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Nurturing POTENTIAL

in Education - Personal Growth - Health - Relationships - Business



Major theme:
THE SELF-CHANGE MODEL

Corporate:
Human Performance

Belief Systems:
Science and Magic

Communication:
French fries and food fights

Education:
Intuitive Thinking

nurturing POTENTIAL

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There is within each of us a potential for greatness. And greatness is not measured by objective achievement alone, but needs to take its starting point into account. An Irish proverb says: Praise the ripe field not the green corn. And to Oliver Cromwell is attributed: "None climbs so high as he who knows not whither he is going." To which we would add: it doesn't matter how far you have come or where you wish to go, you can always get there from here.

The aim of Nurturing Potential is to provide signposts, to suggest less-travelled footpaths, to open up new vistas and new territories, and to recommend different maps for familiar territories. To this end we will be providing serious and light-hearted material, for we believe the frivolous can be as didactic as the academic.

Your bouquets and brickbats will be equally welcome. Even more appreciated will be your contributions by way of articles, comments and suggestions. And do not neglect the Letters' page.

**Be not afraid of growing slowly, be
afraid only of standing still**
[Chinese proverb]

**I could have had class. I could have
been a contender.**
[Budd Schulberg –
On The Waterfront]

**Ah, but a man's reach should exceed
his grasp/ Or what's a heaven for?**
[Robert Browning]

**Too low they build, who build below
the stars**
[Anon]

**Do not seek to follow in the footsteps
of the men of old. Seek what they
sought.**
[Basho]

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Nurturing Potential The Heart of Governance by Lynn McGregor



“Life will work best for you and therefore for others when you can achieve a balance of 50% giving, and 50% receiving.”

This was taught to me by my South Dakota Native American teacher eight years ago and I have been thinking about it ever since, particularly in relation to my work with business leaders in the UK and the USA. At the time I was working extremely hard in four companies who wanted us to help optimise the potential of their directors. For me at the time, giving was easy. We were highly in demand and highly successful financially. Receiving was not as easy. I noticed that I felt tired and was grumpy with friends who tried to support me. Even worse, I believed that I did not have any spare time and was a “busy-ness” rather than a “human being”. Even worse, when I did take time out and went into nature, I found myself staring at the beauty of a tree, knowing in my head that the tree was beautiful, but not feeling it. I knew then, that I was badly out of balance and needed to learn how to receive again. Otherwise how could I really give of my best? I realised that I was feeling drained and suffering from what I advise my clients to guard against. Because I was not taking responsibility for nurturing my own potential, I was in danger of losing it.

Manfred Max-Neef¹ argued that much of the trouble in the world was because we try ineffective ways to satisfy real human needs. In our society, many try to satisfy deep-seated needs to be loved, acknowledged and appreciated through money, status and being busy. And the less fulfilled we feel, the more money and status we try to achieve until it becomes an addiction where more and more gives us less and less. I also believe that a deep-seated human need is to find and develop what we are best at. Joseph Campbell² said that the most important thing in life is to find and follow your bliss.

“We’re so engaged in doing things to achieve purposes of outer value that we forget that the inner value, the rapture that is associated with being alive, is what it’s all about.”

I would agree, except with the caveat that one’s “bliss” should not harm others.

When we talk about nurturing potential, we often mean nurturing the best in us, or healing aspects of ourselves that stop us from being effective or happy. However, the real question in my mind is *what* are we nurturing? Is what we are nurturing really right for us and for the greater good?

At the start of the Conference on Sustainable Development, at the end of August this year, Thabo Mbeki, president of South Africa said it was time to come together to work not only on cleaning up the planet, but also on narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor. He said that it was time to re-evaluate “the savage principle of survival of the fittest.” Now, more than ever, after the collapse of Enron and Worldcom because of dishonesty and greed, we are aware of the shadow side of the system we live in. These are the negative effects of competition, ambition and materialism. We are brought up to be competitive, to win over others and are valued according to our financial wealth and status. Is it surprising then that some people have developed their potential along self interested lines?

What with global warming, unstable economies and September 11th, we are being invited to re-evaluate the kinds of potential we nurture in others and ourselves. This means being more conscious about the choices we make about life and how much freedom we have to act. It is also influenced by the wisdom, maturity and humanity of those we allow to govern us. This in turn, depends on how they have been nurtured themselves.

In the twenty years that I have been working with business and other leaders, I have discovered that how they have been nurtured or deprived, makes an enormous difference to the quality of the decisions they make and the ways in which they treat people.

Many of my clients are millionaires. Collectively they have extraordinary power over the fates of organisations, the environment and livelihoods of thousands of people, not to mention the communities

they serve, or abuse. However, as a CEO of a major global business with a good environmental track record said, “unless I am making a positive and meaningful difference to the world, all I am doing is banging golden nails in my coffin.” I have come across many people who are genuinely making a positive difference. In the course of my work, I ask people to talk about the history of their lives. This is to find out what is the essence, or the area of genius that each person has and wants to develop so that she or he can really give of their best and continue to do so. In every case, the same thing has made a positive difference to them.

What really helped them was the presence of one or more significant people in their lives who had recognised their worth and took time to encourage them. It could have been a teacher or a relative, or a boss or senior colleague. But the words are all very similar; he or she “made me feel I mattered and that I could do amazing things. He/she spent time with me showing me what I could do. I did better than I could ever have imagined. I have never forgotten.” Those people, who have been supported on their life paths, are also the people who do the same for their employees. It is not just something that is tacked onto a training programme or a one off event. It is a belief in the value of human beings and their potential and therefore a way of life. Developing potential is not just to do with personal development; it is also learning the skills and expertise necessary to do specific kinds of work. More than that, it is the collective ability of human beings to make intelligent and thoughtful decisions that create meaningful results.

In my book, *The Human Face of Corporate Governance*³, I argued that ‘governance’ was a human decision-making process between investors, boards and executives about the fate of companies, organisations and countries. I also suggested that there were four levels of governance, self governance – concerning each of us, inter personal governance, concerning how we relate to each other and make group decisions, inter group governance, decisions negotiated between representative groups and systemic governance – the effect of the system on how we govern. Some of us have more potential to operate at some of these levels than others.

In the work that we do with boards and top executives, we have found that nurturing personal and team potential, makes a significant improvement to achieving successful results. For example, a CEO totally changed his style from being aggressive and critical to that of mentoring and encouraging his people. From a position where he was given six months to get his act together or leave, he eventually become CEO of a large international company. Another Director discovered that she was in the wrong job even though she was doing well. She changed her role and her company

and found that she was not only very happy, but achieving much more than she dreamed.

A board of directors in a family company were not making decisions because they were arguing all the time. The chairperson asked us to enable them to work better together. We worked individually with each person and the board as a whole. As a result an environment was created where people really listened to each other. They were able to support and challenge the executive team. The company not only won prizes for being the best employer of the year, but also increased its profits and grew successfully. People loved working there.

Whether we are able to work in a positive environment or not, makes a great difference to the extent to which we can nurture potential. However, all of us live in a stressful world with many challenges. Nurturing potential is now more important than ever. But the kind of potential we need to nurture also needs to include developing our inner resources to deal with uncertainty, instability and sometimes despair and depression as well as our ability to experience joy, love and beauty. Only then can we use our knowledge and expertise to the real benefit of others.

Nurturing real potential is the celebration of what is humanly best in us. This can come from providing an environment in which we are loved, acknowledged and can flower and grow. However, it is important also to remember that some of the best life lessons come from having to face and deal with adversity. If I had not suffered under a tyrannical regime, I would not have understood why power should be used wisely or have as much compassion for people. Nurturing potential is not all sweetness and light. After all, some of the best plants are nourished by compost.

¹ Manfred Max-Neef, “Human Scale Development”, Apex Press 1991

² Joseph Campbell, “The Power of Myth” Doubleday, 1988, Pg 6

³ McGregor Lynn “The Human Face of Corporate Governance”, Palgrave 2001

Lynn McGregor is a recognised leader in the field of corporate governance and executive leadership. An experienced coach, mentor and lecturer, she has significantly improved the performance of many chairpersons, CEOs, executive and non-executive directors of corporations that are household names.

In September 2000 her book The Human Face of Corporate Governance was published by Palgrave, the business division of MacMillan and became a best-seller in its field.

Human Performance: - A Question of Potential or Interference? by Amanda Knight



The connection between ‘performance’ and ‘personal effectiveness’ is well documented, if not obvious. The evolution of management and employee competency programmes, comprising of soft skills assessment as well as traditional hard skills evaluation, has reinforced the need for the development of people skills.

For most organisations though, the apparent inconsistent results in the so-called ‘soft and woolly’ aspects of skills training have only served to reinforce the doubt and suspicion in many corridors of power of the need for, and the role of, human development.

This is further fuelled by an inadequate understanding in organisations of how we actually function as human beings, and the enormous impact this has on our ability to perform as individuals, as members of teams, and as contributors to the wider goals of the business.

Why are organisations prepared to spend millions in the research and development of technology, yet do not seek to understand and develop their human resource? After all, an IT system does not make a business ~ yet without the people, that same business could not exist.

There seems to be a cynicism beneath the requirement to provide employees with the opportunity to explore their potential. Why is that?

Well, perhaps they will decide to leave the organisation, which would be a wasted investment. Yet the organisation that encourages the development of potential in its staff will unleash the creative energy required to propel a business towards a more successful and sustainable future. And in turn, that creative and stimulating environment will prove to be a strong factor in retaining the very staff that helped create it.

Or may be there is a fear that their newly-found wisdom would encourage employees to challenge management ideas and decisions a little too vigorously. The only people that would need to be worried about that, however, would be those in positions of authority who have an egoic need for control.

Any manager able to perceive beyond their own self-preservation will recognise the need to understand how their own ego responses, and those of their staff, impact on the team’s (and ultimately the organisation’s) overall performance.

And this really is the crux of the people performance issue. When will organisations truly understand and accept the fundamental impact soft skills have on the performance of the individual, the team, and the organisation?

But is there a fast-track solution?

This comes back to the need to understand how we actually function as human beings.

Much development and soft skills training focuses on improving aspects of ‘behaviour’ ~ the need to be more assertive, more visionary, a better communicator, and so on. But by seeing ourselves as needing to improve, or to be more or less of something, we are assuming that we lack that skill in the first place.

In his book ‘The Inner Game of Tennis’, Timothy Gallwey discusses a simple formula for improving performance:

$$\text{Performance} = \text{Potential} - \text{Interference}$$

What if we actually already have the potential, but this is inhibited by interference ~ habitual thought patterns and conditioning that make us think we are inadequate and incapable? If we could believe, for example, that we are naturally good communicators but that there is old emotional memory creating a smokescreen that distorts our communications output and delivery, that gives a very subtle, but vital perspective from which to develop ourselves. What is healthy about this idea is that it considers human development as a cleansing process rather than a negative, uphill struggle.

So ~ we can consider human potential in two ways. There is the traditional idea of the struggle to ‘improve’ oneself and become a ‘better’ human being. And then there is the concept of realising one’s potential by releasing the creative being that already exists within.

The problem with the former is that it reinforces existing perception ~ and supports judgement; either judgement of oneself, or judgement of and by others. Whereas the latter is about uncovering the truth, the true ability of the individual ...

Developing Potential, Limiting Interference

We have all heard of the concept of left and right brain. The left brain is our rational brain (the cortex) and the right brain is our emotional brain (the limbic system). Whether we are aware of it or not, every decision that we make, every action we carry out, requires the simultaneous use of these two areas of the brain. Physiologically, the two do not, and cannot, function independently.

The significance of this is that our emotional brain is as involved in our decisions and actions as the rational part, and this has serious implications for our personal effectiveness ~ our performance and achievement of goals; our ability to make decisions and communicate effectively; our relationships with others; and our health.

To identify how we are using the brain to interfere with realising our potential requires understanding. Understanding how our brain accesses and uses its emotional memory base. Understanding what the data inside this memory store is compiled of and how it is impacting us today (without us perhaps even being aware of it). Understanding how we can create new memory to help us enhance our personal performance and relationships, and create the results we want.

It is vital, therefore to take responsibility for how our emotional brain works. It then becomes possible to 'train' it to respond in ways that create the outcomes we want, both in terms of personal performance and our interactions with others.

Whilst we need to understand the emotional factors affecting our performance, we also need to understand the range of intelligence that we can develop as humans. The scientist Howard Gardner established that there are at least eight intelligences, all of which are capable of being developed, and all of which are interlinked. The most commonly known are the linguistic and logical intelligences which make up our IQ. Our intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences form our emotional intelligence (EQ). The combination of IQ and EQ is now widely recognised as a strong indicator of performance of the individual in the workplace.

