

CUTTINGS...

Number 140 April 2019

Compiled and edited by Geof Cox

Welcome to Spring!! As the embarrassment and confusion of Brexit continues to dominate, I am compiling this edition in the sunshine in Nice on the Côte d'Azur, where I am attending the World Appreciative Inquiry Conference. It's a very different atmosphere where the focus is on what you want rather than what you don't want, the discussion is about opportunity not problem, and the future is positive not depressing. I share some ideas and quotations from the conference papers and workshops in a concise, but no less significant, edition of Cuttings.

And an announcement: I am running a couple of new public workshops in SE Asia later this year - one for engineers and technical staff making their first steps into leadership and management, and one on using whole system approaches (including Appreciative Inquiry Summits) to develop strategy. Follow the links to my organising partner in the region for more details and to register interest.

Enjoy...

Geof Cox

'Near misses' or 'Great catches'

One of the keynote sessions at the World Appreciative Inquiry Conference (WAIC) in Nice this year highlighted a groundswell of action to improve the quality and delivery of great and safe healthcare by learning from everyday excellence in the UK.

One action started in Birmingham and has spread across the UK and internationally as a peer reporting and sharing system for capturing good practice and excellence in everyday work. The originator, Adrian Plunkett is the clinical lead consultant in Paediatric Intensive Care at Birmingham Children's Hospital. He implemented Learning from Excellence in his department in 2014 and it has spread as a philosophy and practice since then.

The approach in Learning from Excellence will be well known in industry - much of the time we investigate error and mistake when looking to improve safety. So we fix problems - and the outcome is very often 'no problem' rather than the 'new success' that we are seeking. We know the root cause of failure, but we do not know the root cause of success. Error reporting misses opportunities to learn from excellent practice, and creates a rules and procedure based process which cultivates a fear of making a mistake and a lack of innovation.

In this edition

'Near misses' or 'Great catches' - learnings from a new approach to patient safety in the UK NHS

Generative conversations - guidance for having more productive conversations 'conversations worth having'

Plus details of **Public Courses** (including two new public courses in October in Kuala Lumpur), **Book Sales**, and a collection of **Snippets** - quotations to further provoke your thinking and reflection

Snippets

A collection of thought provokers and quotations from WAIC Nice 2019...

"Change is often an occasion that brings out the very best in people."

Lindsey Godwin

"Human action is created by what is possible in the future"

Martin Seligman

"Stop paying attention to what I don't want and start paying attention to what I do want"

Gervaise Bushe

"Success is not limited to natural ability."

Keith Storage

It also assumes that excellence is not something unusual not a day to day experience that we can learn from. If we identify what we are doing well, we will know how to repeat that practice and enhance it to become even better - and with feedback that we are doing things right rather than worry about doing things wrong, work becomes more enjoyable and fulfilling - and less error prone. Look for 'great catches' as well as 'near misses'.

On a parallel track in Scotland, Belinda Dewar is spearheading a programme to help staff in the NHS to capture learning and innovation from everyday experience: the LIFE programme. In a similar way, the LIFE programme fosters conversations using the Appreciative Inquiry methodology to find out what is happening in the 'here and now', identify what is working, and improve it - not run a 'session' on excellence. This approach brings quality and improvement into everyday life, and again, provides a proactive balance from the culture of error avoidance.

USEFUL LINKS

[Click here](#) to go to the website for Learning from Excellence where you can find case studies, resources and more information.

[Click here](#) to go to the Caring Conversations website where there are resources and an online tutorial to help explore positive staff-to-patient and peer-to-peer relationships

New Directions offer workshops and consultancy on the application of strengths-based processes including Appreciative Inquiry. For more information on workshops [Click here](#) or on our consultancy offers [Click here](#)

"I don't know anything with certainty, but seeing the stars makes me dream."

Vincent Van Gogh

"We need a third measure of success that goes beyond the two metrics of money and power - thrive."

Arianna Huffington

"Maybe you are searching among the branches, for what only appears in the roots."

Rumi

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."

