

EDITION #76 Autumn 2017

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

In this our first edition for 2017, we start with **Learning Moments** in which we share an article that challenges the effectiveness of time management techniques. In **Did You Know?** you can read how the AnD clients rated our coaching services in 2016, and a catchy term about gender dynamics in meetings. Also in this edition we recommend **A Good View** (instead of **A Good Read**) - a video that describes organisations that are doing things differently, and thriving. We close with another quote from the Dalai Lama.

## Learning Moments

Kate writes: An article in the January 6, 2017 edition of The Guardian Weekly headed **Why time management is the curse of our existence**, caught my attention. Written by Oliver Burkeman, it encourages the reader to re-think the value of time management techniques.

Burkeman begins by describing the system of Inbox Zero, devised by Merlin Mann that recommends that every time we check emails we "process to zero" by dealing with each one, and so emptying our Inbox. You might be using this system yourself.

Mann gained a reputation as a productivity guru and was contracted to write the Inbox Zero book, but he ultimately refuted all his teachings in a self-lacerating essay in which he admitted to the irony of missing morning after morning with his three-year old daughter because he was "typing bullshit that I hoped would please my book editor" about how to use time well.

Burkeman reminds us that the economist John Maynard Keynes predicted in the 1930s that within a century, economic growth would mean that we would all be working no more than fifteen hours per week, and so we would need to find ways to use the empty hours this created.

So what happened? Burkeman:

*Time management promised a sense of control in a world in which individuals – decreasingly supported by the social bonds of religion or community – seemed to lack it. In an era of insecure employment, we must constantly demonstrate our usefulness through frenetic doing, and time management can give you a valuable edge.*

*However, it remains the frequent experience of those who try to follow the advice of personal productivity gurus ... that a "mind like water" (ed: a clear mind) is far from the guaranteed result. The more efficient you get at ploughing through your tasks, the faster new tasks seem to arrive. .... The supposed cure just makes the problem worse.*

Burkeman puts the radical suggestion that we might begin to try to get more comfortable about not being as efficient as possible, and supports this by arguing that:

- Good ideas don't emerge more rapidly when you feel time poor. In fact more creative work environments encourage people to sit back, put up their feet and think from time to time.
- Maximising the efficiency of employees removes the time available for them to respond to critical new demands. For that kind of responsiveness, idle time must be built into the system.

Burkeman ends his article on a philosophical note. He quotes Nietzsche that "haste is universal because everyone is in flight from himself" (sic). Burkeman:

*You can seek to impose order on your inbox all you like – but eventually you'll need to confront the fact that the deluge of messages, and the urge you feel to get them all dealt with, aren't really about technology. They're manifestations of larger, more personal dilemmas. Which paths will you pursue and which will you abandon? Which relationship will you prioritise, during your shockingly limited lifespan, and who will you resign yourself to disappointing?*

Burkeman closes by asking the meaning of life question of: "What matters?" This has encouraged me to look within and revisit those deep questions of 'what it's all about' for me, and maybe reading my précis of his article will encourage you to do likewise.

## Did You Know?

### (i) Evaluations of AnD's 2016 services

The team of AnD coaches offer Leadership and Vision Coaching services to our clients (for more, see Our Services at [www.andconsulting.org](http://www.andconsulting.org)). In 2016 the average rating given by clients who either completed their coaching contract with us or renewed for another contract was 9.4 out of 10.

They rated the highest value to themselves from their coaching support as Direction Setting and Insight/Clarity.

In terms of value to their organization, they scored Productivity, Quality and Improved Communication.

Comments included - from a Melbourne client:

*Every session is always so valuable. Sessions have really contributed to the growth of my business.*

And from a Brisbane client:

*It was a fantastic process and I achieved my vision with more peace of mind than if I had tried to do it alone.*

### (ii) Gender dynamics in meetings

You've probably all heard of "manspreading", the phenomenon where some men take up a disproportionate amount of space around them when sitting by spreading their legs wide. Well, Jane Halton, the recently retired secretary of the federal Department of Health and a long term senior bureaucrat has used the term "manterrupting" to describe what she and her female colleagues regularly experience in meetings: this is where the woman raises a good idea, then a male colleague talks over the top of her and steals the credit for the idea. In a farewell speech to the Institute of Public Administration Australia Halton noted this habit of "manterrupting" and appealed to male colleagues to be more aware of it.

## A Good View

Kate writes: I encourage our readers to invest the twenty minutes it takes to view the video at this link: <http://www.enliveningedge.org/media/power-care-organizations/>

The speaker is Frederic Laloux, a Belgian author of *Reinventing Organizations*. In this video Laloux is presenting the core messages of his book to the Dalai Lama and a conference audience. It is about a new metaphor for organisations that are doing things

differently. He suggests that a metaphor to describe organizations operating in the old scientific model is that they operate like a "machine". Whereas his metaphor for the increasing number of organizations that are doing things differently is that they are like a "living organism".

Laloux describes the three key differences between these two types of organizations:

- Old organizations have a hierarchy with a boss who asserts power over the team; whereas the new ones operate as a self-organising system with interconnected power and no hierarchy.
- In the old there is a sense of fear, scarcity and separation, while in the new there is love, connection and an abundance mentality.
- In the old there are strategies, plans and budgets to predict and control outcomes. While the new organisations operate in organic ways.

Laloux says that during the research for his book, he talked to some who were working in a new organization who said things like, "I sometimes wish my home was more like my work". He challenges leaders to tune into the "sense of meaning and purpose" in their organization, and he concludes with the somewhat gently challenging suggestion to them that:

*The only thing that needs to change is how they view the world.*

And before your eyes glaze over because you think that this can't possibly happen in the real world, watch the end of the video when Laloux cites one case study out of many examples he has, of a home care organisation in The Netherlands: a group of nurses broke away from the control culture in the Dutch home care industry. The organization thrived, nurses flocked to join it and their customers loved the service they offered.

This case study convinced this viewer that it's possible to run organizations in a new way that will see them thrive. It's well worth a view over a cuppa some time soon to see what you think.

## And To Close

From the Dalai Lama to us all, and a sound message to those of us who lead a team:

*Give the ones you care about wings to fly, roots to come back and reasons to stay.*