The remaining intelligences (plus a proposed spiritual intelligence) may indicate supplementary abilities either in our professional or personal lives. By considering the breadth of knowledge and capability indicated by the range of intelligences, we are being offered a whole new vista in terms of our human potential. [See Table 1]

Maslow's hierarchy of needs enables us to understand what motivates us as human beings, with a focus on human potential, as he believed that humans strive to reach the highest levels of their capabilities. Some

people reach higher levels of creativity, of consciousness and wisdom. His term for these people was "self-actualising".

Table 1 - Eight Human Intelligences

Bodily/Kinaesthetic. The ability to use one's whole physical body to express and create, with the capacity for strength, balance, dexterity, flexibility, co-ordination and speed

Intrapersonal. The ability to gain self-knowledge and to act adaptively on the basis of that knowledge with the capacity for self-discipline, self-understanding and self-esteem

Interpersonal. The ability to perceive, make distinctions between, and respond effectively to the moods, intentions, motivations, and feelings of other people

Logical/Mathematical. The capacity to use numbers effectively and to reason well, including sensitivity to logical problems and relationships, and statements and propositions (what if? - cause-effect)

Musical/Rhythmical. The capacity to perceive, discriminate, transform and express musical forms, including sensitivity to rhythm, pitch, melody and tone

Naturalistic. The ability to appreciate the impact of nature on the self and the self on nature, and a capacity for caring for, taming and interacting with living creatures, and sensitivity to plant life

Verbal/Linguistical. The capacity to use words effectively, in a written or a spoken form, including syntax and structure of language, phonology, semantics and its practical use

Visual/Spatial. The ability to perceive the visual-spatial world accurately and to perform transformations upon those perceptions, e.g. through sensitivity to colour, line, shape, form and space.

Source: identified by the scientist Howard Gardner

Maslow set up a hierarchical theory of needs in which all the basic needs are at the bottom, and the needs concerned with man's highest potential are at the top. The hierarchic theory is often represented as a pyramid suggesting that each level of the pyramid is dependent on the previous level. For example, a person does not feel the second need until the demands of the first have been satisfied.

But if we are considering two interwoven aspects of development ~ potential and interference ~ then are not the basic needs and the growth needs two interdependent hierarchies? [See Table 2]

Table 2

Basic needs hierarchy	Growth needs hierarchy
4. Esteem needs	Self-transcendence 4
3. Belonging needs	Self-actualisation 3
2. Safety needs	Aesthetic needs 2
1. Physiological needs	Cognitive needs 1
Unmet egoic needs create emotional interference	Unmet trans-egoic needs highlight untapped potential

If any of the emotionally-affected basic needs are not being met, this interferes with achievement of the growth needs. But it does not mean the growth needs are not being explored and pursued.

Facilitating Learning

Whether we are considering our own performance and how it is impacted by developing potential and limiting interference, or if we are involved in raising the performance of others, the function of human development is learning. Learning about our unrealised potential, and learning how to reduce the interference by bringing daylight to our misguided perceptions.

Wherever we are on the path to self-actualisation, enlightenment or our own Nirvana, we can take a giant step forward by doing what we can to minimise our judgements, and to believe in and identify with our inner creative being instead.

Maslow proposed the following steps for nurturing potential in others [See Table 3] ~ we can use these to assess our own progress too.

Ultimately, the question of whether interference affects human performance by impacting on potential certainly appears to be valid. Considering this simple formula

as a focus for people development may well prove to be the key to improving performance in the workplace.

Table 3
NURTURING POTENTIAL

Teach people to be authentic - to be aware of their inner selves and to hear their inner-feeling voices.
Teach people to transcend their own cultural conditioning and become world citizens.
Help people discover their vocation in life, their calling or destiny.
Teach people that life is precious, that there is joy to be experienced in life, and if people are open to seeing the good and joyous in all kinds of situations, it make life worth living.
Accept the person and help them learn their inner nature. From real knowledge of aptitudes and limitations we can know what to build upon, what potential is really there.
See that the person's basic needs of safety, belonging and self-esteem are satisfied.
Refreshen consciousness, teaching the person to appreciate beauty and the good things in nature and in living.
Teach people that controls are good, and complete abandon is bad, as it takes control to improve the quality of life in all areas.
Teach people to transcend the trifling problems and focus on the serious challenges in life: injustice, pain, suffering and death.
Teach people to choose well by practising how to make choices.

Source: suggested by the humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow

Editorial

Well, it's early days, but *Nurturing Potential* has been getting some very good feedback from the people who've seen the prototype issue; and the current issue has had even more acclaim from those who have read it as work-in-progress.

We are still on a learning curve. There are questions to be answered as well as some that we haven't yet asked.

We have been amazed and delighted by people's willingness to contribute articles, advice and criticism and, in many cases, time. Every input is highly valued and appreciated

The first two paper issues (as well as the first four online issues) have been totally subsidised by us. This is clearly a situation that cannot continue indefinitely, but our intention was to let you *sample* before asking you to *buy*. We hope that what you have seen and read will encourage you to pay a modest sum so that you may continue to enjoy *Nurturing Potential*.

Subscription rates will be held to the minimum. We propose charging £10 a year from the beginning of 2003, to cover the six online issues each year as well as the three paper issues, inclusive of P&P, or £8.00 a year for the paper issue only. Further information about this can also be found in *The Last Word* on page 31.

""What is the Self-Change Model?

We prefer to call it the self-change model because we believe this terminology makes the concept more accessible than The Transtheoretical Model of Change as it was described by Prochaska & DiClemente in 1983.¹

Originally directed at behaviour change in connection with health issues, and particularly as relating to the smoking habit, it gradually developed into an effective integrative model for all forms of behaviour change. The model describes how people modify a problem behaviour or transform it into a positive behaviour. Central to the model are the various stages of change.

The Self-Change Model is less concerned – certainly less than other similar models – with the social influences on behaviour, but focuses primarily on decision-making behavioural patterns. It has been found effective in such areas as nicotine addiction, exercise, dieting, organisational change, and stress management, amongst many others.

Five stages have been identified as forming the primary “building blocks” of the Model. This is the process by which self-change progresses.

Precontemplation is the initial stage. People in this stage are not intending to take action in the foreseeable future, usually regarded as the next six months. They may have tried to change before without success and this has depressed them, or they are not sufficiently aware of their behavioural patterns and the possible consequences thereof.

Contemplation is the stage in which people are intending to change in the next six months. They are more aware of the pros of changing but are also acutely aware of the cons. This ambivalence can keep them stuck in this stage for long periods of time.

Preparation is the stage in which people are intending to take action in the immediate future, usually measured as the next month. They have normally already taken some significant action in the past year, and may intend to join an exercise class, or a therapy group, consult a doctor or a counsellor, or even simply buy a self-help book.

At the *Action* stage people have already modified their behaviours within the past six months. Not all modifications of behaviour, however, count as action in this model. In the case of nicotine or drug addiction, for example, people must attain a criterion that

professionals agree is sufficient to reduce risks to health. The Action stage is also the stage where vigilance against relapse is critical.

Maintenance is the stage in which people are working to prevent relapse but they do not apply change processes as frequently as do people in action. They are less tempted to relapse and increasingly more confident that they can continue their change.

Using the self-change model enables a far more effective treatment by moving people (or organisations) from one stage to the next rather than trying to move them directly to Action.

Questions that might be asked to determine intervention procedures include:

What? What needs to change? This enables behaviour patterns to be portrayed so that issues faced may be targeted in individuals and organisations.

When? Transtheoretical awareness helps to identify the stage reached and thus the individual’s or organisation’s readiness to take and sustain action.

How? The processes of change may not be revealed by individuals or organisations, but their activities provide a clue to how changes are occurring from one stage to the next.

Why? Identification of the pros and cons of changing helps in maintaining a balance and can provide the link between knowledge and action.

Decisional Balance

Before leaving the subject of the self-change model, one other component needs to be mentioned. This is the decisional balance. This states simply that before change can occur from an unhealthy to a healthy behaviour, the pros must outweigh the cons. In *precontemplation* there are more cons (more reasons not to change) than there are pros (reasons to change). In *precontemplation*, therefore, the emphasis should be on increasing the pros. When moving onward, for instance from *contemplation* to *preparation* and *action*, the emphasis needs to reinforce the decreasing of the cons.

¹ Prochaska, J. O., & DiClemente, C. C. (1983). Stages and processes of self-change of smoking: *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 51, 390-395.

""Living inside out - on purpose

by Michael Mallows



I invite you to share what may well be the most profound journey that any of us can ever take – a journey into the deeper parts of our very being.

Such a journey can help us to discover, uncover and to rediscover our wonderful and mainly untapped resources.

Often unfamiliar, sometimes even unacknowledged because they remain unused, these resources lie dormant, buried, repressed and denied, manifesting in the undercurrents of fear and frustration that permeate so much of our day-to-day lives. These feelings are often underpinned by a vague but pervasive sense of yearning for ‘Something Other’ (not here, not now, not me). We have more to give and to experience; there is so much more that we could tap into - if only! And yet, something holds us back. It may be an inner voice, unbidden images, created or recalled unwanted feelings of doubt, unexpected feelings of irrational anxiety, helplessness or futility. Or, pernicious and persistent, the bitter regret of, “If only...”

“If only yesterday had been otherwise how different today would be!”

Clinging to regrets for wrong turnings and errors of judgements, we feed the fires of resentment, guilt and blame by rehashing every long remembered betrayal, abuse and loss.

At other times we may believe, and find others to agree, that it is the future not the past that prevents us becoming the best that we might be. Anxieties, fears, negative hallucinations and self-fulfilling prophecies limit the vision of future possibilities and impair our judgment in the here and now.

Exposing the teeth marks on our psyche to justify shying away from risks and responsibilities, we seek people to give us the sympathy we think we need and believe we deserve. Their good intentions reinforce our convictions and problems, which are neither the past

nor the future, as such, but our thoughts and feelings about yesterday and tomorrow in the living breathing moment of the Now.

The philosophy of this journey is simple. Each moment, each heartbeat, happens in an instant of choice. Each moment offers various options. We may not be aware of the options, let alone the possibility of choosing, but, between one heartbeat and the next we choose:

What we are going to focus attention on
 What meaning we will give it
 What action we will take

If you (like most people in the West), do not believe that this applies to you then much of what follows will be, at best, of academic interest.

We always do our best at any given moment as far as our beliefs, values, imagination and memories allow. A nanosecond later, we may feel both wiser and more foolish, wishing we had acted differently (“If only!”). Repeating a mistake, repeating a mistake, taking another wrong turning, meeting another dead-end, is only lamentable if we choose not to seek the lesson available in every mistake.

In the living breathing heartbeat, we can choose to look over the wall and imagine the possibilities, or we choose to keep looking back over our shoulder and regretting our limitations.

I invite you to consider who and how you would like to be. How will you look? What will you say? How will you sound and feel when you are moving toward your full potential? What steps you are willing to take to fulfil that vision and inhabit your dream?

This article is intended to help you to reconsider the decisions you make, if you so desire, about who you are and where you are going. What you really want? How you will go about getting it? You know whether you are expressing the best of yourself in your relationships with other people because you feel good about asserting yourself, and you treat others with respect and generosity of spirit.

You will know that you are more fully connected to the world around you when you approach it with curiosity, interact with creativity and behave with responsibility, respect and dignity. How, in the ordinary moments of your day, can you nurture your extraordinary potential?

The invitation and the questions imply change, as does any experience of personal development.

If we develop our potential, by definition we change. If we build on that to develop yet more of our potential, we can influence the world around us. We may set an example, become role models, motivate, nurture and inspire others so that they feel encouraged to take risks and to develop or to change themselves. If the world and the people around us change, those changes will impact on us, and so on, and so on.

Take someone who, arriving home after an assertiveness course, finds that the people in his life do not like the 'new' persona. They may even be rejecting or punitive. This may compel the person back into his shell or, like countless real, imaginary and fictional heroes, to vast horizons and new visions.

Many people want to change (although even more want to stay the same), but have not fully considered the 'ecology' of change and the impact on others. New responsibilities and challenges may be unexpected and uncomfortable and the price of change seems too great compared to the familiarity of the present state of affairs.

The Self-Change Model

Also known as the Transtheoretical Model (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983; Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997), this model describes a series of steps and stages for personal evolution. It requires giving up dependency and blame and taking appropriate responsibility for our decisions and actions.

Pre-contemplation.

In the first stage - pre-contemplation - a person may have no idea that there is a need for change. They may deny the existence or the significance of any evidence, clinging tenaciously to the security of their map and model of 'Reality'. They certainly have no thought of change in the foreseeable future.

Contemplation

In this stage we look at our own thoughts, feelings and actions, and consider the possibility that we could do something different.

It is at this point that many people, peeking out of their comfort zone, realise (decide) that they prefer their patterns, even if they're painful, and retreat hastily into a bolthole of rationalisations.

