



KATE RAMSAY AND THE AnD COACHES WELCOME YOU TO OUR STAYING IN TOUCH NEWSLETTER.

In Learnable Moments in this edition we invite you to Stop Overdoing Your Strengths in an article from the Harvard Business Review. Our AnD story is about how effective leaders have both a strategic and an operational style and introduces you to a new coaching tool. A Good Read looks at a book that shows how we can use our brain plasticity to bring more joy into our lives. We end with a plea to Let's Hear it for Empathy!

Learning Moments

Kate writes: I was fascinated by an article from the February 2009 edition of the Harvard Business Review (HBR). The authors Robert E. Kaplan and Robert B. Kaiser in Stop Overdoing Your Strengths propose that, taken too far, strengths can become weaknesses:

Consider two leadership strengths: forcefulness (driving your team hard) and consensus building (getting everyone's agreement on decisions). Overdo forcefulness and your team's productivity may improve but its morale will weaken, eventually undercutting productivity. Overdo consensus building and morale may rise but productivity might ultimately suffer (for instance, decisions take too long), eventually eroding morale.

The authors' research of a group of senior managers revealed that 97% of the group who overdid forceful leadership also underdid enabling leadership, and 94% of the group who overdid operational leadership underdid strategic leadership, resulting in both instances in what they call "lopsided leadership".

The authors caution leaders that when co-workers give them a rating of five for a particular leadership behaviour, it might be an indication that they're taking this behaviour too far. They suggest leaders review the highest ratings on their most recent 360 report and ask themselves whether this could mean they're "demonstrating too much of a good thing". The challenge then is to explore how to stop overdoing a given attribute, while at the same time learning how to strengthen the opposite attribute.

An AnD Story

The HBR article lists what Kaplan and Kaiser call Opposing Leadership Virtues under the headings of the 'what' and the 'how' of leadership. They propose that the two dualities of Strategic versus Operational behaviours define the 'what' of leadership, while the two dualities of Forceful versus Enabling behaviours define the 'how'.

Given we at AnD Consulting are always on the lookout for examples of how seemingly opposing forces can work together as an and/both rather than as an either/or, we've changed Kaplan and Kaiser's versus to an and. We believe that effective leaders use Complementary Leadership Virtues because they are strong at both planning ahead and focussing on results, and skilled at both taking charge and empowering others.

Take a look at the attached document – the latest in the AnD coaching tool kit – and see how you rate in terms of your Strategic and Operational skills in the 'what' of your leadership style, as well as how you rate in your Forceful and Enabling skills in the 'how' list.

Is it time for some coaching support anyone?

Did You Know?

AnD Consulting is named to represent an and/both view of the world. We are in the business of coaching leaders

through our Leadership and Vision Coaching services that:

- Value the bottom line and people
- Promote visioning and action planning
- Cover the professional and the personal
- Enhance strategic thinking and emotional intelligence.

Kate Ramsay is the Managing Director and Lead Coach. Supporting her are ten Associate coaches who are all accredited in AnD's Leadership Coaching methodology. We are represented in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Canberra,

Brisbane and Northern NSW. To learn more take a look at our website at andconsulting.org or contact Kate on 0418 164 260 or at kate@andconsulting.org.

A Good Read

Kate writes: I've been reading lots about brain plasticity of late. I've slowly worked my way through *The Brain That Changes Itself* by Norman Doidge - an exploration of brain science with fascinating case studies. Next came *Musicophilia – Tales of Music and the Brain* by Oliver Sacks that focuses on music and brain plasticity and is also filled with both uplifting and tragic human stories.

And now a colleague has recommended [Buddha's Brain – the practical neuroscience of happiness, love & wisdom](#) by Rick Hanson PhD and Richard Mendius MD (New Harbinger Publications, Inc. 2009). It teaches the reader how to use the plasticity of our brain to activate a sense of calm, joy and compassion while letting go of negative emotions such as worry and anger.

To me the opener in Chapter Eight captures the essence of this good read:

A Native American elder was asked how she had become so wise, so happy, and so respected. She answered: "In my heart, there are two wolves: a wolf of love and a wolf of hate. It all depends on which one I feed each day."

Buddha's Brain shows us how to feed our wolf of love.

Let's Hear it for Empathy!

The essay [Evil lives when empathy dies](#) in the June 25/26 edition of *The Sydney Morning Herald* moved me deeply. Written by Simon Baron-Cohen, professor of psychology and psychiatry at Cambridge University, it is a plea for empathy as a "universal solvent".

Baron-Cohen begins by asking, "How do humans come to switch off their natural feelings of sympathy for a fellow human being who is suffering?" As he says, the standard explanation of the Holocaust is that it's an example of the "evil" humans are capable of. But as a scientist, he needs to understand the cause of this extreme example of what he calls "empathy erosion". He proposes an "empathy spectrum" with people said to be evil or cruel being at one extreme. He asserts that:

Empathy itself is the most valuable resource in our world. Given this it is puzzling that in the school curriculum empathy figures hardly at all, and in politics, business, the courts or policing it is rarely if ever, on the agenda... It has not yet been achieved between Israel and Palestine, or between Washington and Iraq or Afghanistan. And, for every day that empathy is not employed, more lives are lost.

Baron-Cohen ends with the good news story of hearing two fathers share the same stage at a gathering in north London. Ahmed was a Palestinian whose son was killed by an Israeli bullet. Moishe was an Israeli whose son had been killed by a petrol bomb thrown by a Palestinian. They had met through The Parents Circle for Israelis and Palestinians that enables bereaved parents to make free phone calls into each other's homes to express their empathy. Baron-Cohen:

Here were two fathers, from different sides of the political divide, united by their grief and embracing each other's language. Ahmed described how he had been at home in Gaza one day when the phone rang. It was Moishe, at that time a stranger in Jerusalem, who had taken that brave first step. They both openly wept down the phone. Neither had ever met or even spoken to someone from the other community, but both told the other they knew what the other was going through.

And he closes with:

Empathy is like a universal solvent. Any problem immersed in empathy becomes soluble.