

Welcome to The EDGE

Your occasional e-newsletter on LEADING, LEARNING and CREATING

Wednesday 31 January 2007

Issue 2

"I want to stand as close to the **edge** as I can without going over.

Out on the **edge** you can see all kinds of things you can't see from the centre."

Kurt Vonnequt Jr

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WELCOME

Hello and a Happy New Year

Welcome to another **EDGE** e-newsletter

I get a lot of e-newsletters and at this time of the year most of the writers are trying to tell me to set my goals for 2007 and giving me tips as to how I might do this. I'm not sure about all this goal-setting stuff. When I look back over my life a lot of what has worked for me has been through a series of happy accidents rather than being planned. So does this goal-setting stuff really work? Seems to me that a lot of people sit around and talk about their goals, plan their goals and wish for their goals to come true. There is a difference between goal setting and goal getting. Talking, planning and wishing are not going to work for you. More about this later in the newsletter..

If you have news about leading, learning or creativity please feel free to forward it to me for potential inclusion in The **EDGE**. You will be acknowledged.

What's been happening since the last **EDGE** e-newsletter:

- Well - not a lot of 'real work' but a lot of fun – I think its called a good work-life balance. My family [Sarah and Stu] and I took on organising a music festival at a place called Te Wera [in Stratford, Taranaki, New Zealand] and it was great. A week of music, relaxing and learning [photos on the web under the Events section]. There were ukulele workshops [with Alistair of Alistair's Music in Cuba Street in Wellington, who sold 400 ukuleles before Xmas – ukuleles are taking over the world!!!], guitar finger-picking workshops with Carol Bean - check out her web site www.carolbean.com - juggling workshops which are much more interesting after a few wines, drawing and painting

workshops with Sunset - www.artsunset.co.nz - and lots of spontaneous and music and creativity.

- Then a few days at Massey University doing a summer school on 'Creative Processes' coordinated by Dr Angie Farrow gave me some more insights to my own and others creative process. A bunch of extraordinarily talented facilitators drew from people talents that they had never used before. The course is well worth checking out.
- In between times a bit of "real work" got done – with workplace leaders in the engineering sector, a bunch of one on one coaching, some exciting stuff in health, and the review of learning material for an industry training organisation.
- Then off to another music festival in the Hawkes Bay hosted by Mary Kippenberger [story teller extraordinaire] and Peter Charlton-Jones [musician extraordinaire] at their home farm, Te Rangi. Lots of hot weather, lots of talented people, lots of great music
- And to top January off I had the pleasure of playing percussion for a band from the UK - www.streetworthy.com.uk -who were guests at the Auckland Folk Festival.

It all fits my vision of leading, learning and creating even if it doesn't keep the bank manager happy!!

LEADING

Peter Koestenbaum [www.pib.net] offers a **leadership model** that I have found really useful as a model for living. The model looks like this:



It just makes sense to me. The diamond distinguishes four interdependent imperatives: ethics, vision, courage and reality. All aspects of successful leadership as well as aspects of happy and successful lives. These, Koestenbaum suggests, are your inner resources, always available to help you if you access them. The relationship among the four determines the shape and size of the space within your diamond. Koestenbaum describes the space within your diamond as your 'leadership capacity', which he calls 'greatness'. The larger and more balanced your diamond the greater the potential for the extraordinary to happen to you.

If you haven't yet completed the **Leading Edge** FREE Leadership Competency Assessment you can find it at <http://future-edge.co.nz/leading>. Contact me if I can help you with your leadership development.

LEARNING

Are you ready to have some of your beliefs about learning challenged?

If so 'Google' Neuroscience of Learning – the 'url' doesn't seem to work. You know when you have it by getting a mauve and yellow power-point [its not as bad as it sounds!!]

It seems that **research into neuroscience is seriously questioning some of things we have accepted about how learning happens.**

The people behind this research suggest that there are 4 negatives and 5 positives from the neuroscience research:

The negatives:

1. We have no intrinsic motivation to learn academic material
2. There is no evidence for learning transfer
3. There is no evidence for multiple intelligences
4. Every single memory we have is completely unstable

The positives – the 5 promoter mechanisms whereby short term learning changes to long term learning:

1. Innate learning programmes
2. Repetition of information
3. Excitement at time of learning
4. Eating carbohydrates at time of learning
5. 8-9 hours sleep after learning

And this from an article entitled Arts, Neuroscience and Learning by James Zull – http://www.newhorizons.org/neuro/zull_2.htm.