Alert for danger, we may oscillate in and out of the contemplation stage as we test the waters and sniff the air. As each emergence makes us a little bolder, a little braver, we may roam a little wider. We are still wary, doubtful and ready to retreat, but ever more optimistic that change could be worth the risk. As we yo-yo between the past and the future, between hope and the fear, something in our perception shifts and we start questioning our assumptions and attitudes. We can now imagine the possibility of possibilities.

I asked Joe, after some emotional freedom tapping, "As you listen to your feelings now, how are they different?"

"I believe that I can believe in myself!" he replied.

Preparation

Emboldened by our forays, we direct our thoughts, though perhaps not yet our actions, toward real change. Not just any change, of course, but self-change.

We can think seriously about doing something different or doing the same thing in a different time or place. This could be simply thinking about preparing for a new activity, or it could be thinking about a change of job, abode or places of entertainment.

Grossly overweight, John decided that he wanted to run a half-marathon. He thought seriously about his eating (and drinking) habits. Reluctant to forgo his weekly binges with his drinking buddies, he decided that, at the very least, he didn't need to imbibe quite so much at lunch times. Immediately he cut down.

He was not quite ready to commit, but he was getting ready.

Re-evaluating means (re)considering how Selfhood (who we think we are) shapes our relationships with people, events and situations. We question the validity of our convictions or the vanity of our certainties. This can be extremely uncomfortable, especially if our sense of Self is firmly attached to our version of Reality.

Fragile egos believe they can only survive in the confines of their Limiting Beliefs!

Fragile Egos believe they can only survive in the confines of their Limiting Beliefs!

To get ready for change, it is useful, even essential, to have a clear picture of the desired changes. How will I look different, how will others see me differently, how will things look different as I change and when I've changed?

When you have pictured that clearly, in full colour, you can step into that picture and anticipate the feelings you will have when the changes are established.

At this - or at any - point in the process, you could decide that the changes are not worth the effort required. Too little outcome for too much input.

Commitment

Having prepared, we can focus attention on the emotional, conceptual and psychological investment required. No longer just wishing and hoping, we are aware of and serious about taking the risk. We are prepared and now we commit to following through and dealing with the consequences.

This, and every stage, can re-stimulate enough doubts and anxieties that we loop back to any of the previous stages - even to pre-contemplation. "What was the point? I was just banging my head against a brick wall!" Other people know that something is different because of our general attitude, the things we say and the way we say them, and because our reactions are different. When we are truly committed, we are less threatened or upset by other people's scepticism or cynicism. As they are very willing to remind us; they've heard it all before!

Action

OK, we made it this far! Perhaps we took a convoluted route, two steps forward three steps sideways, but now we are ready to show we mean business. Now we are going to walk our talk!

So we do, and guess what? Just as (or worse than) we feared, it all goes wrong. Whoops!

What next? Retreat or recommitment?

It's up to you. It's up to me.

Either way, it's still a choice.

Maintenance

This can be a difficult stage. We need to stay focused on the benefits and believe in our capacity to work through to the glittering prize of Self-esteem.

We may need encouragement but not find it. We can relapse and feel that we have failed – again! Friends may say "I told you so!" Colleagues may indicate "I knew it!" And we will need to draw on all our inner resources, resilience and support networks to maintain our determination.

And if you fall before winning post? So, You pick yourself up, dust yourself down and start all over again!

Transcendence

Eventually, you know that you unlikely ever to return to the problem state. It may happen, 'never say never' but there is no need to worry. Your effort, your preparation, your commitment and the action is now a part of who you are. People don't offer you drinks, or tablets or cigarettes. They don't expect you to engage in the same old tired and tiring behaviours. You don't expect them to bail you out, and you aren't blaming them for what goes wrong because you accept responsibility for your contribution.

Other people may not like the way we have changed. At any of the stages, some people may have fallen by the wayside. In the contemplation stage we will have weighed up the possibility that a friend or lover may not stay around if we change the way we are. And maybe they won't! But, we can let them go with love or we can use them as an excuse not to change.

Handling other people's reactions to our personal development will be addressed in a future article.

Personal Evolution

Self Change takes time and it requires 'minor' yet profound changes. We will need at least to consider our (limiting) beliefs, our values (to value ourselves by shifting from self-doubt to self-esteem is a massive shift of beliefs and values), our relationships, our perceptions, assumptions, memories, attitudes and even our identity.

. . . to value ourselves by shifting from self-doubt to self-esteem is a massive shift of beliefs and values

I believe we are here to grow. To develop our full potential and to evolve both as individuals and as a species. Human beings are remarkable and wonderful creatures with a vast capacity to evolve and grow. We can create an illusion of security by trying to maintain the status quo, but it goes against nature to do so. It takes as much emotional and creative energy to stay the same as it does to change. We are by nature creative and aspirational beings. As Oscar Wilde said, "We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars!"

- For details of Michael's workshops, you can email SET@mallows.co.uk, call Michael on 020 8202 3373 or send three 1st class stamps to
- Living On Purpose, 37 Layfield Road, Hendon, London NW4 3UH.

Processes of Change

by Joe Sinclair

(Change is a process, not an event)



A model for change is only as effective as its ability to serve in the process of change.

Models of all kind are interesting pointers to uncharted territories, or for providing new vistas of familiar systems. They may be exciting, eye-opening, imagination-rousing, mind-broadening, or simply interestingly innovative, but they remain somewhat sterile without the ability to effect change. A map is only useful if the territory it represents is accessible.

The Transtheoretical Model of Change not only displays a territory marked by the five signposts of *Precontemplation*, *Contemplation*, *Preparation*, *Action* and *Maintenance*, but it provides strategies and processes that may be readily and effectively applied in most areas of existence where change – or momentum – is desirable or desired.

There is a considerable literature available for detailed exploration of these processes, much of it on the Internet, and I will be providing some signposts for you to access that information at the end of this article. First, however, I want to give a fairly brief overview of how the processes may be applied.

I have chosen four areas to illustrate this. Firstly a condition for which the TTM was much used in its early days (and, indeed, persists): that of addiction. Secondly, its application to student motivation. Thirdly, as applied to team development and team leadership. Finally, as I have myself experimented with it, in the area of plotting and scriptwriting.

The figure below [based on Prochaska et al 1992] is a visual representation of how the processes of change interact with the stages of change.

As can be seen, the processes commence at different times in the stages of change. This illustration features ten processes. The original model by Prochaska and others featured nine. Different writers give different names to some of the processes. Sometimes they are put in a different order. But the basic concepts remain the same.

Let me take them in the order in which they appear above, with a brief illustration of how they can be applied to our four studies. Note that these are merely suggested options and you may very well come up with more appropriate examples for yourselves.

PRECONTEMPLATION	CONTEMPLATION	PREPARATION	ACTION	MAINTENANCE
Consciousness raising Dramatic relief Environmental re-evaluation				
	Social Liberation Self re-evaluation			
		Self-liberation		
			Reinforcement management Helping relationships Counter-conditioning Stimulus control	

Consciousness Raising. Increased awareness about causes, consequences, and cures.

(a) *Addictions (Drugs, Smoking, etc.)*. Discovering and learning new health facts.

(b) *Student Motivation*. Questions may have been raised about falling grades.

(c) *Teams and Leadership*. Group performance is less than satisfactory. There may be a sense of apathy. Perhaps a complaint has been made.

(d) *Plotting*. A problem situation is established. It needs to be interpreted, confronted, and behavioural patterns defined.

Dramatic Relief. An emotional reaction to a situation may be experienced.

(a) *Addictions (Drugs, Smoking, etc.)*. The person may experience fear and worry about the consequences of their behaviour.

(b) *Student Motivation*. A poor examination result may produce a sudden, sharp shock.

(c) *Teams and Leadership*. The loss of a contract may lead to questioning leadership style or group motivation.

(d) *Plotting*. An event occurs that produces a reaction to the situation. At this stage the concern and involvement of the protagonist may be stated.

Environmental Re-evaluation. An assessment of how the behaviour may impact on one's social environment.

(a) *Addictions (Drugs, Smoking, etc.)*. The potential harm and discomfort to other people from one's addiction may come into awareness.

(b) *Student Motivation*. Concern may be experienced about how falling grades or failure in examinations may affect family and friends.

(c) *Teams and Leadership*. How is the behaviour of the team leader or any individuals in the team affecting an external situation?

(d) *Plotting*. What is happening outside the protagonist's cognition? It is time to bring in other characters and show the potential effect on them of the problem situation.

Social Liberation. An awareness of opportunities available to one that could result from a change in behaviour.

(a) *Addictions (Drugs, Smoking, etc.)*. How might my quality of life improve if I changed my habits?

(b) *Student Motivation*. How might I become more academically successful? What would it cost me? What would I gain?

(c) *Teams and Leadership*. [Leader] Might a change in leadership style produce a positive response in the team? [Team] Might a more cooperative response produce benefits that I do not currently enjoy?

(d) *Plotting*. The introduction of other characters and,

consequently, a shift in emphasis, produces unexpected or unexplored options.

Self-re-evaluation. A growing recognition of our own failure to perform adequately or positively leads to reappraisal.

(a) *Addictions (Drugs, Smoking, etc.)*. I begin to imagine myself free of the undesirable habit.

(b) *Student Motivation*. I begin to explore possibilities and potential results of greater attention to study; doing more than the minimum requirement; completing assignments more regularly.

(c) *Teams and Leadership*. Both Leader and team members start to examine the reward system, personal motivation, and level of skills.

(d) *Plotting*. What will happen now if the protagonist changes a behaviour, or if one of the characters takes a positive action.

Self Liberation. A decision is taken and a commitment made to changing the problem behaviour.

(a) *Addictions (Drugs, Smoking, etc.)*. Joining a self-help group. Taking a course of study. Buying a "How-to . . ." book.

(b) *Student Motivation*. Resolutions: assignments will be completed on time; homework will be produced as required; grades will be improved.

(c) *Teams and Leadership*. Decisions can no longer be deferred. Perhaps a training programme may be introduced; outside consultants brought in; coaching and mentoring to be arranged.

(d) *Plotting*. A decision is taken that introduces an entirely new factor to the plot equation.

Reinforcement Management. A reward given to oneself or provided by others will help to reinforce the positive commitment to the change.

(a) *Addictions (Drugs, Smoking, etc.)*. It is essential to be aware of the danger of negative feedback that might cause a relapse.

(b) *Student Motivation*. Stress management skills need to be employed in order to prevent relapse.

(c) *Teams and Leadership*. Specific and detailed tasks may be devised in order to reinforce the programme of action, plus a system of performance-related rewards.

(d) *Plotting*. A metaphorical "carrot on the end of a string" may be introduced. There would be a prize on offer - something to be gained - if an objective is attained. Will success grace efforts?

Helping Relationships. Accepting the support of others. Learning to trust them and, if necessary, to lean upon them.

(a) *Addictions (Drugs, Smoking, etc.)*. This is the time for friends and families to offer unstinting help, emotional support and praise. Be available!

(b) *Student Motivation*. Students who have clearly made an effort to change their earlier disruptive or negative behaviour patterns need to be validated. If they feel their efforts are not appreciated, they may decide: “What the hell! Is it worth it?”

(c) *Teams and Leadership*. Team Leaders must hold themselves available to support the efforts of their team members. Inaccessibility will deter colleagues and subordinates in their efforts and may undo all the good that has been achieved.

(d) *Plotting*. Help is at hand. The efforts of protagonist may find support, possibly from an unexpected quarter. And a seemingly negative situation may suddenly become positive and hopeful.

Counter-Conditioning. Substituting alternatives for the problem behaviour.

(a) *Addictions (Drugs, Smoking, etc.)*. Relaxation. Palliatives. Healthy pursuits, such as walking, swimming, cycling. A change of diet.

(b) *Student Motivation*. Assertiveness to counter peer pressure.

(c) *Teams and Leadership*. Public presentations; public appearances. Action in place of previous apathy. Actively seeking out situations where ability to lead or to fulfill tasks may be revealed.

(d) *Plotting*. Introducing a new factor that brings turmoil into the situation that had appeared to be under control

Stimulus Control. Adopting measures and other behaviours to control situations where previously the problem behaviour might be triggered.

(a) *Addictions (Drugs, Smoking, etc.)*. Cues for unhealthy habits are removed and healthy alternatives

are put in their place. For example, end a meal with a cup of tea to remove the stimulus of a cigarette with a cup of coffee. Avoid bars and other smoky environments.

(b) *Student Motivation*. Refrain from the habits that encouraged sloth in study - perhaps watching TV, listening to the wrong kind of music, the kind that energised rather than relaxed. Develop new habits in an environment that will encourage study.

(c) *Teams and Leadership*. Give constant publicity to all successes and avoid focusing on failures. Organise get-togethers, team meetings, conferences, where the focus is on achievement.

