

Welcome to The EDGE

A e-newsletter from Future Edge Ltd

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Visit our website at: www.future-edge.co.nz

“Come to the edge,” he said. They said, “We are afraid.”

“Come to the edge,” he said. They came. He pushed them . . . and they flew.

Guillaume Apollinaire

Your successful FUTURE requires that you step up to the EDGE.

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The EDGE is only to those who have requested it – except for this first one! If I don't hear from you I'll keep sending it until you tell me not to. I'll get one of those automatic opt in and opt out 'thingys' eventually.

Newsletters will be archived on the website. Click the Newsletter tool bar.

Welcome

I am sitting writing this, the first EDGE e-letter, on an overcast Taranaki day [that's in New Zealand for our overseas friends] listening to updates on the coup in Fiji. The world seems to have gone a little nuts! We are coming to the end of another year and often at this time we look back and focus on what we didn't do or on the things that remain unfinished. Maybe it is time to just appreciate those things for which we are grateful and plan for a great future. There isn't a lot of difference between having a good life and a great life; a good business and a great business. The difference may be smaller than you think. Google this link: www.212movie.com/ and learn the very small difference between good and great.

In the last couple of months I have been working with leaders in an oil and gas company, a sawmill, an engineering company, and in the health and education sectors; delivered a presentation to a branch of the New Zealand Property Institute, facilitated some lively debate about the future of some organisations and what they need to become to remain successful, completed my Masters degree [yahoo] , sold 3 of the 4 works I had in a group exhibition, played a band gig in the town I first taught in, in 1971, worked with a wonderful group of people who work to support change in prison inmates, and enrolled in a summer school on creative processes. All good!!

Leading

And this from the good people at *ChangingMinds.org* . . .

Warren Bennis, widely known as a modern leadership guru, has identified six personal qualities that great leaders have.

- Integrity – the alignment of words and actions with your values. This means sticking to them when the going gets tough.
- Dedication – spending the time and energy required to get the ‘important’ things done rather than giving it whatever time is left over from other ‘urgent’ things.
- Magnanimity – crediting people with success and accepting personal responsibilities for ‘screw-ups’ and we all make them!
- Humility – recognising that you are not ‘God’ and that others are not inferior to you.
- Openness – listening to ideas that may be outside of your current mental models and being able to suspend judgement until you have heard and understood the idea being put forward.
- Creativity – the ability to see and think differently, to see things others have not and to be open to a challenge to your existing paradigms.

How do you measure up?

More at:

http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/articles/bennis_qualities.htm

Learning

My friend Bruce is passionate about learning and how it happens [or doesn’t happen] in our education system. For his regular rants, raves and biased opinions about current educational issues check out his blog.

Go to www.leading-learning.co.nz and click on Bruce’s Blog.

It is great to see people who are passionate about stuff and Bruce is one of those.

I have long been fascinated by how learning happens. My foundation training was in teaching but there seemed to little attention paid to how learning actually happens. Now along comes neuroscience which is defined as “the study of the human nervous system, the brain, and the biological basis of consciousness, perception, memory, and learning.”

[<http://www.funderstanding.com/neuroscience.cfm>]

Neuroscientists tell us that the nervous system and the brain are the physical foundation of the human learning process. Neuroscience links our observations about cognitive behaviour with the actual physical processes that support such behaviour.

Some of the key findings of neuroscience are:

The brain has three bits to it – in fact it actually contains three brains: the lower or reptilian brain that controls basic sensory motor functions; the mammalian or limbic brain that controls emotions, memory, and biorhythms; and the neo-cortex or thinking brain that controls cognition, reasoning, language, and higher intelligence.

The brain is not a computer. Damn! – for quite a while I have likened the brain functioning to the hard drive in a computer. I am going to have to change my thinking – again! Apparently the structure of the brain's neuron connections is loose, flexible, "webbed," overlapping, and redundant. It's impossible for such a system to function like a linear or parallel-processing computer. Instead, the brain is better described as a self-organising system. My could certainly do with some help in this area on occasion!

The brain changes with use, throughout our lifetime. – and I thought it just wore out! [Maybe that's how it feels at the end of a busy year..] Mental concentration and effort alters the physical structure of the brain. As we use the brain, we strengthen certain patterns of connection, making each connection easier to create next time. This is how memory develops.

That's all great but how can I use this information to make me a better learner or trainer or facilitator? It seems that when I take neuroscience into account I need to organise a curriculum or programme around real experiences and integrated, "whole" ideas. Plus, I need to focus on instruction / delivery that promotes complex thinking and the "growth" of the brain. Neuroscientists advocate continued learning and intellectual development throughout adulthood. So do !!!

Well, its got my interest so you may see more on the applications of neuroscience in future e-letters

Creating

I read a lot. From some books I get a lot, from others very little and occasionally a book comes along that is quite exceptional. Sir Ken Robinsons 'Out of our Minds – Learning to be Creative' is one of those books. The book addresses three vital questions for everyone who has a serious interest in creativity and innovation.

- *Why is it essential to promote creativity?* organisations everywhere are concerned as never before with promoting creativity and innovation. Why is it so important?
- *What's the problem?* Why do so many adults think they're not very creative? How do we lose the confidence to be creative?
- *What should be done?* Is everyone creative or just a select few? Can creativity be developed? If so, how?

