

The Baobab Centre
Inspiring potential and growth



August Newsletter 2007

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'The teacher who is indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind'

Kahlil Gibran

Dear Colleague

As we prepare for the summer and for a new academic year in September, our thoughts at the Baobab Centre are turning to the youth of today; to how we could best help them acquire skills in relational management and assist them in their lives and their careers. Many young executives who have come on our courses and benefited from our coaching have expressed surprise that they were not provided with these skills before they started working.

In order to redress this situation, we are offering a new programme-*Young Executive Mentoring*. Naturally, when you recruit college or university graduates, you will be looking to those who can offer something more than good technical skills. You will be looking for candidates who have advanced people skills, who can work well within a team, who have the potential to become leaders one day. You may already have graduate trainees, or other employees, who you think would benefit from this programme. Please do not hesitate to contact us to find out how it may help them and you.

We are also introducing a new programme on *Parenting Skills*, for parents of all ages. Parenting is one of the most important roles we take on, often in isolation with little or no support. Our parenting skills programme aims to help develop and build upon existing skills and offers tools and insight for managing difficult situations. Our experience is that managing people well is often similar to good parenting. Offering this training to employees will increase their management skill and decrease the family stress they might bring into work.

We are proposing to run both the *Young Executive Mentoring* and the *Parenting Skills* programmes through schools, colleges and community centres as well as to organisations both big and small. We invite you to consider sponsoring this type of programme; however, if you are not in a position to support these programmes yourself, you can rest assured that we do not only take a reactive stance with regard to supporting people in the workplace with relational management, but we are also taking a proactive approach which could help all employers in the future. If you would like your organisation to be associated with this future-focused programme please contact us.

Going to the other end of the spectrum, we will be running two two-day workshops addressing the subject of death in response to many queries on the subject. You will find a short paragraph on this workshop in this newsletter as well.

We, of course, continue to offer in-house personal development courses, executive coaching, life coaching, counselling and mediation. For further information please visit our website at www.baobabcentre.com or please telephone us on 01904 422733.

With kind regards



Manar Matusiak

'For life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one'

Kahlil Gibran

Young executive mentoring



"Our happiness, self-esteem and ability to work, is influenced greatly by our relationships. It is important to realise that in order to change relationships we can change the way we relate to others, and then others can change the way they relate to us" (Tripod, 2007). "Emotional intelligence describes the ability, capacity, or skill to perceive; assess and manage the emotions of one's self, of others and of groups" (Wikipedia, 2007).

I work for The Baobab Centre as marketing and communications officer. Prior to my employment with Baobab I had paid little attention to this notion of an emotionally intelligent individual. My attention had been purely focused on being academically intelligent.

The philosophy at The Baobab Centre is that relationships are crucial not just to the efficiency, creativity and effectiveness of an organisation and the individuals within it, but also in life in general. With this in mind I was asked to find out whether or not young adults were being effectively taught such skills through the early part of their lives.

My primary research established that most young adults regard themselves as emotionally intelligent individuals when leaving school. Despite their short life experience their conclusions are that they have naturally acquired these abilities and are able to enjoy the benefits of them in all aspects of life. Can this really be the case or was this the naivety of youth? The results of the survey indicate that after university, once they experienced the transition of engaging with the wider society and the working environment, they realised they didn't know as much as they thought. They are academically bright, but lacking softer skills, such as inter-personal skills and notably, the ability to manage others. In general terms the educational system, from school through to university, is exam intensive and lacks a focus in developing other skills essential for flourishing in the workplace. This belief was noted by many respondents and some teachers. Is the need then for organisations to train up their newly recruited graduates?

By sharing our knowledge with young adults and providing them with the necessary tools and techniques, we at The Baobab Centre feel that we can significantly enhance all aspects of the individual's life and help them bridge the gaps, identified by young adults, between school and university and university and the working environment. From my personal experience, the skills I have acquired from having such training have been very helpful. Acquiring skills taken from Transactional Analysis have been particularly beneficial to me in understanding the different dynamics between people.