(d) *Plotting*. Introduce “red herrings”. Have your characters confronted with threatening situations needing resolution.

NOTE

The self-change model is by no means the only model I use for plotting scripts or stories. Indeed, it is only a very small part of plotting, and is usually used when I hit a momentary “block”. There are many other models “out there” that are at least as useful. But I thought it would be helpful to use it for illustrative purposes here. I will welcome feedback, comments, (yes, and criticism) from readers.

Further resources

<http://www.uri.edu/research/cprc/TTM/detailedoverview.htm>

<http://www.mcg.edu/som/fmfacdev/hp.htm>

http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed429053.html

Main Theme

Self Change and Parenting Skills

by Michael Mallows

I was recently working with Anne, a lone parent, and introduced her to the Self Change Model.

After I explained the Self Change Model, we assessed at which of the stages she would place herself in relation to her two teenage sons.

“Well, I keep trying different approaches [*Action*], but the boys get worse, so I retreat to contemplation feeling like a failure. Then I try something else, and it still doesn’t work!”

“Well,” I said, “you have only failed if you do not learn from what didn’t work at the action stage. Also, instead of judging yourself for ‘failure’ let us celebrate your flexibility! It is wonderful that, time after time, after each relapse, you are still willing to try new approaches!”

“That’s a nice way to put it,” she said, smiling. “I feel better about myself already.”

“How often do you try these new approaches?”

“Oh, if the boys don’t react positively, I give up more or less straight away.”

It was not difficult to work with this mother, and the Self Change Model helped her to understand and validate her strengths, and to recognise that if she was going to prevail in her parenting role, she had to demonstrate to her teenagers that she had changed herself.

The change would show itself partly in the way she made demands of them. Instead of fearfully expecting them to say ‘No!’ and showing it by requesting

apologetically, in a pleading, whining kind of voice, she would make clear, emphatic statements about what she wanted, what she expected, and, if necessary, what would happen if she did not get what she asked. The change would also manifest if she did not give up after one or two attempts. So she would only persevere in the areas where she knew she could prevail.

She had many opportunities, including the issue of washing dishes after meals.

Because contemplating this change made her feel guilty and anxious, we rehearsed the following scenario:

A lone, working parent, Anne would tell her boys, aged 15 and 16, that she needed their support, and from now on would expect them to clear and wash dishes after meals, and to share other household chores.

They understandably agreed, and unsurprisingly reneged almost immediately.

At the next meal, she said that she understood they did not want to share the chores because she got very bored and tired of them as well. What suggestions did they have for dealing with the situation?

They could think of nothing, except more promises. She explained that she knew they meant it, but experience showed they found it hard to remember or to follow through.

She said that she would give them until the end of week to think it over, talk it through and come up with some real ideas – and some real consequences. If they did not, she said, then she had some ideas that might help the situation.

They were intrigued, but she did not cave in to their entreaties to tell.

On the Friday evening, she asked them what ideas they had. Answers came there none.

“Well,” she said (and she told me that she already felt so much more confident, that she was quite enjoying the situation), “I have decided that I will only shop or cook in relation to the amount of work that gets done after I have prepared meals.

“If you do not clear up and wash up after evening meals, then I will not cook the following evening. Also, from now on, I will only shop each day rather than weekly. There will always be some basics so you will not go

hungry, but I agree with you that it is not worth putting too much effort in if you don’t want to bother.”

Of course, they did not believe her, and she did not know if she would be able to maintain her resilience over time.

Well, she managed it for long enough that she didn’t have to struggle for long. After three weeks or so, her sons were convinced that she ‘meant it’. She arrived home one evening to find that they had, if not to her standards, certainly to her great delight, cleaned the house and had prepared a meal.

Over the meal, they had the first real talk they’d ever had, in effect, as adult to adult.

The talk touched on the hurt and anger they’d all felt when her husband, their father had walked out on them two years previously. The boys had blamed her, and she had blamed herself, wondering where she’d gone wrong, and believing that it was her fault that the boys had lost their father. Overcompensating had significantly contributed to the boys’ expectations of her doing everything for them.

There is more love, laughter and dust in their house these days . . . she still nags them to do their share . . . but there is little rancour in their arguments now.

There is more love, laughter and dust in their house these days. The boys still leave undone some of the things they said they’d do, and she still nags them to do their share of keeping the house and family running reasonably smoothly.

But there is little rancour in their arguments now, and they are all able to negotiate back to a win/win situation rather quickly.

Anne has lowered her standards of housework, raised her expectations of a family united in respect and empowerment rather than guilt and regret and has definitely changed her self in many ways.

She is more assertive, more direct and forthright, more confident, and she has regained her self-esteem as a mother and as a woman.

Her sons are more considerate more often; they have become better communicators and gained both empathy and responsibility.

As you will have seen, the stages of the Self Change Model are implicit. Perhaps you can see how Anne, consciously, and the boys perforce, had worked through the various stages to a more intelligent level of processing, a wiser level of thinking and more responsible, responsive and effective levels of functioning and communicating.

The Big Green Gathering

by Maxwell Steer



Imagine 12,000+ people in peaceful interaction on an ancient fenland farmstead where the fields stretch from the Mendips to the Isle of Avalon across drainage channels peppered with willows. Imagine that these people comprise children, women and men in equal numbers.

Imagine, if you will, that all of them feel free to wander around this ancient landscape in the sun, without inhibition yet without interfering with each other. Imagine that this site contains areas devoted to ecology, country crafts, healing, earth energies, entertainment and contemplation of spiritual issues. Imagine too that there is a field for travellers, where the whole families set up camp with their wagons and livestock and spend a few weeks without harassment.

If you can imagine all this, then you will have the conditions of the Big Green Gathering as near as dammit.

It is as well that it is largely ignored by the mainstream media because too much attention would bring a sudden influx of 'tourists' and sensation-seekers which would destroy the delicate balance of perception which the BGG exists to nourish.

Having had various connections with the Big Green Gathering over the years I was surprised and delighted to be asked to coordinate the Spirit Zone on this occasion. What does the public want from a Spirit Zone? You could transpose this into the broader question: what are people's needs in this area of life?

I often think the Greeks had the right idea. In Athens the apostle Paul derided an altar dedicated To An Unknown God - but actually that's how a lot of people first become aware that there is a dimension in their life which is not being satisfied by *doing*, and begin, infinitesimally slowly, to move towards the realisation that the central issue of life is not what you do, but what you *are*. You cannot *do* peace, you cannot even really *bring* peace, you can only *be* peace - or not.

Our adjacent Healing and Earth Energies Zones were full of people *doing* healing, and despite some beautifully evocative structures by the Zones' coordinators the energy in these fields, I felt, had a happening feel, there was a sense of people purposefully engaged in doing and offering paths to self-development and wholeness. Since those offering services were

much keener to pitch their tents in these zones than ours they naturally created a more competitive atmosphere around them. By contrast I felt that the Spirit Zone ended up seeming much more spacious and laid-back. I take no particular credit for this, but with less competition for space our pitches were much looser, with large Buddhafield and Hare Krishna cafe tents, and even the Rainbow Circle area, a consortium of astrologers, had a more easy-going feel.

In terms of pointers to the future, I felt that our 'Confession and beyond ...' tent was an experiment well worth repeating. It was the brainchild of Raga Woods, an eco-activist and spiritual amateur. Attending various festivals she had been struck by people wanting to release aspects of themselves in order to move on without engaging formal therapy, and had come to realise that what many people are looking for might, in old-fashioned language, be called absolution. She calls herself a 'low priestess of the holy earth' to make clear that she makes no claims, other than that of someone living in close contact with the land. Several people who visited her told me that her quiet and Samaritan-like listening had helped them to identify the self they had been searching for, and gave them courage to discard unwanted patterns.

Perhaps maturity is accepting that you can't change the world, you can't heal its pain, you can't even lower the price of bread. So the most we can hope for is to interact constructively with a few people along the way. And therefore making a space that facilitates this process for other people is an effortless way of amplifying your own positive karma. And as ever, in interactions with the public, when you get it right people are extremely generous. My favourite compliment came from a black girl who said 'I wish you was my Dad.'

Maxwell Steer is a composer and writer who became sensitized to the experiential affects of sound as a result of writing film scores. In 1981 he abandoned his conventional career (which had included posts as London Director of Music for the Royal Shakespeare Co, BBC Producer and Head of 20thC Studies at the Royal College of Music Junior Department) to pursue the integration of his musical and spiritual instincts and experiences.

For more information about Maxwell and his work, try his website: www.msteer.macunlimited.net/. You can find out more about the Big Green Gathering from its website www.big-green-gathering.com/.

Is Science any more sensible than Magic?

by Ramsey Dukes

This article is one of a series based on my book 'SSOTBME An Essay On Magic'. The book argues that discussion of differences between Science, Religion and Art are incomplete unless a fourth culture - Magic - is included. The book also makes the revolutionary suggestion that Magic, far from being merely a primitive forerunner of Science, is actually what follows after an age of Science - just as the '60s magical revival followed rather than preceded the materialist '50s.

I offer this article as a contribution toward the debate between TFT and Science started in the last issue of Nurturing Potential. It argues that Science quite rightly won popular acclaim for its 'sensibly', but that times and Science have moved on. We still are inclined to assume that Science has the monopoly on sensibility when actually, if we look at it more closely, it has slipped into just the sort of dogmatic mumbo jumbo that it once rescued us from.

Was it Dr Johnstone who famously kicked a stone or thumped a table or whatever and declared that this was what he meant by reality? I'm surprised that I have forgotten the details, because it was an anecdote much loved by people who considered themselves to be 'down to earth' and so opposed to my interest in the occult.

The assumption was that there was this mushy world of fantasy and spiritual claptrap which was being steadily eroded by the advance of Scientific rationalism - and the fact that Magic was not Science meant that it must therefore be part of that fantasy world.

In part I agreed with their historical view, because I do believe that Science does tend to erode then overwhelm Religion. I describe in SSOTBME how Religion evolves towards monotheism and, rather than stop at a duality of God and matter, the mind tends to move on to the ultimate monotheism which admits matter as the one reality. I also describe the process whereby phenomena once considered to be spiritual can be replicated in laboratories and so the mind tends to abandon the spiritual explanation, not because it has been 'disproved' but because it is no longer needed.

The difference is that I see this process as a cyclical psychological shift rather than as any absolute repudiation of spirit. For I believe that Magic in turn tends to erode then overwhelm Science - as I described in the second essay of this series. In that essay the model was that Science conquers Religion by providing material explanations which demonstrate greater power

than Religion - rather like those old stories where the priests of one religion conquered those of another by performing better miracles. But then I went on to describe how after a while people find that not only do they no longer need to believe in spirit, but they no longer need believe in matter either. All that is needed is the explanations - and a world of pure information is a world of Magic.

Put this way it might seem to confirm the prejudice addressed at the beginning of this essay: that Science is indeed about solid reality, while Magic is pure speculation. But such an interpretation misses the point.

When the astronomer shows us through the telescope how the shadow of the earth obscures the Moon in a lunar eclipse, he is providing a material explanation, so the mind no longer need believe that a dragon has swallowed the Moon. In this case Science is bringing us down to earth from fanciful Religious notions. Science is being more 'sensible'.

But when Science says that my experience of falling in love is 'really' chemicals in my bloodstream it is on shakier ground - for the sensation of falling in love is more tangible, sensory - literally more 'sensible' - than an explanation based upon chemicals which cannot readily be demonstrated without invading my body and thereby invalidating the very evidence.

It is as if the descent from spirit into matter - originally felt as a coming down to earth - if pursued further by Science leads us not into ever more tangible but rather ever less tangible realms. Science has left behind the 'realist' who thumps the table or kicks the stone, Science is now talking about quarks and superstrings while the 'realist' remains in the world of experience which is essentially the world of Magic.

Consider this example of a person who might not consider themselves to be a Magician, but is so according to the definitions in SSOTBME: the person is the alternative medicine enthusiast. The one who advocates Reiki, aromatherapy, natural cures and homeopathy. The one who insists that you should not have your fibroids removed surgically, but that you should dialogue with them until they fade away... and so on. One day this person's little child is diagnosed with cancer - and they rush them off to hospital for surgery. Now the rational Scientist tends to find this funny - 'so much for all that alternative rubbish, when it comes to real illness see how they rush back to ordinary medicine'. Stories like this are seen as some

sort of repudiation of alternative therapies, proof that they are bogus to 'sensible' people.

Really? Who is being more sensible? The Scientist who seems to think that one should be prepared to sacrifice one's child to prove one's conviction? Or the person who chooses to leave the herd in times of safety and go exploring on the alternative fringes - but who is wise enough to rush back to the herd and conventional medicine when serious danger threatens? What could be more sensible than that? An evolutionary psychologist would surely applaud such behaviour for its survival advantages both for the individual and the species.

