

Value Adding #28



February - April 2001

Kate Ramsay and Des Ryan welcome you to AnD Consulting's newsletter.

In **Learning Moments** Des explores doubt. In **Did You Know?** a client explains the value she gets from Leadership Coaching and this edition's **And/Both Story** illustrates the value of an 'and' approach to managing people fairly. A **Good Read** recommends a book on how to enrich our relationships.

Learning Moments

Recently, I was thinking about all the things I was taught to believe and from which my personality was formed. And, looking back, no one ever mentioned the concept of doubt. Starting with my parents, next the Dominican nuns and then the Christian Brothers all did their bit to help make me stupid by convincing me that there was one truth and only one truth.

For example, Brother O'Neil taught me that water boiled at 100 degrees centigrade. Then later I was told that it is true that water boils at 100 degrees centigrade except at higher altitudes and except when ... and when ... How stupid was I to believe Brother O'Neil!

So next I decided not to believe anything or anybody, but rather to sit on my cynical piece of moral high ground and reject everything I was told and everybody who told it to me.

This proved as unhelpful as believing everything I was told, so I have now turned to the concept of doubt as a way of helping me find meaning.

These days I choose to doubt what I am told by others and at the same time to suspend judgement of them. In so doing I accept that in whatever others tell me, they are giving life their best shot and if I choose not to agree with them, I am giving it mine.

Thus with an 'and' mindset and a dose of what I would describe as healthy scepticism I have learned to value doubt as a way of making sense of my world.

Did You Know?

We describe the service of AnD consulting is as Coaches to Learners and the process we use as Leadership Coaching. However it is hard to explain what happens at a coaching session. So we asked one of our regular clients to describe what happens for her during her coaching sessions.

Value Adding



Virginia Johnson, Director of Operations and Quality for Accenture (formerly Andersen Consulting) had this to say:

A friend of mine once asked me when I was setting off for my coaching session, "What does Kate tell you to do?" When I responded "Kate doesn't tell me to do anything," it brought home to me the true benefit and value in these treasured times.

What Kate does do is to allow me to have some safe space to think about, and articulate, what is important in my life, the areas where I get stuck, and some possible options and solutions to ensure an obstacle free course to the desired destination.

The journey I travel with Kate is filled with interesting stories, loads of good humour and thoughtful probing of sticky issues. There never seems to be enough time to share ideas and discover new ways of approaching the many challenges that relentlessly crop up.

At the end of each session, I leave filled with renewed vigor and energy, knowing that I have invested in myself by taking the time to think and reflect on the



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PO Box 74 Federal NSW 2480
Phone: 02 6684 9100 Fax: 02 6684 9112
Mobile: 0418 164 260
Email: and@spot.com.au

Website: www.bayweb.com.au/learningretreat

Things that are important in my life. The plans and actions that result from these conversations help me to pull together my roadmap which will ensure a successful journey.

Leadership Coaching sessions are available in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane or as a Learning Retreat in the Byron Shire (see enclosed postcard).

And/Both Story

We named our business AnD Consulting because of our commitment to live and relate in and/both rather than either/or ways. However this is a somewhat abstract notion, so the purpose of telling and/both stories is to illustrate what living an and/both life means in action.

This edition's story comes from the May 2000 Executive Excellence magazine in which William Cottringer, director of marketing/quality control for the Farm Resource Centre in Mounds City, Illinois, names 10 dilemmas managers need to balance in order to demonstrate fairness to their team. These are:

1. Giving and Taking

Arriving at a fair balance of giving and taking requires checking pride and ego and answering the question, "What will I lose by giving in on this one, and what will I gain?"

2. Autocracy and Democracy

This is about knowing when to lead and when to listen and seek a consensus before taking action.

3. Autonomy and Supervision

Achieving a balance between these is not easy. Knowing the competency and motivational level of each team member helps, as does applying the fairness rule of never delegating responsibility without also assigning authority.

4. Change and Stability

Achieving a balance between change and stability is about knowing what things to preserve and managing change in ways that are not counterproductive.

5. Aloofness and Approachability

A good rule of thumb to achieve this is to preserve aloofness for private and social matters, and be open and approachable in professional and business matters.

6. Idealism and Realism

This is about knowing when ideal standards are just not achievable and when more 'realistic' results are just a cop-out.

7. Talking and Listening

To achieve fairness, a sequence of listening more and talking less will give you an edge on saying the right thing when you do choose to speak.

8. Simplicity and Complexity

The object here is to present things in simple ways even when they are quite complex.

9. Organisation and Individuals

This is about listening to each team members' needs and concerns and explaining why if you are unable to accommodate them for the sake of the good of the team as a whole and therefore of the organisation.

10. Thinking and Acting

This is about walking the talk. Nothing is more unfair to a team than not taking action on promises.

So, next time you are feeling torn between an either/or dilemma with your team, these and/both solutions might be of value.

A Good Read

Stephanie Dowrick, in *The Universal Heart* (Viking Australia 2000) sets the scene for her book in the introduction when she says:

We improve our skills in almost everything except how to give and receive more freely within our relationships. We move our attention away from the people we love for years at a time. And we wonder why the relationships we intended to value and honour break down or disappear.

Although a little preachy in style at times, we are finding *The Universal Heart* a helpful guide to enriching our relationships at work and at play.

I leave filled with renewed vigor and energy, knowing that I have invested in myself by taking the time to think and reflect