Barack Obama

"Once you have a genuine sense of concern for others, there's no room for cheating, bullying, or exploitation; instead, you can be honest, truthful, and transparent in your conduct."

HH Dalai Lama

Generative Conversations

Another significant theme at WAIC 2019 was centred on the power of generative conversations - which is a fundamental element of Appreciative Inquiry. A generative conversation is basically a dialogue among people interested in learning and exchanging ideas about a topic, with the dialogue being a shared exploration towards greater understanding, connection, or possibility. AI is embedded in social constructionism - our words create our worlds and we construct our reality by the questions we ask and the conversations we have. So asking questions that are generative - ones that enable inquiry and enable dialogue - is an essential part of creating understanding.

We are beset by problems and difficulties, and we live in a world where criticism and identifying what is wrong is commonplace. But just inquiring more deeply into the problem does not always provide the best way forward - as we see in the first example from the world of patient safety. Rather, if we seek to intentionally shape the conversation to focus on a desirable outcome, then we have a very different conversation - one that is positive in its frame and is generative in its substance. A conversation that energises rather than depresses. A conversation where we engage with our strengths rather than focus on our weaknesses. As Gervaise Bushe puts it ' we need to stop paying

Public Courses

New Directions runs a small number of public training programmes in association with petroEDGE in SE Asia. Click on the course date to access further details.

Human Competency and Capability Development

A 4 day course in human resource development strategy for the oil and gas sector.

**Kuala Lumpur [21 - 24](#)
[October](#)**

**** NEW FOR 2019 ****

**Moving from Engineer to
Manager**

attention to what we don't want and start paying attention to what we do want.' (UK politicians could well heed this advice following 3 years of discussion on BREXIT about what they don't want with no clear idea of what they do want.)

And as Cheri Torres and Jackie Stavros explain in their work on 'Conversations Worth Having' not only are these conversations more generative, they also connect with positive energy and hormone release in the body, whereas negative conversations trigger the reptilian brain response of flight or flight. So taking an issue you have and intentionally flipping it to a positive frame before having a conversation will start to create these physical responses and produce a generative conversation - one that is worth having as it moves us forward.

USEFUL LINKS

[Click here](#) to go to the Conversations Worth Having website where you can find a guide to having these conversations as well as some suggestions for generative questions that you can use to hold more productive conversations - and buy the book!

New Directions offer workshops and consultancy on the application of strengths-based processes including Appreciative Inquiry. For more information on workshops [Click here](#) or on our consultancy offers [Click here](#)

A 3 day programme to help engineers and those from a technical background take the first steps into management.

Kuala Lumpur [21-23 October](#)

Rapid and Inclusive Strategy Development

A 3 day workshop exploring whole system approaches to developing strategy that yield success and build commitment in a radically shortened timeframe.

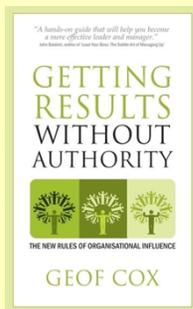
Kuala Lumpur [24-25 October](#)

USEFUL LINKS

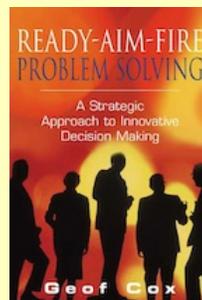
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Book Sales

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Ready-Aim-Fire Problem Solving
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or Bundle both titles for £15.00

Price includes p&p in the UK, for deliveries outside the UK add £1.00 as a contribution towards the extra cost of postage.

[Click here to go to the secure Online Shop](#)

Cuttings

Cuttings is a bi-monthly collection of ideas and comments published elsewhere which have attracted my attention over the past couple of months. It is designed for readers who are interested in individual, organisation and management development and is free. It has been published continuously for more than 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.

USEFUL LINKS

[Past issues of Cuttings](#)
[New Directions website](#)
[Getting Results Without Authority](#)

Contact details

T: +44 (0)117 968 1451
M: +44 (0)7753 626284
Skype: GeofCox.NewDirections
E: geofcox@newdirections.uk.com
P: 26a Downleaze, Bristol BS9 1LZ

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