Consider also a Scientific 'disproof' of alternative medicine. Two groups suffering the same affliction are given tablets - in one case they receive a particular alternative remedy and in the other case plain sugar pills. There may even be a third group given a random mix of the two - but the point is that no-one should know which pills they are receiving. We often hear results of such experiments which reveal no greater than chance benefits of the alternative remedy - and this is announced as a disproof of its efficacy, even when I myself have tried the remedy with excellent results.

The whole framework of this 'test' is geared to eliminating the psychological influence on medicine - we must not know about the remedy we are taking in order to get a 'fair' result. But if the psychological influence is really so effective, how can any test that eliminates it be a realistic test?

A major factor in people's choice of alternative medicines is that they do not dumbly accept what they are given - such people listen to their friends' experience, they read the wonderful claims on the bottle, they get excited about the theory behind the new cure... this foreknowledge is an integral part of alternative therapies. My first experience of them was with an osteopath: I had gone from a doctor who simply offered me pain killers and a week off work to someone who showed me a model of the spine and discussed my affliction like a helpful car mechanic, demonstrating where the problem was and what it was... I was halfway cured already.

The extreme of this 'unrealistic' Scientific approach was when I heard of a claim in the media that organic real cream ice cream was 'no better' than the standard British frozen mash, because a team of tasters rendered 'objective' by being blindfold, having their noses pegged and mouths rinsed with mouthwash failed to identify the superior product. But who in the world would choose to eat expensive ice cream blindfold, with a

peg on their nose and after rinsing with mouthwash? Not only is this test far from being sensible, it is positively ridiculous because knowledge of the cost of a meal is part of the dining experience - as any sensible person will acknowledge!

In my terms Magic is not an airy fairy fantasy game, it is grounded in reality - though not in the same way that Science is. The reality of Magic is the reality of the senses and our perceptions - Magical transformations are more about changing perceptions than about changing some sensorially 'abstract' notion of molecular structure or what might have been.

It is not that spirit has no role in Magic. In my model Religion is more about raising the material everyday world up towards the spirit, whereas Magic's role is more to bring down a sense of spirit or meaning into the everyday world. So building a church, say, is an act of Magic insofar as it makes a pile of stones and mortar into a sacred place. Yet it is also an act of Religion, because the purpose of this exercise is not to make matter sacred (an act of idolatry in Religious eyes) but rather to create a vehicle for material people to enter in and be raised up to get towards God.

For this sort of reason I would argue that people who go from a Scientific culture to Religion in order to 'bring meaning' into their lives would do better to go to the New Age or some other Magical practice. Magic is more about bringing meaning into our everyday affairs, whereas Religion is more about finding a meaning that takes us beyond our everyday affairs.

Finally, I must repeat that the argument is about the use of the word 'sensible' - magic is every bit as sensible as Science, but in a different way. Science is not 'wrong'. Science has rescued us from the pompous inflation of blind, dogmatic priests, but then it grew its own blindness and dogmatism so we turn from the priesthood of Science towards Magic for its 'sensible' realistic approach.

But, of course, Magic too will grow its own priesthood, its own pompous spiritual masters. And so, in time, people will turn towards the joys of Art, because it 'does not take itself too seriously' (witness the late 70s punk rebellion against the 'boring old hippy farts'). Then Art too becomes dogmatic and we find Religion...

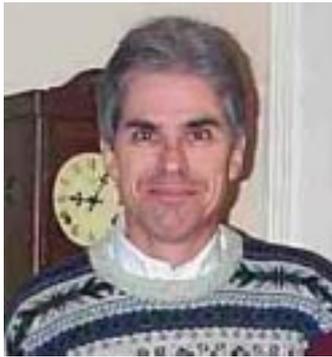
No one solution is better than any other, and yet moving from one to another is a form of progress, and it is not to be denied or resisted.

Magic is no better than Science. It just happens to be what we need next to guide us, following on from the age of Scientific enlightenment.

French Fries and Food Fights

How to stop overreacting

by Paul W. Schenk, Psy.D.



The husband of a couple I had been seeing for marital therapy called me one morning when they returned from a trip. On one leg of their journey, Jim and Heather had stopped at the drive through window of a restaurant to get lunch before getting back on the interstate. Once back on the road Jim had asked his wife to pass him his food. As she did, he suddenly began angrily yelling at her. Both of them agreed she had done nothing to warrant this emotional outburst. He wondered what I thought might explain why he had reacted that way.

Most of us have experienced our own awkward moments when we find ourselves overreacting to a situation. It typically occurs without warning. You recognize that your sudden emotional intensity doesn't fit what is happening. There is an out-of-control feeling to it – you don't *want* to be talking/feeling this way. You've probably been on the receiving end of moments like these, too. You've asked a simple question or made a benign comment when your spouse or a co-worker unexpectedly responds in an angry or sarcastic manner. The natural reaction is a defensive one with its own counterattack that is often sarcastic or angry in tone, "Well, *excuse* me!"

The truth is it's no fun being on either end of a conversation at such times. Worse, these moments can accumulate to drive a wedge deeper and deeper into an otherwise healthy relationship. You may decide not to discuss an issue with someone because you have come to anticipate he or she may overreact. You may begin to feel as if you are "walking on egg shells" in an effort to steer clear of such moments. Maintaining open communication in a marriage – or any relationship – becomes increasingly difficult the more that one or both of you overreact to comments or situations. The more frequently or more intensely that you overreact, the more important it becomes to understand what has been continuing to trigger you, and then eliminate the trigger.

When Jim came in for his next appointment I taught

him a simple model about how memories work that you can use to help identify the source of your own triggers – and then get rid of them. Our brains organize and store memories in categories to help us learn. These categories facilitate our remembering things later, much like file folders help us locate specific information more quickly. With children this process of categorizing can lead to some humorous anecdotes. One day my three-year-old son excitedly came to tell me there were two cows in our front yard. Since we live in a residential neighborhood, I was pretty sure he hadn't seen cows, but I was curious what he had actually seen. Going to the window I saw two *huge* Great Danes slowly lumbering across our lawn. To Matt, a four legged animal that big had to be a cow. Nor are adults immune to problems categorizing things incorrectly. As a college freshman I learned the hard way that the fact a red sweatshirt is old and faded still doesn't mean it is safe to wash it with white underwear! As we grow we learn that some things go together well and some don't. Most parents will not pick certain names for their new baby because of unpleasant associations those names have with childhood acquaintances. Color choices can be influenced in similar ways. To this day I still won't wear slacks that are a certain shade of brown.

Jim's overreaction in the car with Heather was a striking example of how memories are stored and remembered. Every complete memory has four parts as shown in the box below. Sometimes we forget some of the details of a memory such as the name of the lead actress in a movie or whether we liked the taste of a particular wine. But the fact that you forget a detail doesn't mean that it doesn't continue to influence you in some way. (Before I began to routinely hang my car keys on a hook in the kitchen, I was regularly influenced by my forgetting where I had put them!)

Diagram I

The four parts of a memory:

Behavior	What you are doing
Sensations	What you see, hear, smell, etc.
Feeling	What you are feeling
Thoughts	What you are thinking

When Jim arrived at my office for his appointment I had him describe in detail what had taken place in the car with Heather. Then I had him close his eyes, take a moment to relax, and let his mind remember the past event which had triggered the situation in the car. A few seconds later he exclaimed, "Wow! I hadn't thought about that in years!" He was remembering

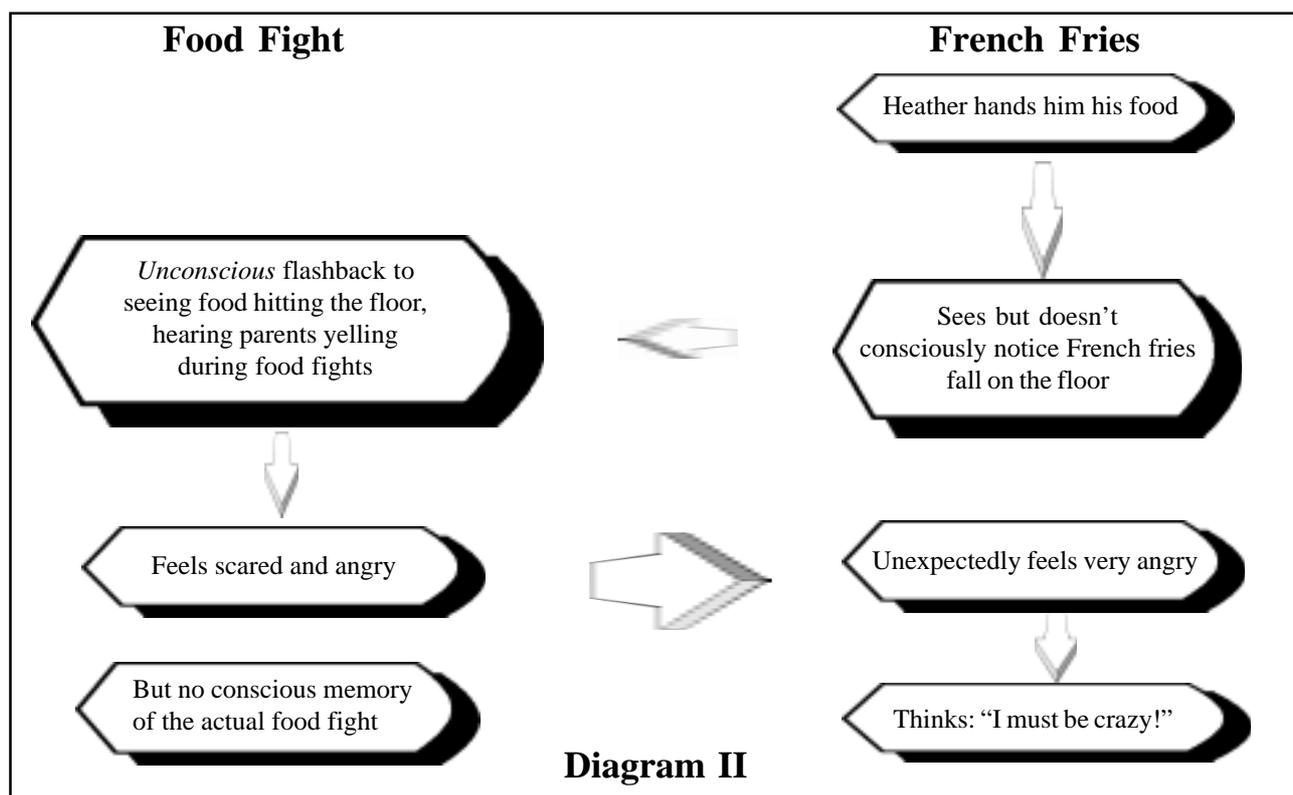
how his parents used to have occasional food fights when he was a child. He would hide under the table, scared and angry, to avoid being in the line of fire as they threw whatever they could get their hands on at each other. While this memory had clearly stirred up some intense feelings, at that point neither of us understood what this memory had to do with the incident in the car. Both events had food as a common component, yet he had not thought about the food fights for years, despite the fact that food was a daily part of his life. The critical missing piece emerged a moment later.

I had Jim imagine a split screen in his mind's eye. On the left screen I had him project an image of one of his parents' food fights; on the right an image of the scene in the car with Heather. Then I asked him to notice anything that linked to two images together. In a matter of seconds he exclaimed a second, "Wow!" On the left screen from his vantage point under the kitchen table he was watching food falling to the floor. On the right screen he noticed that when his wife had handed him his bag of French fries, a few of them had accidentally spilled onto the floor of the car. He hadn't even been consciously aware that this had happened at the time. The visual image of food hitting the floor in the car had triggered the memory of the food fights from his childhood. But here was the critical piece: it had only triggered a *partial* recall of the memory. Only one of the four parts of the memory had re-emerged in the car: the feelings. The emotional outburst had occurred when the old feelings came flooding forward as an overlay to the current situation. Diagram II shows what had happened.

The subtle visual trigger of seeing food hitting the floor had an emotional impact similar to that of puncturing a can of spray paint. In the years since those food fights he had never dealt with how angry and scared he had felt as he hid under the kitchen table. All of those old, but still intense, feelings had come flooding forward. He had felt embarrassed and not a little crazy because he knew his reaction was way out of proportion to what was actually happening in the car at the moment. Unfortunately, this is usually what happens when a person overreacts. Only the feelings from the earlier memory reemerge, and not the other three pieces. The old feelings piggyback on the current feelings, producing the unexplained overreaction.

Now that he understood the link between the two events, I had him replay the scene in the car one more time. This time, when he noticed the falling French fries, the entire childhood memory came flooding forward. In his imagination he heard himself telling his wife, "Agghhh! Seeing those French fries hit the floor just brought back an awful memory of my parents having food fights when I was a child. I used to get so scared and angry hiding under the table!" Now his intense feelings matched what was happening. Instead of yelling at his wife, he was sharing a painful memory with her.

