

methods of measuring commitment to those goals. All of these will be in the coachee's domain and control.

Many of us will have started 'coaching' through seeing various psychological tools used successfully during training. As we progress in rudimentary coaching, we may have concentrated more on the tools than the client. A short while ago I held my breathe as a 'coach' rained questions at his poor coachee without pause for breath! Whitmore says that the coach must focus on the coachee's experience. The coach needs to attend to what the coachee feels, their blocks and their goals. Attention, he says, leads to performance, learning and enjoyment.

John Whitmore led us towards his revolution, whereby the living philosophy of coaching is broadly taken up in our business and communities. This way of being a coach pays attention to the development of people and helps them towards their goals. According to Maslow and others, these characteristics manifest at a higher level of personal evolution (than is generally exhibited in business and in institutions).

Whitmore says that some of us in HR, Training & Development (and other personal development roles) are operating at higher levels. He asks why are we not more successful in influencing top management to go with more productive methods of man-management rather than crude control. Partly in answer, he says that top managers would buy into coaching if there was hard evidence and corporate examples of success. Maybe its time to sit down with John Whitmore and re-invent coaching under a new name, free from the corrupting influence of inadequate 'coaches'. As with the word 'consultant', poor practitioners are polluting the word 'coach'.

Whitmore's vision and practise of coaching is underpinned by beliefs. He says that success (in the terms of the client) leads to self-esteem. He avers that coaching is not behaviour, it is a way of being. Whitmore does not switch into coaching mode; he is normally in that mode. He switches out of 'coach' into directive mode only when an emergency dictates it.

It does mean that coaches must walk the talk at all times. Our families and friends will benefit from that development. I believe it healthy to think of myself in perpetual development as a coach, that my goal is always moving away from me. The Coaching Group is absolutely committed to that philosophy of continuing practise and co-learning. John Whitmore has been a gift in that process. Roll on his revolution!

Dr Angus McLeod

The structure of meetings is to have a visiting guest who will provide some input to coaching which may or may not be NLP. We also like to include practical work and fun learning which can be facilitated by the guest or the organisers. Meetings usually run between 4:30 and 7:30pm. If you are interested to join the group (for free) and/or interested to facilitate, then do please contact Steve Breibart or Angus McLeod as below. We are Not-for-Profit and charge a basic rate for all our events.

Angus McLeod, 27 July 2001.

Bringing the Best out of People

By Angus McLeod, PhD

Sir John Whitmore and the word 'coaching' have been inextricably linked since his seminal book on the subject appeared in 1992. *Coaching for Performance* has now sold over 150,000 copies worldwide. John brought his passion about coaching to a wider audience when he spent a day of learning and fun with our extended group.

It is generally agreed, few people get close to fulfilling their potential. It was Marianne Williamson who wrote,

'Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate,
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure,
It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.'

Nelson Mandela made this quotation famous in his 1994 inaugural speech. Our group guessed the level of individual potential that is realised, at between three and sixty-five percent. Forty seems to be an average. Without exception, all of us believed that coaching is a valuable tool in dramatically boosting performance. Unfortunately, the values and behaviours that underpin a true understanding of coaching are sadly absent in almost every organisation on earth. It's no wonder that the results of good coaching, a revolution in motivation and performance, has not yet occurred. John Whitmore dreams and schemes for this revolution.

Even in sport, 'coaching' is uniformly rooted in behavioural (skill level) direction and has no systematic approach to enhance peak mental performance. Real coaching in sport is rare and not known by the name of coaching. It is parcelled out in little packets of wisdom and mystique by individual skill coaches. It's no wonder top athletes seem to have had many skill coaches! For John Whitmore, true coaching does not work at the behavioural level at all. It functions at the level of transpersonal psychology. This developed from humanist psychology by incorporating, as well as attention to an individual's feelings and perceptions, the motivating dimension of their Will.

My understanding and practise in coaching is founded in values and beliefs close to those of John Whitmore. When he says that the coach is a good gardener of the potential that lies in each person, I agree with him. When he states that the same approach can also be used to transfer skills and task-level learning, I believe him. In fact, he elegantly demonstrated the coaching of enhanced skills by coaching us to improved performances in tennis and golf. This was accomplished without direction.

The result of coaching to this standard is that the coachee's learning path is uniquely developed by themselves and, importantly, owned by them. Hence, they are very motivated by their learning. This leads to improved self-esteem and more self-actualisation (action and success). The success may widen out to encroach and support every aspect of that individual's development and experience of life. Coaching at this level is transformational.

The good coach helps their client to develop ideas, learning and metaphors that belong entirely to the coachee. Yes, coaches will use questioning and challenge and there will be silences in which catharsis can take place. And there will be goals and