



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

In this edition we are celebrating two significant milestones. On January 6 this year it was 21 years since AnD Consulting was registered as a business entity. And it was very soon after that that my then partner in business and life, the late Des Ryan and I wrote Value Adding #1, and here I am, 21 years later writing VA#70. We hope you'll enjoy this 21st birthday edition as you read in **Learning Moments**, about the value of bringing unconditional positive regard to coaching clients; in **Did You Know?**, our clients' evaluations from 2014; in **A Good Read**, Hugh Mackay's book *The Good Life*, and an **AnD Story** that includes a quote, to end.

Learning Moments

Kate writes: All AnD coaches commit to bringing unconditional positive regard to our clients: this is about putting our needs and ego on hold for the duration of each session so we are fully present for our clients. I'd always known that an advocate of this approach was Carl Rogers, one of the early giants of the social sciences, so I decided to take the time to read Rogers' book *On Becoming a Person*. (First published in the early 1960s, my edition in 2004 by Constable & Robinson, London.)

Rogers was a psychotherapist who lived from 1902 to 1987. Once I ignored the fact that all his clients and therapists are described as 'he', and that he writes in a somewhat verbose way, I found it an enriching read. In essence Rogers says that in 'client centred therapy' it is important that the therapist (coach) brings to clients:

- *Congruence*
- *Unconditional positive regard, and*
- *Empathic understanding.*

And from this clients will become:

- *More open to their experiences and so are more able to accept new situations for what they are, rather than distorting them to fit old patterns,*
- *More trusting of themselves by learning to know and understand their feelings and impulses, and*
- *Better able to recognise that it rests within themselves to make choices for change.*

Rogers believes (and so do I) in the fundamental goodness of humankind and that if we can discover who we really are, we will embrace and express goodness in the way we live our lives.

There is much more in this long book including Rogers' philosophy that you can't teach another to lead; rather that leaders need to learn for themselves about those things that influence their behaviour and then commit to personal change. This same philosophy underpins the AnD approach to coaching, which leads me to conclude that Rogers could well be described as a giant of leadership coaching as well as of client centred therapy.

Did You Know?

We are proud to announce that the clients who completed a coaching contract in 2014 rated an average of 9.625 out of 10 for our services. And, given that we often describe our coaching as reflective practice, it's particularly noteworthy that our Leadership Coaching clients rated Reflection and Insights as the areas where they gained the greatest value.

Specific comments

From a Leadership Coaching client:

Having an independent third party that helped me work through the issues I was struggling with helped immeasurably.

From a Vision Coaching client:

When I first started I wasn't sure, but over the past 6 years I've learned the power of the visioning process.

From a Coach the Coach in Leadership Coaching client:

It was great to have a coaching agenda to follow to help me stay on track to achieve the desired outcomes.

From a Coach the Coach in Vision Coaching client:

The opportunity for plenty of reflection and review time as I was learning how to take clients through the Vision Coaching process, means I now feel confident and ready to take some of my own clients through Vision Coaching.

Several clients experienced their coaching during a Learning Retreat at Byrongerry (see www.andconsulting.org). Here's what one client wrote about their retreat:

I felt productive and calm walking away from the retreat. The environment was helpful to resting and there are some great walks to explore. Overall it was a very worthwhile experience.

A Good Read

Kate writes: a friend lent me The Good Life – What Makes a Life Worth Living? by Hugh Mackay (Macmillan, 2013, Sydney) while I was convalescing from big spinal surgery, and what a good read it proved to be!

On the choice of book title Mackay explains:

When I say 'the good life', I'm referring to a life that is characterised by goodness, a morally praiseworthy life, a life valuable in its impact on others, a life devoted to the common good.

To help us lead this kind of life Mackay advocates living by what he calls The Golden Rule: that biblical message of 'doing unto others that which we would have them do unto us'. In order to live by The Golden Rule he suggests we need the humility and courage to:

- *Listen attentively*
- *Apologise sincerely, and*
- *Forgive generously.*

It might come as no surprise by now that Mackay names Carl Rogers as one of his 'psychological heroes'. Mackay advocates a state of personal 'wholeness' to help us feel psychologically free enough to live The Golden Rule and aligns this to what Rogers calls 'the fully functioning person' who:

- *Lives in a state of openness, especially to fear, discouragement and pain,*

- *Is able to live in the moment (mindfulness), and*
- *Trusts his or her own gut instincts (intuition).*

Mackay agrees with Rogers that achieving all of the above is about having 'the courage to be'. But before you start to think this is all sounding a bit Polyannaish, Mackay also reminds us that:

The truth is that to be fully human – normal, to be healthy - is to be occasionally engulfed by waves of grief or sadness, stymied by feelings of despair, paralysed by doubt or crushed by disappointment.

To help us sustain 'the courage to be' he recommends a simple set of questions to ask ourselves during each day:

- *What range of emotions did you experience today?*
- *Where did they spring from?*
- *What did each of them teach you about your journey through this day's events?*

Mackay stresses that the measure of a good life is how well we treat others, regardless, as it says on the back cover of the book, of how that makes us feel and of the sum of our security, wealth, status, postcode, career success or levels of happiness.

An AnD Story

Kate again: I saved an article from the 15/8/14 edition of the Guardian Weekly by Oliver Burkeman because it advocates the value of spending time each day on some 'inward directed thought'. He illustrates how much easier it is for most of us to remain outwardly focused with a piece of research which involved 42 people being asked to choose between sitting doing nothing and giving themselves electric shocks; two-thirds of the men and a quarter of the women chose the latter.

This extraordinary finding was reinforced to me by an edition of Life Matters I heard on ABC radio one morning at the end of January. On the topic of giving ourselves what was called 'digital detoxes', one woman admitted she was sending emails to clients throughout her labour and immediately after the birth of her baby.

So how can we find a better balance between outward busyness and inward directed thought? Maybe by taking the advice of Sylvia Boorstein, a meditation teacher:

Don't just do something, sit there.