Young people might ask why they should be concerned about possessing such skills. From a purely career-orientated perspective the evidence highlighting the benefits is extensive. Peter Ellwood, Chief Executive of Lloyds TSB has commented

"It's simply not possible now to succeed without emotional intelligence" (Wark, 2003). Hy-phen Workforce Management Solutions, an industry-leading recruitment solutions provider, has been using emotional intelligence to predict the potential of graduates for its clients (Onrec.com, 2006).

However, arguably of more importance, is that acquiring these skills or tools enables you to communicate effectively with people in all aspects of your life and not just those in the working environment. These skills can define, empower and guide your emotional intelligence in communication, giving you the means to help secure successful, long-lasting relationships (Rotary Club, 2007). Again, in my experience improving my level of emotional intelligence brought a benefit outside of the working environment in relation to dealing with difficult people and situations.

The issue of cost is always a prevalent one. We firmly believe in giving value for money and at £400 for 8 sessions this course is no different. The 8 sessions need to be booked in advance, but can be taken in 1 hour slots at the individuals convenience. For comparison purposes most graduate coaching organisations, such as Graduate Prospects, provide *online* consultation services, CV evaluation or assessments for £60-£90 (Graduate Prospects, 2007). Yet for under this price you will have coaching for one hour on a one-to-one basis with a skilled professional tailoring the programme to your needs.

The value of having skills from such a course is considerable. "You can be born with a higher or lower potential in either intrapersonal or interpersonal intelligence, either way you can improve them both significantly at any age" (Centre for Applied Emotional Intelligence, 2007). Having high emotional intelligence is

relevant to success in the modern workplace and will make a candidate a superior performer that stands out from the crowd. In addition, it will have a beneficial effect in all the other aspects of the individual's life. If you are interested in accessing this training or sponsoring a course please contact us on 01904 422733 or at office@baobabcentre.com.

Robert Ma'aye

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Death weekend

We will all die ourselves and will probably experience the death of someone we love, which may involve us in the care of someone who is dying, yet we are surprisingly reluctant to think and talk about the issues around death. The Victorians talked about death, but sex was taboo. In 21st Century United Kingdom we talk freely about sex, but death and dying is taboo.

At The Baobab Centre we work often with people who are bereaved, approaching death or managing the practical and emotional tasks following the death of someone else. Mystery, fear, sadness, anger, confusion and many other emotions often surround death and the dying like a shroud. There is much that is unknown, unspoken, unacknowledged. We believe breaking this taboo, this silence around the issues of dying and death, is healthy. Our experience is that although thinking and talking about these issues does not necessarily take our fears and imaginings away, it can make matters less frightening and more manageable. We also find that thinking about death can inform and enrich our living.

If you are interested in exploring your thoughts and feelings about death and dying then consider joining our residential workshops. There will be two separate weekends. Bookings can be made for one weekend, or for both, but we cannot take bookings for individual days. We would encourage participants to choose the residential option, but booking on a non-residential basis will be possible.

The first weekend, 29 and 30 September, will be focused on managing when someone else is dying or has died. The second weekend, 27 and 28 October, will be focused on looking at the issues involved in our own dying and death. Please contact us to register your interest and we will supply you with details of the full programme, cost and venue.

Parenting skills

Parenting is about giving and modelling love, rules and codes for life. It is about offering insight, wisdom and support and it is sometimes about standing by while those we care about explore their world. Sometimes it is very difficult and things can go wrong and we may find ourselves stuck in a repeating pattern leading to conflict and relationship breakdown. At these times we may feel we are to blame, be isolated and struggle to make sense of what's going on.

Our parenting skills workshop aims to build and enhance the skills that we have and bring to parenthood. We will focus on listening skills, especially how to listen when your child appears to be speaking a different language, how to understand your child, how to be understood by your child and how to accept and live with areas of difference and tolerate the possible conflict in such a close relationship. In this we would also wish to look at the differences between praise and bribery, discipline and harm.

In looking at these skills we hope we will be able to help parents detect when there

may be issues that a child might not know how to address. The course will also cover how family dynamics can be passed along the generations and how to spot repeating patterns.

We take on the role of being a parent in many ways; with our friends, our work colleagues – developing these parenting skills can help us improve our understanding of these relationships too.

If you are a parent, wish to better communicate with your parents, or notice where you parent others and wish to improve upon your skills, please contact Gayle-Anne Drury to find out more about this course on 01904 422733.