Identifying the link was the first half of our work. We spent the remainder of the session dealing with his memories of the food fights. If you have childhood memories of your own which still evoke strong feelings, you might play with the exercise I used with Jim. I had him imagine walking into his parents' kitchen – at his



current adult age – during one of the food fights. As an adult I had him stand between them and the table while he told them what he thought of their childish behavior. When he was done, he turned to face the boy he had been as a child. Taking the boy’s hand, he led him out of the kitchen to a safe place. He affirmed that the boy was right to be so scared and angry, and how sorry he was that the boy had had to deal with his parents behaving that way. He also reassured the boy that the food fights were not his fault, nor was he responsible for stopping them. Then I had Jim take care of one final piece. I asked him to repeat the sentence, “I forgive myself for not knowing as a child what else to do when my parents behaved that way.” If you do this exercise yourself, consider the following sentence if you have trouble modifying the one I used with Jim. “I forgive myself for accepting wrong teachings about me as truth.” Say it out loud three or four times, pausing to take a deep breath each time after you say the sentence.

I teach my clients a simple rule of thumb: if your emotional reaction to a situation is more than you expected (or *less*), the difference is history. If you

... if your emotional reaction to a situation is more than you expected (or *less*), the difference is history.

expected to be mildly annoyed but found yourself much more upset, the additional emotional intensity is coming from some earlier event which was triggered by the current one. Similarly, if you *aren't* as sad or upset by some event as you thought you would be (such as the death of a friend), the missing emotional intensity is probably being blocked by an earlier event where you didn't or couldn't express similar emotions. When something triggers old grief, many people “shut down” to avoid having to deal with the sad feelings. There is no statute of limitations for these old, unresolved feelings. I once worked with a woman who had never grieved the death of a sibling who had died in an accident some 40 years earlier. In another case a man’s supervisor had told him not to return to work until he

dealt with his sadness, and his anger, over his father’s death. A few weeks later both felt emotionally much lighter having finally dealt with these losses.

Your feelings serve a critical purpose for you, just as the many sounds we hear from such diverse things as a microwave oven, a telephone, a doorbell, a car horn, or a smoke alarm. While we may not like the message implied by some sounds, we take a risk if we choose to ignore them. That odd grinding sound coming from the car wheel could be your warning of a failing wheel bearing getting ready to lock up while you’re driving down the highway at 55 mph! Every one of your emotions, but particularly the strong ones, provides you important information about what you are thinking. Your feelings don’t really go away if you don’t deal with them. They just get pushed to the back like leftovers in the refrigerator. Like those leftovers, the potency eventually begins to contaminate everything around it.

So the next time you overreact, thank your emotional self for the message. Acknowledge to yourself (and the other person) that apparently something about the

current situation is triggering some leftover emotions from your past. Set aside a few minutes where you can sit quietly, and invite yourself to become aware of the memory from the past event which contains the emotional leftovers. If you need to, used to split screen to help you recognize what connects the two events.

Then replay the current event, this time allowing the full memory of the earlier event to emerge. Notice that the sense of overreacting has disappeared. Then imagine your adult self intervening in the earlier him situation as I had Jim do. Conclude with a statement about forgiving yourself. Be sure to say it out loud as the words have much more impact that way. I’m confident you’ll like the results!



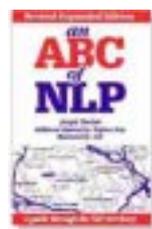
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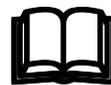
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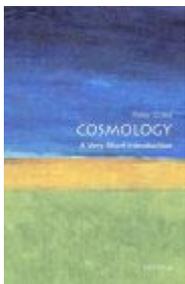


BOOK REVIEWS



We were quite taken with the Oxford University Press's *Very Small Introduction* series of books, which seemed appropriate to the theme of nurturing potential, being (as described by OUP) "written by specialists for the newcomer" and "intended as a stimulus to further exploration". So we distributed some of them for review. Here are three of them.

Cosmology by Peter Coles. 139pp, £5.99 ISBN 0-19-285416-X



Open and closed universes, dark matter, Higgs bosons, quarks, black holes, superstrings, cosmic bubbles..familiar as household words, or parts of an enticing map as yet for you marked "Here be Dragons"? If the latter, then you may well find this little book to be exactly what you are after, for Here be Cosmology, laid out for your delectation like the AA Guide to the Universe. More, still, because it is not just a geography of the topic but a history too, and so engagingly written that you may read it like an adventure story.

Which, of course, it is.

Beginning with ancient mythology, Coles brings us swiftly forward through the Renaissance and the Newtonian universe, then to the explosion of physics and astronomy that relativity and the quantum theory brought about in the first half of the 20th century, leading to the birth of the Big Bang theory and the prevalence of the view that the Universe, indeed, is expanding.

Thereafter the field broadens. We discover the puzzles that the Big Bang hypothesis poses, the dark matter that may be slowing down

expansion, and the more-recently postulated force that may be driving it. We find out how satellites searching in the infra-red have discovered the embers of its fireball surrounding us still, in a great uneven shell. We learn of the initial stages of the fireball, when the Universe was opaque and the laws of quantum physics and gravitation first took shape.

All this, and much, much more: will the Universe eventually stop expanding and fall back into the Big Crunch? Where did the great proliferation of sub-atomic particles come from? Can the four forces, strong and weak nuclear forces, gravity and electromagnetism be united in one Grand Universal Theory, whimsically called the GUT? What are strings, branes and supersymmetry? Why did the Australians launch a metal balloon in Antarctica (they called it Boomerang, of course)? And why do humans happen to exist exactly here and exactly now?

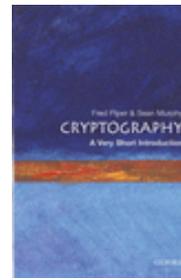
Although the book stands alone as a pleasurable introduction to Cosmology, covering so vast a field in so few pages obviously requires that a great deal of detail be omitted. Everywhere, however, Coles makes up for this, for once he has whetted your appetite for the matter in hand, he then supplies references to other works that provide the missing in-depth treatment. In fact, you could so a lot worse than take this one volume as a five-year study plan.

Or if you get hooked - a lifetime.

John Ewing

Cryptography by Fred Piper and Sean Murphy. 142pp, £6.99 ISBN 0-19-280315-8

When Julius Caesar sent messages to his generals, he encrypted them



using an alphabetic cipher in which each letter was represented by another, always following the same fixed rule. Mary Queen of Scots used a variant of the same code to plot her escape from prison and the assassination of Queen Elizabeth I. Caesar conquered most of the known world; Mary lost her head.

The reason for this is the awareness of cryptography. Caesar's security was based on the assumption that anyone intercepting his messages would not think of encipherment, and simply dismiss them as meaningless. He got away with it, at least if one believes everything in *De Bello Gallico*.

But in sixteen centuries awareness changed, as Mary found out. Her letters were intercepted, deciphered, and read in evidence at her trial. Nowadays, the key to Caesar's code is given away on the backs of cereal packets, and methods that decided the life and death of armies provide entertainment for eight-year-olds on a wet day.

Awareness is the theme of this entire work. While it constitutes an enticing introduction to the methods of cryptography, its stated aim is to make those whose responsibilities include cryptographic methods aware of the choices facing them, and the burdens and advantages each choice implies.

To this end, Piper and Murphy describe a variety of historical systems, showing how each eventually succumbed, then move on to the modern mysteries of public key encryption, secure web browsing and GSM telephony.

For these, not only are the strengths and weaknesses laid bare, but also the logistics of each method and the

practical considerations of, for example, protecting millions of keys from prying eyes.

The book does not require any knowledge of mathematics other than simple arithmetic. While an abundance of worked examples and puzzles is provided and you can spend quite a few happy hours with these rather than your favourite crossword, the authors assert that you do not need to work through them for the book to accomplish its aim. Having done about half the examples along the way, I can support this, with the rider that the book is a lot more fun if you do work the odd one out.

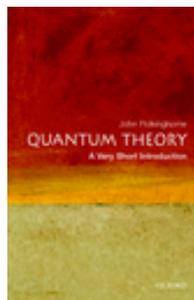
The only criticism I can make is that the index is rather skimpy. The Caesar cipher, having served as basis for much of the early chapters, does not appear there. This holds for various other items to which the reader may want to return. However, this does not detract overmuch from the sheer pleasure obtained from finally finding out, in clear and simple language, what public key cryptography really is, and why there are such noises made over its use on the World Wide Web.

A final exercise for the reader: How do you send someone a padlocked box, without the key, in such a way that they can open it yet no-one else can? Page 16 of *Cryptography* will tell you, or you can look at the answer at the foot of page 31. Work it out, and you have discovered the basis of public key cryptography.

John Ewing

Quantum Theory by John Polkinghorne. 128 pp £6.99 ISBN 0-19-280252-6

My problem is plain: how to resist writing a very long review of a very short introduction without making the review less comprehensible than the work being reviewed?



And therein is the beauty of the OUP Very Short Introductions. They are so expertly written that their subjects are made totally accessible within the brief length permitted their authors. Quantum Theory is no exception.

By chance I had been reading something about Max Planck just before *Quantum Theory* landed on my doormat, and had found myself somewhat bogged down in the mathematical equations with which it was littered. Polkinghorne has adopted the very useful tactic of committing the maths to an appendix, thus making the body of the book very readable to someone like myself, yet available to the more mathematically adept via cross-references in the text.

For those who do not know, the quantum theory, which originated with Max Planck in the early part of the 20th century, was the greatest advance in physics since Newton. It did for atomic and subatomic phenomena what Einstein's General Theory of Relativity did for planetary motion.

I enjoyed being reminded by Polkinghorne of the "sad story of Schroedinger's Cat." A living cat is placed in a thick lead box which is then sealed. The box contains a radioactive source with a 50 per cent chance of decaying within an hour. At this stage we have no way of knowing whether the cat is alive or dead. Since we do not know, the cat is both dead and alive, according to quantum law - in a superposition of states. Only when the box is opened will there be "a collapse of possibilities".

Several pages in the book are devoted to that part of the theory

that became known as the uncertainty principle, formulated in 1927 by Werner Heisenberg, suggesting that precise, simultaneous measurement of two complementary values is impossible; that objects such as light and electrons would behave in mutually exclusive ways, depending on how they were measured. This apparently prompted Albert Einstein's famous comment, "God does not play dice."

The usefulness and enjoyment to be derived from this book, however, is no gamble.

Sep Meyer

C is for Confidence, by Lesley Wilson and Mary Blair. Russell House, 80 pp in A4 wiro, £14.95 ISBN 1-903855-02-0



Mary Blair and Lesley Wilson's book is subtitled 'A Guide to Running Confidence Building Courses for Women of All Ages'. In reading it I found that this statement needed to be held in mind in assessing who the book is aimed at and who would receive most benefit from using it.

It is not a Course Manual; it is a Manual for constructing a Course. It contains a wealth of material, which I found both useful and, in some cases entertaining. Many of the concepts will be familiar to the experienced tutor, for example, the Ice Breakers. Most courses today, relax and introduce the group to each other at the beginning, including the concepts of introducing yourself to a partner or introducing yourself to the whole group with a small personal profile. This guide suggests a number of other approaches as

well. It also recommends working in pairs or in groups throughout the course to achieve different purposes, again very familiar. However, it includes ideas which are focused at the objective of the Course, to give women confidence in themselves.

I liked the idea of encouraging participants to comment on the room and to suggest changes, which would make it more comfortable for themselves either physically or mentally. This focus is continued throughout the book, with guidance as to the Stages, which need to be followed to promote the growth of confidence in the participants. It also draws on popular disciplines to some extent. 'Close your eyes and relax and begin to become aware of your breathing. As you breathe in and out begin to become aware of how more and more open and relaxed you feel.' Yoga immediately comes to mind.

For an experienced tutor, moving into a new domain area, or looking for other peoples' ideas in an area they already facilitate, the guide will be useful. For someone new to creating a course, as opposed to using an existing course manual, it will be invaluable. The book is written with an understanding of the need for comfort, for humour, for feedback and familiar things that help the participants to begin to relax and feel comfortable in a potentially stressful environment. This, whilst also providing the necessary material as the tools for the job in hand.

There are two issues, which were interesting in relation to timing. The authors state that their own courses are based around ten sessions of two hours each. They also give some recommendations on timing of certain exercises; however it would be very easy to construct a course where time ran away: take care. Maybe a little more guidance as to a possible overall timing would have been useful. Secondly, the

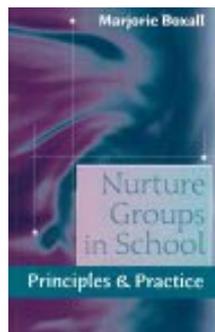
statement that morning is often a better time for these courses as energy levels are higher in the morning struck a real chord with me.

