



CUTTINGS

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The Neuroscience of Leadership

Businesses everywhere face the same problem: Success isn't possible without changing the day-to-day behaviour of people. But changing behaviour is hard, even at an individual level when new habits can mean the difference between life and death: only one in nine patients who have undergone heart bypass surgery adopts a healthier lifestyle. Now, new and far more accurate views of human nature and behaviour change are possible through of the integration of psychology and neuroscience.

Managers who understand the recent thinking in cognitive science can lead and influence mindful change: organisational transformation that takes into account the physiological nature of the brain, and the ways in which it predisposes people to resist some forms of leadership and accept others.

However, what we now know works is stunningly simple: focus people on solutions instead of problems, let them come to their own answers, and keep them focused on

their insights. This is what is behind some of the most successful management change practices such as Toyota's production system.

Change is pain – our brains prefer to work from habit and routine, and any deviation uses a great deal of energy in the pre-frontal cortex area of the brain and the generation of frequent 'errors' between expectation and actuality. This hurts – literally.

Cognitive scientists are finding that people's mental maps, their theories, expectations, and attitudes, play a more central role in perception than was previously understood – as demonstrated by the placebo effect. Tell people they have been administered a pain-reducing agent and they experience a marked and systematic reduction in pain, despite the fact that they have received a sugar pill.

So, we need to find a way of providing some kind of event or experience that allows people to provoke themselves, in effect, to change their attitudes and

expectations more quickly and dramatically than they would through a passive 'knowledge receive' mode. (A 1997 study found that training alone increased productivity 28%, but with the addition of follow-up coaching productivity increased by 88%.) Insights – so important for changing mental maps – are, as the term suggests, generated from within! The change is 'owned' by the individual.

Focusing on the future and positive expectations overcomes the painful reminders of 'errors' and non-performance. The brain creates new maps, and constant feedback reinforces the new map behaviour in a success loop. It's like learning to drive a car on the 'wrong' side of the road – have an experience which provokes a new mental map, then provide constant positive reinforcement of the new behaviour to create the insights of 'That's good. That's it!'

*The Neuroscience of Leadership,
Strategy+Business Issue 43 2013*

Managers Lose Trust by not Saying Sorry

Trust in leaders and employee engagement is being eroded by managers who fail to acknowledge when they're wrong or apologise, according to a survey by Forum Corporation.

There is also a major perception discrepancy: the survey found that 5 per cent of UK employees get an apology from their boss, yet 60 per cent of managers claimed to always apologise.

Where managers are accountable for mistakes at work, this tends to engender trust. Almost half of managers and a quarter of employees believe that

acknowledging personal mistakes is one of the key things leaders can do to inspire trust, while 'being able to trust your boss' is very important for 93 per cent of the employees. Those who displayed most trust for their managers were also the most engaged at work, the survey found.

However, almost a third of employees said they trusted management less than in previous years, and managers were aware of this drop in trust, with 43 per cent saying that staff trusted them less than before.

Saying sorry is not easy. Three-quarters of managers surveyed said they

do not want to say sorry in case they look incompetent, and 29 per cent are afraid of looking weak. Not apologising is then compounded as they are seen to be lying, taking credit for others' ideas, gossiping and poor communicators.

To bolster trust, Forum's survey found that the four most effective tactics would be: listening to employees and understanding their concerns; 'walking the talk'; following through on commitments; and encouraging staff to offer up ideas and suggestions.

The Forum Corporation EMEA / Chartered Management Institute

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A bumper collection of thought provokers and quotations for the holiday season...