A small taste from the book:

"There are many misconceptions about creativity. Creativity is not a separate faculty that some people have and others do not. It is a function of intelligence: it takes many forms, it draws from many different capacities and we all have different creative capabilities. Creativity is possible in any activity in which human intelligence is actively engaged. The distinctive feature of human intelligence is imagination and the power of symbolic thought. Our lives are shaped by the ideas we have and beliefs we hold. New ways of thinking can transform us. To promote creativity it is essential to understand the main elements and phases of the creative process including:

- *the importance of the medium;*
- *the need to be in control of the medium:*
- *the need to take risks; and*

- *the need for critical judgement.*”

If you want to see Sir Ken in action, on the same subject copy this link into Google: www.ted.com/tedtalks/tedtalksplayer.cfm?key=ken_robinson. It's a 20 minute video clip that is well worth watching – humorous but with a clear message. While you are there check out other TED video clips!! TED is a fascinating organisation – if it can be called that.

Quotes of the week

"There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things."

Niccolo Machiavelli *The Prince* (1532)

"Unless you are prepared to give up something valuable you will never be able to truly change at all, because you'll be forever in the control of things you can't give up."

Andy Law

"It is important that students bring a certain ragamuffin, barefoot irreverence to their studies; they are not here to worship what is known, but to question it."

Jacob Bronowski

"The things we fear most in organizations -- fluctuations, disturbances, imbalances -- are the primary sources of creativity."

Margaret J Wheatley

Resources

Check these sites out. Remember that curiosity is one of the characteristics of a creative personality – so I am not giving anymore information about the sites. Get curious!!

- <http://www.ipb.com/report103/> - especially their e-journal
- www.robertfritz.com
- <http://www.neufportes.net/index.htm> - Will Menter - new music composer and maker of sound sculpture – for the 'creatives'.
- www.jimcoillins.com – of good to great fame!

Humour

Stolen directly from Phillip Humbert's e-zine – check it out.

[\[http://www.philiphumbert.com/TIPS\]](http://www.philiphumbert.com/TIPS)

ZEN FOR THOSE WHO TAKE LIFE TOO SERIOUSLY

1. SAVE THE WHALES. COLLECT THE WHOLE SET.
2. A DAY WITHOUT SUNSHINE IS LIKE, NIGHT.
3. ON THE OTHER HAND, YOU HAVE DIFFERENT FINGERS.
4. I JUST GOT LOST IN THOUGHT. IT WAS UNFAMILIAR TERRITORY.
5. I FEEL LIKE I'M DIAGONALLY PARKED IN A PARALLEL UNIVERSE.
6. HONK IF YOU LOVE PEACE AND QUIET.
7. HE WHO LAUGHS LAST, THINKS SLOWEST.

8. DEPRESSION IS MERELY ANGER WITHOUT ENTHUSIASM.
9. THE EARLY BIRD MAY GET THE WORM, BUT THE SECOND MOUSE GETS THE CHEESE.
10. I DRIVE WAY TOO FAST TO WORRY ABOUT CHOLESTEROL.
11. SUPPORT BACTERIA. THEY'RE THE ONLY CULTURE SOME PEOPLE HAVE.
12. A CLEAR CONSCIENCE IS USUALLY THE SIGN OF A BAD MEMORY.
13. GET A NEW CAR FOR YOUR SPOUSE. IT'LL BE A GREAT TRADE!
14. PLAN TO BE SPONTANEOUS TOMORROW.
15. ALWAYS TRY TO BE MODEST, AND BE PROUD OF IT!
16. OK, SO WHAT'S THE SPEED OF DARKNESS?
17. HOW DO YOU TELL WHEN YOU'RE OUT OF INVISIBLE INK?
18. HARD WORK PAYS OFF IN THE FUTURE. LAZINESS PAYS OFF NOW.
19. EVERYONE HAS A PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY. SOME JUST DO NOT HAVE FILM.
20. IF BARBIE IS SO POPULAR, WHY DO YOU HAVE TO BUY HER FRIENDS?
21. EAGLES MAY SOAR, BUT WEASELS DO NOT GET SUCKED INTO JET ENGINES.
22. WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU GET SCARED HALF TO DEATH TWICE?
23. I USED TO HAVE AN OPEN MIND BUT MY BRAINS KEPT FALLING OUT.
24. I COULDN'T REPAIR YOUR BRAKES, SO I MADE YOUR HORN LOUDER.
25. WHY DO PSYCHICS HAVE TO ASK YOU FOR YOUR NAME?
26. INSIDE EVERY OLDER PERSON IS A YOUNGER PERSON WONDERING WHAT HAPPENED.
27. JUST REMEMBER - IF THE WORLD DID NOT SUCK, WE WOULD ALL FALL OFF.
28. LIGHT TRAVELS FASTER THAN SOUND, WHICH IS WHY SOME PEOPLE APPEAR BRIGHT UNTIL YOU HEAR THEM SPEAK.

This e-newsletter will come to you on an irregular basis just to keep the element of surprise going. I am happy to get feedback because this being the first I don't really know what I am doing. If you like it let me know – if you don't then let me know how I can make it better. Happy to receive contributions as well.

Have a great December and that includes Christmas. Back in the New Year.

Cheers
Wayne

P.S. Feel free to send this off to anyone who you think might be interested.