As a tutor I have run courses over full days, and have often dreaded the 'dead' time after lunch and would therefore endorse this particular recommendation. Finally, personal confidence and belief in one's self has to work in the real world, which involves everyone we meet. Maybe the concept of confidence with male colleagues and friends, which this manual does not address would be useful.

To feel confident in your interaction only with women, is not quite enough.

June M. Tutton

Nurture Groups in School - Principles & Practice by Marjorie Boxall. Paul Chapman Publishing (a SAGE Publication Company), 240 pp in paper £17.99 ISBN 0-7619-7343-5 (also available in cloth at £60.00)



This book should be essential reading for Government ministers.

The author pioneered the setting up of nurture groups in Inner London in the early 1970s as a response to social deprivation and its consequences for children in school. The book describes why and how, drawing on those early experiences and later projects in the London Borough of Enfield.

It is salutary to note that the concept of nurture groups is now well over thirty years old and as yet

there are still very few of them in existence. Hopefully Boxall's book will help to change this situation. As she says: 'Our capital of good nurture is diminishing fast and the fabric of society is at risk, for with each generation there are fewer people...to provide good nurturing, and more children who have been deprived of it.'

Nurture groups provide children with social and emotional experiences that are necessary as a pre-requisite for formal school learning. Boxall describes how such children are functionally below the age of three, due to having missed out on essential experiences which are normally provided through mothering. Adults who work in a nurture group setting provide a variety of structured experiences: for example, how to play with toys, how to share a meal, so that the

children 'catch up' on their social and emotional development and can then rejoin mainstream education.

This is a very practical and readable book that serves as a comprehensive introduction to the subject. There is some reference to theoretical background, but I would have liked more - I am surprised, for example, to find no mention of John Bowlby and his 'attachment theory'. My other reservation is that its style in somewhat repetitive - some charts or diagrams and more case studies - dare I say even photographs? - would enliven the book considerably.

But these are small criticisms. This book is a bible for nurture group enthusiasts and should be essential reading for anybody who has the desire to make a significant impact in the area of social change. Copies, please, to Tony Blair, Estelle Morris and to every Chief Education Officer in the United Kingdom. They ignore it at their peril.

Mark Edwards

Learning Maps

by Maite Galán & Tom Maguire

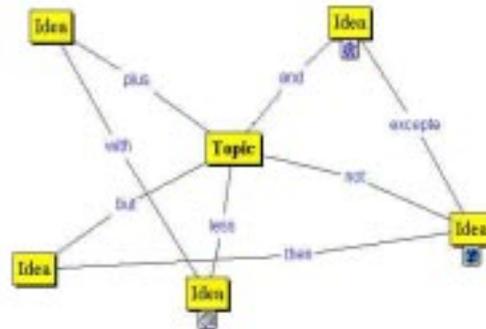
This article will show you how people are enabling teaching and learning through two tools : concept mapping and body maps. All that you require to gain maximum profit is an open mind, determination to experiment with these practical examples and the decision of which is most suitable for you. So open your parachute and dive into mapping.

Joseph Novak researches learning models in Cornell University. His research in education has led him to conclude that that our knowledge is not so much discovered as crafted. He describes the traditional classroom pedagogy of showing > telling > repeating as "conceptually opaque" education, suggesting instead the alternative of a constructivist approach he calls "conceptually transparent". This is where students build knowledge by relating what they are learning to their existing knowledge. According to Novak this act of crafting knowledge is what delivers the empowering effect of learning. He proposes a simple tool to help craft knowledge: the concept map.

Concept mapping is based on a learning model proposed by David Ausubel and also on a model of how memory works. Ausubel says that learning takes place by the assimilation of new concepts into existing concept frameworks held by the learner. In other words learning is actually a widening of the student's internal conception of the world. The concept map mimics this expanding learning process.

The other model Novak uses defines human memory not as a single "vessel" to be filled, but rather a complex set of interrelated memory systems. He says that knowledge is incorporated into long-term memory through interaction with the short-term memory. All incoming information is organized and processed in the short-term memory by interaction with knowledge in long-term memory. However, the short-term memory can only process small number (five to nine) of psychological units at any one moment. This means that relating two or three concepts at the same time is about the limit of its capacity. Therefore, structuring large bodies of knowledge while new information is being received requires an orderly sequence of interactions between working memory and long-term memory. Novak believes that one of the reasons concept mapping is so powerful for the facilitation of meaningful learning is that it serves as a bridge between the two memories. He considers that the brain organizes knowledge in hierarchical frameworks and thinks that any learning approaches that facilitate this process significantly, such as the concept map, enhance the learning capability of all learners.

In order to construct good concept maps it is important to begin with a topic that is very familiar to the person constructing the map. Once a topic has been selected, the next step is to identify the key concepts that apply to it. These would shoot out from the central topic, as in the example below.



The computer program allows easy moving of groups of concepts and links to restructure the map. You can change the size and font to enhance the concept map and get a printout or image file that you can share with collaborators. If you prefer to work on paper, post-its make flexible concept boxes to construct a preliminary map. They also allow a group to work on a whiteboard and to move concepts around as ideas and relationships change.

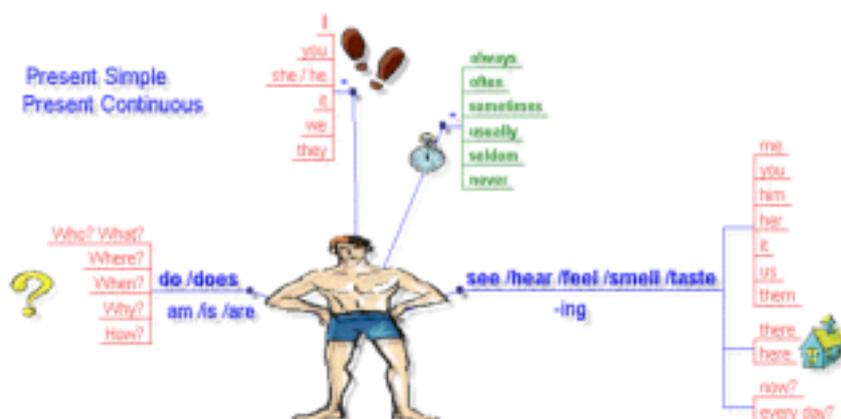
It is important to help students recognize that all concepts are in some way related to one another. This explicit relationship and the possibility of cross-linking the ideas is what make concept maps different in format from mind maps. You must be selective in identifying cross-links, and be as precise as possible in identifying the linking words that connect concepts. In addition, you should avoid using many words in the boxes since this usually indicates that a whole subsection of the map could be constructed from the statement in the box.

Novak says his students often comment that it is hard to add linking words onto their concept map. This is because they only poorly understand the relationship between the concepts and it is the linking words that specify this relationship. Once students begin to focus on good linking words and identify good cross-links, they can see how every concept could be related to every other concept. This also produces some frustration, and they must choose to identify the most prominent and most useful cross-links. This process involves high levels of ability evaluate and synthesise information. The assessment of this type of performance makes concept mapping a very powerful evaluation tool for the teacher looking to train students in skills for the future.

Novak has also found that concept maps facilitate cooperative learning. He says that there is a growing body of research that shows that when students work in small groups and cooperate in learning subject matter, positive cognitive and affective outcomes result. In his work with both teachers and students, small groups working cooperatively to construct concept maps have proven to be useful in many contexts.

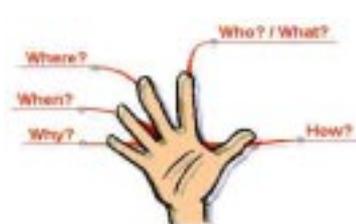
A different type of map is the body map. It is inspired by the work of Anne Dwyer, a freelance teacher and educational consultant in Barcelona. Anne believes in using parts of the body as memory pegs for learning English grammar. The idea is that if learners - especially young learners - can associate grammar structures with body positions then they can effectively grasp the grammar more easily.

We have experimented with Dwyer's idea and found that you can present grammar structures simply and clearly using her scheme. Here is an example of a presentation of the differences between the Present Simple and the Continuous tenses which we used in class:



Mind Maps™ is the creation of Tony Buzan.

The above map was made using Mind Manager, which has advantages and inconveniences. The principle advantage is clarity but Dwyer's original idea uses the five fingers of the right hand to enumerate the Wh? words and three fingers of the left hand to distinguish between the object pronouns, the adverbs of time and those of place. Mind manager doesn't allow us to reproduce the finger picture within the doll drawing but we have used it in class on the blackboard.



This representation proved to be immediately comprehensible to students and they were able to create

correct sentences without hesitation using the map. The picture also helped us to explain the collocation of frequency adverbs in a minimum of words since you can immediately see where they are to be placed. Above all the map injected an element of fun to learning grammar and pupils welcomed the reappearance of call it.

This style of representation is also a boost for memory. Each time you present a new grammar point using the same map you are really teaching students how to link what they already know with the new material, thus enabling them to remember it better. This gives them a ready reference when it comes to speaking or writing. If you help them transfer the picture to their own bodies they can remind themselves of the grammar by physically carrying the reference around with them, inscribed in their own fingers and trunk. Through the stability of the map students will also gradually grasp a sense of the underlying unity of structure of the language.

We began this article comparing your mind to a parachute - it works only when it is open. Mind mapping is an effective tool for learning, but learning needs an open mind to progress. This implies trying things out, which is precisely what we invite you to do: try it and see whether it works for you. We also wish you a happy flight with mind mapping.

Biodata:

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It's still happening

(in memorium - Dr Winifred Rushforth)

by Joe Sinclair



Dr Winifred Rushforth OBE died in 1983. Her obituary reveals that she died at the age of 98. This is almost a travesty. She was, in fact, ageless.

I was astonished recently to discover in a group of at least a dozen participants at a personal growth workshop, that I was the only one to know of Winifred Rushforth. *Sic transit . . .* Nurturing Potential is a fitting vehicle through which to revive many of my own memories of Winifred, to remind others of what this remarkable woman achieved during her remarkable lifetime, and to introduce “newcomers” to some of her philosophical and sociological concepts.

This aim will be hard to achieve. How does one convey, in words, the profound influence that she had on all who came in contact with her? Born in 1885, she qualified as a medical doctor in Edinburgh in 1908 and then went as a medical missionary to India, where she worked as a surgeon and hospital administrator, and specialised in helping Indian women with health problems.

In 1929 she returned to Britain and, after a period of training at the Tavistock Clinic, became a practising psychiatrist in Edinburgh, where she founded the Davidson Clinic to bring family therapy to the community – an achievement that was recognised by the award of her OBE.

Her vision was always to help people achieve their true potential and to develop their true selves. Amongst many who were deeply inspired by her insights was Charles, Prince of Wales who – at the suggestion of Sir Laurens van der Post - made a private visit to her in 1983, shortly before her death. Thirteen years later he was to unveil a memorial to her in Edinburgh. Entitled *The Dreamer*, this is a sculpture by Chris Hall which reflects that tireless and enigmatic woman's interest in dream therapy.

In a postscript to her posthumously published autobiography *Ten Decades of Happenings*¹ the editor has written: “When Winifred died she was in the company of three close friends, one of whom subsequently remarked that she had been on

“sparkling” form during her last morning, completely alert and enjoying life to the full.” Her spirit clearly remained undimmed throughout her life. “. . . this spirit will continue to burn in the psyches of many who in some way have the privilege of being in contact with a remarkable and truly loving lady.”

For many years Dr Rushforth was a popular TV and radio personality, discussing her work and telling Bible stories with psychological insight. In what was conceivably her most popular book², this amazing pioneer in the human potential and creative group movements explored the way the unconscious impinges on our everyday behaviour. Here are some insights from that book.

“For we human beings also have, locked up in our individual psyche, energies awaiting release. Within the last few decades, something very intimate and extremely relevant to our lives has come to light. This is the fact demonstrated by Harold Burr of Yale University that every cell of the human body has a charge of electro-magnetic force. This means that you and I have in our bodies and immense storehouse of energy which we constantly employ and which we never cease to pour out into the environment. Whither? We can ask the question, but so far the answer can only be that we do not know to what infinity it is reaching.”

“A prescription against ageing given to me fifty years ago might be helpful. ‘This year and each subsequent year attempt to achieve three things. Make a new friend, acquire a new skill, learn a new language.’ Even if only one of these is acted on it will delay the onset of ageing. You may notice they refer to heart, head and hand – friendship awakens love, language acquisition bestirs the mind, and even ageing hands can be used to weave or at least to spin the wool, to draw, or better still to paint or find other ways of making pictures, to write. Suppose that today you begin to work at your autobiography – it will be surprisingly interesting.”