*“One thing we have found is that **the brain physically changes when we learn.** And that change is most extensive and powerful when emotion is part of the learning. The chemicals of emotion, such as adrenalin, serotonin, and dopamine act by modification of synapses; and modification of synapses is the very root of learning. Changing connections in the brain is learning. In some cases, such change does not occur at all unless the emotion chemicals and structures in the brain are engaged.*

The important idea, then, is that the arts trigger emotion. This could be part of the answer to our question above: what is art? Artists create things that engage others, emotionally. And, of course creating itself is engaging—the artist also feels emotion. The arts, then, change the brain of both the creator, and the consumer.

Another thing that changes synapses in the brain is practice. We learn the things that we repeat the most. But we repeat the things that we care about. So we enjoy the arts and repeat them over and over. This intensity of effort and focus is healthy for learning. It also changes the brain.”

So there!! – to those people who would have us reduce the time spent on the arts in our school curriculum's. We could do with some 'brain-changing' in New Zealand!!

And then there is the Goal Setting carry-on! I'm never quite sure about all this goal setting stuff. Seems to me that people set goals without taking the bigger picture into account and when they achieve their goals the achievement seems somewhat hollow. It would make more sense to get a handle on the big picture for your life – your vision or purpose – and then plan your goals to enable your self to move towards your desired future.

In my work with people I have found two questions to be really powerful and they are:

- Is what I am about to do going to bring me closer to living the life I desire – if not, is it worth doing? That's the goal-setting stuff.
- What is the cost I pay for being me? If I don't want to continue to pay this cost what do I need to change? That's the behaviour change stuff.

What else is there? These two questions underlie a lot of what I do in my coaching practice.

I have a booklet called **Living on Purpose** that I am happy to let people have – I can email it so let me know and I'll send you a copy. It's FREE.

CREATING

I'm still hooked on Ken Robinson's book *Out of Our Minds – Learning to be Creative*. I mentioned this in the last newsletter so if you haven't checked Ken out copy this link into Google: www.ted.com/tedtalks/tedtalksplayer.cfm?key=ken_robinson and watch him in action.

His writing just makes good sense like this chapter summary:

“ . . . I have argued that intelligence is essentially creative, that our lives are shaped by the ideas we use to give them meaning. Creativity is a process of seeing new possibilities. We all have creative possibilities. We all have creative capacities but these are related to different media and processes. Realising these capacities relies on being in control of the medium – on having the necessary skills – combined with the freedom to take risks. Creativity is not strictly a logical process, it draws from many different aspects of our intelligence and personality. A critical factor is intuition and a feel for materials and processes involved. The relationship between knowing and feeling is at the heart of the creative process.”

If you want to read more get hold of the book.

One newsletter that I do get that I really look forward to is one by Jeffrey Baumgartner called Report 103. You can find the subscription information at <http://www.jpb.com/report103/> . This is a small taste of his writing.

“With 90% of senior managers claiming innovation is critical to their companies and every big consultancy now offering innovation consultancy services, the word "innovation" has become one of the sexiest business terms in recent years. Sadly, it also frequently misused. This is important. In order to analyse why innovation initiatives work or don't work (and far too many of them are still not working), it helps to understand properly the word "innovation" as well as the related words: "creativity", "ideas" and "imagination" and how they all fit into the innovation process.

- Imagination is the fertile field of your mind where ideas are born.

- Creativity is the act of creation and development of ideas.

- Ideas represent two or more bits of information, thoughts or opinions brought together in your imagination in order to create a new concept.

- Innovation is the implementation of creative ideas. In the business context, innovation usually implies not only the implementation of creative ideas, but also profiting from their implementation.”

One of my goals this year is to build on the success of the **Creativity Retreats** held last year. The feedback from them has been great and I loved doing them. If you are interested email me and I'll send the information. I am looking at running them from a stunning Beach Retreat here in Taranaki or if you want I can come to you. You can check out the brochure on the web site. <http://future-edge.co.nz/creating>.

