Who can provide a better home?
- What do the children want?
- What visiting rights apply?

Decide who lives where

Sit down together and decide whether one or both of you will move from the home. Preferably make that decision on practical grounds. Does one person need the home, perhaps for stability for the children? Often people find divorce easier to cope with if there is a clean break.

Strategies if you are not managing

It is also important to identify when you might need further assistance to help you during difficult times. You can contact your EAP provider, a relationship counsellor, your GP or other trusted friend. You may also find it useful and comforting to read self-help books to assist you through this time.

Useful resources

- Beck, A.T. *Love is never enough: how couples can overcome misunderstandings, resolve conflicts, and solve relationship problems through cognitive therapy*
- Colling, T. 1984, "Relationships: self help for the family". Corgi Books
- McKissock, M. and McKissock, D. 1995. "Coping with grief". Australian Broadcasting Corporation
- Montgomery, B. and Evans, L, *Living and loving together: how to make your personal relationships more fulfilling*.

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