And from *Life's Currency*³

“We read that Moses was given a puzzling answer . . . ‘I am that I am’. We may remember, however, that it was not given in English! My orthodox Jewish friend tells me that in Hebrew the verb to be has a beauty and depth of significance that we totally miss in translation. In the German language we get *Ich bin*

and *Ich werde*. The former is “here and now I am” – *ego sum* – but the latter is more, the dynamic something is becoming (happening), something is at work, and who knows what the outcome will be?”

“What to you *want* to do? This question needs to be honoured all through our lives. It cannot be the only guide but unless we ask it of ourselves and others, we miss the fun. “I want” is the word of the instinctual life, of the libido, the psychic energy demanding fulfilment. “You ought” becomes “I ought”, necessary controlling influence, but frustrating if allowed to be the only criterion of how we live. The art of living must, I think, consist in finding the right balance between

I want and *I ought* in our lives. Tension is inevitable between them, but tension is creative.”

“Without the way there is no going.
Without the truth there is no knowing.
Without the life there is no living”

¹ *Ten Decades of Happenings*, Gateway Books, London, 1984

² *Something is Happening*, Turnstone Press, 1981, 2nd edition published by Gateway Books, 1983

³ *Life's Currency, Time, Money & Energy*, Gateway Books, Bath, 1983

Third Age

Young at Art

by Natalie d'Arbeloff



Blanche d'Arbeloff, born April 17, 1904, died August 19, 2001.

Blanche began painting at the age of 94, when people might be excused for staring trancelike at flickering images on their TV sets. In the last three years of her life she produced an extraordinary body of work bursting with

vitality, spontaneity and originality.

Her first exhibition was held in May 2000 at the Mary Ward Adult Education Centre in London where she enrolled for painting classes after her husband died in 1996, aged 101. She and Alexander had been together for nearly 80 years.

Born in Paris, Blanche began working as a milliner in haute couture, but was swept off her feet and into a new life by Alexander (Sacha), an aristocratic Russian emigré. At first he was involved in film production in Paris, then in magazine publishing, and eventually in writing novels. Sacha's restless search for new horizons took him, his young wife Blanche and their two small daughters to Paraguay, where he conceived and organized a major road construction project, giving this small landlocked country an outlet through Brazil. The family then moved to the United States where they became naturalized citizens and had another child, a son.

In spite of her globe-trotting existence, Blanche never lost either her French accent or her French *joie de vivre*, evident in the exuberantly coloured paintings that reflect the rich variety of her experiences seen through fresh, unsophisticated eyes.

Blanche and Sacha settled in London about 25 years ago and she began to explore some of the creative possibilities available in adult education, trying her hand at pottery, sculpture, bookbinding, weaving and printmaking - the latter taught by her daughter Natalie at the City Lit Institute - but it was her discovery of painting that determined her true vocation.

Blanche's art tutors at the Mary Ward Centre recognized her unique talent and encouraged her while admitting she was “unteachable” - she would do things only *her* way and ignored all instruction that did not fit her own inner vision. Not one to accept the limitations of old age, she insisted on walking up and down the five flights of stairs to the art studio at Mary Ward every week until her legs finally refused to obey her will.

Blanche became house-bound for the last four months of her life, but her spirit remained alert, interested in everything, serving as an example to all who came in contact with her. She died peacefully at home, surrounded by her family and her life-affirming artworks.

I am proud and eternally grateful for the privilege of having her as my mother.

Blanche d'Arbeloff's painting *The Thinker* has been chosen to illustrate our front cover. Her daughter Natalie, one of our editors, is a painter, book artist, writer, and cartoonist. Her work has been exhibited internationally and is in many public collections including the National Art Library of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London and the Library of Congress, in Washington D.C. She can be located at her website: <http://www.nataliedarbeloff.com>.

"Intuitive Thinking

by Mark Edwards



There is a growing interest in teaching "thinking skills" in the UK at present. Mark Edwards discusses the importance of exploring different ways of thinking with children.

There's an ancient Chinese saying which goes something like "Tell me and I will forget, show me and I will remember, involve me and I will understand." This intrigues me as a teacher, and not simply because I share the belief that telling pupils things in Chris Woodhead-approved style is not the most effective form of teaching and learning. It's rather that I wonder what "involve" actually means and whether it does indeed help learners to understand.

Back in the heady post-Plowden days, primary teachers were encouraged to involve children by given them lots of practical things to do. A few years further on, a commitment to children learning from "first-hand experience" became the phrase to include in your letter of application or at interview. That kind of teaching certainly "involved" children, most of whom love "hands-on" activities, but I believe there is more to it than that. Involving the learner means that he or she becomes emotionally connected to the activity, and that this emotional involvement leads to a type of thinking that can be highly effective. Let me give an example.

"Nim" is a centuries old game that can be played with stones, buttons, matchsticks or any similarly accessible items. The idea is to lay out a number of them – 21, say – then take turns to remove them until only one remains. Each player may take one, two, or three objects on his or her turn. Whoever is left with the last object is the loser.



I first became aware of this game when working as an advisory teacher of mathematics in the 1980s, when schools were being encouraged to develop forms of mathematical thinking using games and puzzles. I was surprised, however, to find the enthusiasm for this and similar games muted amongst the majority of primary aged children – there was an initial expression of interest, but there was usually little motivation to avoid being left with the last matchstick or other object.

I can't remember if I saw the idea, or whether it came to me in a flash of inspiration, but the next time I

introduced "Nim" to a group, I presented it as "The Poisoned Carrot". Instead of using matchsticks, I made twenty bright orange carrot cut-outs and one nasty-looking black one. Whoever was left with the "poisoned carrot" was the loser.

This simple alteration transformed the game for the children who then played it excitedly, and they were noticeably more adept at working out the strategies to avoid being left with the last carrot. I realised that it was because the connection with the activity was at a deeper level than the purely cognitive. The mathematical thinking involved was the same, but presenting the game in terms which led to an emotional connection allowed a new motivation to occur. The notion of a poisoned carrot had meaning and relevance to them and there was a clear purpose to the game. It engaged them and it enabled their thinking to become far more effective.

Why should we be surprised at this? It has long been observed that children are far more intrigued by commercial board games that involve characters and setting than those that don't. My daughter's favourite game at age nine was something that involved black cats going round a board looking under witches' hats; it was little more than a sophisticated version of Ludo, but it kept her absorbed and she quickly worked out the optimum routes to travel.

Which leaves me wondering if the current emphasis on "visible learning intentions" and "clearly defined learning targets" reflects a rather superficial understanding of how the human mind works. In some respects it is quite easy to say "today we are going to learn this"; teach it, and then get the children to tell you what they have learned. But this presupposes that learning is always conscious, and that thinking is always readily visible.

Professor Guy Claxton, author of *Hare Brain Tortoise Mind – Why Intelligence Increases When You Think Less* (Fourth Estate, 1997) suggests that too much emphasis on conscious thinking lessens our ability to think intuitively. He cites a piece of research (1985) in which a group of 10-year olds were given a task that involved predicting where a geometric shape would move to on a computer screen. There was an underlying logical pattern to the series of shapes and their movements, but after 750 trials the children had learned "virtually nothing". After changing the shapes to birds, bees, and butterflies, the cursor to a net, and then adding some sound effects, however, within a short time the children were placing the net correctly. The

logical difficulty remained the same, yet the children, by seeing the task differently (as a video game rather than another school-based activity), used intuitive thinking, which transformed their learning.

So what is it precisely that “flips” us into this intuitive kind of thinking? Why is it that children respond so much better to tasks that involve imaginary creatures and settings? Is it just the stuff of childhood, or is it something that is not age-specific, but a part of human experience that is currently undervalued? Albert Einstein was famously in trouble for daydreaming at school and is also famous for saying “imagination is more important than knowledge”. Other eminent scientists have described the part that visual imagery played in making huge and significant discoveries. The chemist Kekule first saw the atomic structure of the benzene molecule in a “drowsy fantasy” that emerged as he gazed into the flames of his fire, and described the shapes he saw as “snakes that turned and bit their own tails”. Both were scientists whose work

revolutionised the way we understand the world; it seems no coincidence to me that they both recognised the importance of combining imagination and fantasy with logic, reason and facts.

It’s difficult for the over-stretched teacher to find imaginative ways to approach the teaching of the curriculum in today’s target-orientated and time-pressured environment. But I believe it is essential if we are to develop children’s abilities to think intuitively as well as logically. The world “out there” is constantly telling educators that we need young people who can “problem-solve” and “think outside the box”; perhaps this is one approach that needs further exploration.

“Today we are learning to dream”. Now there’s a learning intention to conjure with.

Mark Edwards is a freelance teacher, trainer and writer. Mark4ed@aol.com.

In our next issue

The next issue of *Nurturing Potential* will feature the **Personality Assessment** as its major theme, and will be exploring many of the models used for assessing personality as well as some of the areas in which such assessment is applied.

To this end, several of our feature articles will also be slanted towards the exploration and the nurturing of personality within different fields of human endeavour.

Such theories and models as the Jungian archetypes, the Myers-Briggs type indicators, the Ego States of Transactional Analysis, the nine personality types of the Enneagram, the four personality types identified by Virginia Satir . . . a really outstanding and exciting issue is promised. We may even have to continue the theme to the following issue.

Other themes that we propose introducing in future issues will include (not necessarily in this order):

Action Profiling -

Nurturing Ecological Potential -

Potions, Nostrums and Ancient Remedies

Bridging Cultural Differences -

Emotional Intelligence -

Power Positions.

After Mark Edwards’ book review appeared in our online edition, we received the following letter from Joyce Lynch, Marketing Manager of Sage Publications:

“What a brilliant review!!!! Very many thanks . . . will be sending copies to Tony Blair and Estelle Morris with a copy of the review, plus a flyer with the review to all CEOs.”

TOO GOOD AN OFFER TO REFUSE?

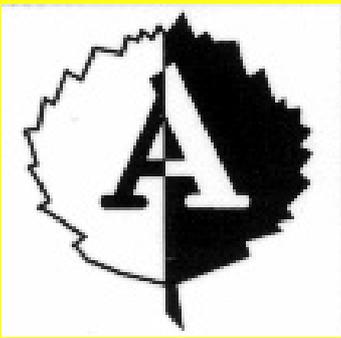
This is the last of the free issues of *Nurturing Potential*. But do not be dismayed. Subscription rates have been fixed at a really low level to encourage your continued support.

£8.00 per annum will ensure mail delivery to your door of the three paper issues in 2003. £10.00 per annum will provide the three paper issues plus access to the six internet issues in 2003. If you want access to the internet edition only, this will cost you a mere £5.00 for 2003.

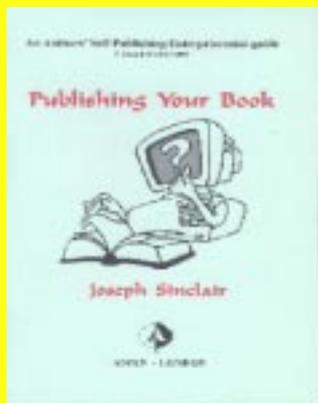
Make cheques payable to Container Marketing Ltd and send them, with your name and address, to 106 Holders Hill Road, London NW4 1LL.

The answer to the puzzle from page 24:

A padlocks the box and sends it to B. B adds his own padlock and sends it back to A. A removes his padlock and sends the box to B again. But can you spot the weakness? You will have to buy a copy of *Cryptography*, and turn to page 17.



Take the ASPEN route to Self Publishing



To obtain a copy of our Guide to Self-Publishing send three first-class English postage stamps with your address, to 106 Holders Hill Road, London NW4 1LL and a free copy will be sent to you by return of post.

Where is there potential in your life for creating happier and healthier relationships?

The Nurturing Potential Relationships Indicator

I can communicate my feelings

Never ☹️ ☹️ 😐 😊 😊 Always

People seem to welcome my company

Never ☹️ ☹️ 😐 😊 😊 Always

I am kind and generous to others

Never ☹️ ☹️ 😐 😊 😊 Always

I respect the opinion of others

Never ☹️ ☹️ 😐 😊 😊 Always

I am willing to give and receive love

Never ☹️ ☹️ 😐 😊 😊 Always

I enjoy the company of others

Never ☹️ ☹️ 😐 😊 😊 Always

I can connect with key people in my life

Never ☹️ ☹️ 😐 😊 😊 Always

There are no correct answers and no prizes. The chart is a simple signpost to your beliefs and attitudes. Too much or too little, always or never, may indicate a need to change some patterns of thought or behaviour, and lead you in the direction of nurturing the potential of your existing or desired relationships.

Nurturing Potential is published by ASPEN three times a year as a paper magazine and six times a year on the Internet in greatly expanded form as an e-zine.