- ✂ "The only things that evolve by themselves in an organization are disorder, friction and mal-performance." *Peter Drucker*
- ✂ "Love doesn't make the world go 'round. Love is what makes the ride worthwhile." *Franklin P. Jones*
- ✂ "Raise your words, not voice. It is rain which grows flowers, not thunder." *Rumi*
- ✂ "A sound heart is a safer guide than an ill-trained conscience." *Mark Twain*
- ✂ "There are those who give with joy, and that joy is their reward." *Kahlil Gibran*
- ✂ "There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you." *Maya Angelou*
- ✂ "Don't find fault, find a remedy." *Henry Ford*
- ✂ "A dream you dream alone is only a dream. A dream you dream together is reality." *John Lennon*
- ✂ "Some of us think holding on makes us strong; but sometimes it is letting go." *Hermann Hesse*
- ✂ Wisdom is not a product of schooling, but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it." *Albert Einstein*
- ✂ "It is much more difficult to measure non performance than performance." *Harold S. Geneen*
- ✂ "If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we are not really living. Growth demands a temporary surrender of security." *Gail Sheehy*
- ✂ "If we have a good heart and concern for others, our actions will be positive." *HH Dalai Lama*
- ✂ "When we can no longer change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves." *Viktor Frankl*
- ✂ "Just because something doesn't do what you planned it to do doesn't mean it's useless." *Thomas Edison*
- ✂ "Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin." *Mother Teresa*
- ✂ A friend is a present you give yourself." *Robert Louis Stevenson*

- ✂ "The greatest motivational act one person can do for another is to listen." *Roy E Moody*
- ✂ "Opportunities multiply as they are seized." *Sun Tzu*
- ✂ "We have to go for what we think we're fully capable of, not limit ourselves by what we've been in the past." *Vivek Paul*
- ✂ "To exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly." *Henri Bergson*
- ✂ "Cognition is embodied, you think with your body, not only with your brain" *Daniel Kahneman*
- ✂ "Always embrace the common humanity that lies at the heart of us all." *HH Dalai Lama*
- ✂ "Challenges make you discover things about yourself that you never really knew. They're what make the instrument stretch -- what make you go beyond the norm." *Cicely Tyson*
- ✂ "Responsibility is a unique concept. It can only reside and inhere in a single individual. You may share it with others, but your portion is not diminished. You may delegate it, but it is still with you. You may disclaim it, but you cannot divest yourself of it." *British Army Doctrine Publication*
- ✂ "Hide not your talents. They for use were made. What's a sundial in the shade?" *Ben Franklin*
- ✂ "Every lesson is a widening and deepening of consciousness. It is a stretching of the mind beyond its conceptual limits and a stretching of the heart beyond its emotional boundaries. It is a bringing of unconscious material into consciousness, a healing of past wounds, and a discovery of new faith and trust." *Paul Ferrini*
- ✂ "The first thing a young officer must do when he joins the Army is to fight a battle, and that battle is for the hearts of his men. If he wins that battle and subsequent similar ones, his men will follow him anywhere; if he loses it, he will never do any real good." *Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery*
- ✂ "The human species is unique in its capacity for learning. To learn is to be human." *Phil Race*
- ✂ "Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow." *Anthony J. D'Angelo*
- ✂ "Good teaching is 1/4 preparation and 3/4 theatre." *Gail Godwin*

Public courses 2014

New Directions runs a small number of public training courses in association with our strategic partners. Coming up in the first months of the New Year:

Getting Results Without Authority

A two day course in positive influencing skills aimed at people working in project or matrix structures where they need to get results without having any formal authority

17-18 February (London)
7-8 May (London)

Human Competency and Capability Development

A four day programme aimed at HR and L&D professionals (in particular in the Oil and Gas sector) which explores the processes and strategies for developing people. (Run with partners Strategies for Training and petroEDGE)

30 March – 2 April (Dubai)

*** call for more information ***

Getting Results Without Authority – Second Edition due

Look out for the new edition of my book, Getting Results without Authority, which is due out soon. I have revised the content to reflect the feedback from readers of the first edition and participants on courses over the last two years.

Cuttings has been published continuously for the past 20 years by New Directions, an international network of consultants and trainers who work together to learn, research, design and provide consulting and training in individual, management, and organisation development. On our website you will find copies of all past issues of **Cuttings**, articles and information on all our services.

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