QUOTES

In times of change, learners inherit the Earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.
Eric Hoffer

Most important, leaders can conceive and articulate goals that lift people out of their petty preoccupations and unite them in pursuit of objectives worthy of their best efforts. John Gardner

THE ILLITERATE OF THE 21ST CENTURY WILL NOT BE THOSE WHO CANNOT READ AND WRITE, BUT THOSE WHO CANNOT LEARN, UNLEARN, AND RELEARN.
Alvin Toffler

Never forget that only dead fish swim with the stream.
Malcolm Muggeridge.

There is no limit to what a man can achieve as long as he doesn't care who gets the credit. Bob Woodruff. Coca Cola.

Many ideas grow better when transplanted into another mind than in the one where they sprang up.
Oliver Wendell Holmes.

RESOURCES:

Here are some sites you might want to check out.

- Most powerpoints are pretty boring. If you are looking for some great advice on presentation go to Garr Reynolds blog – <http://presentationzen.blog.com>. Have a play

around and you will find great sources of free or really cheap graphics and a bunch of other good stuff.

- www.solonline.org SoL was created to connect corporations and organizations, researchers and consultants to generate knowledge about and capacity for fundamental innovation and change by engaging in collaborative action inquiry projects. While bringing together "specialists", our goal is more than simple collaboration -- we strive to develop the researcher, capacity builder and practitioner in each of us! As an action learning community, we generate real business and social system **results**, new **intellectual capital** and on-going personal and professional **networks**.
- www.cstc-apa.com The Creative Skills Training Council is an on-line community of creative practitioners made up of business executives, academics, designers, artists, behavioural and cognitive scientists involved in advancing the practice of creative skills training in business, organizations and government through arts based processes and creativity tools and systems
- My friend Penny Eames has recently published a book titled Cultural Well-being and Cultural Capital. It is culmination of many years of Penny's involvement in the fields of arts, education and cultural well-being. You can get the book from Penny through her site www.pseconsultancy.com or email her at pseames@pseconsultancy.com.

HUMOUR

The following was sent by a friend so I don't know the original source but thanks Colin.

New Words for 2007

TESTICULATING Waving your arms around and talking Bollocks.

BLAMESTORMING Sitting around in a group, discussing why a deadline was missed or a project failed, and who was responsible.

SEAGULL MANAGER A manager who flies in, makes a lot of noise, craps on everything, and then leaves.

ASSMOSIS. The process by which people seem to absorb success and advancement by sucking up to the boss rather than working hard.

PRAIRIE DOGGING. When someone yells or drops something loudly in a cube farm, and people's heads pop up over the walls to see that's going on. (This also applies to applause for a promotion because there may be cake.)

SITCOMS Single Income, Two Children, Oppressive Mortgage. What yuppies turn into when they have children and one of them stops working to stay home with the kids or start a "home business"

STRESS PUPPY A person who seems to thrive on being stressed out and whiny.

PERCUSSIVE MAINTENANCE. The fine art of whacking the crap out of an electronic device to get it to work again.

ADMINISPHERE The rarefied organisational layers beginning just above the rank and file. Decisions that fall from the "adminisphere" are often profoundly inappropriate or irrelevant to the problems they were designed to solve. This is often affiliated with the dreaded "administrivia" - needless paperwork and processes.

404 Someone who's clueless. From the World Wide Web error message "404 Not Found," meaning that the requested document could not be located.

OHNOSECOND*. That minuscule fraction of time in which you realize that you've just made a BIG mistake (e.g. you've hit 'reply all')

BEER COAT The invisible but warm coat worn when walking home after a booze cruise at 3am.

BEER COMPASS. The invisible device that ensures your safe arrival home after booze cruise, even though you're too drunk to remember where you live, how you got here, and where you've come from.

MONKEY BATH A bath so hot, that when lowering yourself in, you go:"Oo!Oo!Oo! Aa!Aa!Aa!".

This e-newsletter will eventually find its way to my web site www.future-edge.co.nz.

This e-newsletter will come to you on an irregular basis just to keep the element of surprise going.

If you want to contact me for any reason such as to:

- give me some feedback on the e-newsletter
- contribute to the next one
- unsubscribe
- get the FREE Living on Purpose booklet

you can do that by emailing wayne@future-edge.co.nz.

Thanks for reading!!

Cheers

Wayne