

# Summer Newsletter 2010



**The Baobab Centre**  
Inspiring potential and growth

Dear friends and colleagues,

Welcome to our summer issue of the newsletter. We pondered on what to offer in this issue and decided in these times of great uncertainty to focus on change.

Our world is being challenged to face and decide on enormous issues including political, economic and environmental matters, all of which seem to be requiring a major change in our thinking and approach. Our country has been faced recently with the challenge of changing or at least reviewing our usual paradigms. Challenges have ranged from the no-fly restrictions resulting from the Icelandic volcanic ash to decisions about what kind of Government we might want or not want and how that is all decided. On an organisational and individual level, major change is likely to come to us all as the new coalition Government makes decisions about how to tackle the national debt, let alone any of the other issues. We have watched news reports on how the citizens of Greece have responded to major shifts in their society and we need to face the idea that changes on a similar scale are likely to come to us too eventually. On a more immediate level, the Equality Act 2010 will have an impact on many of us, employers and employees alike, and some of these may be changes which may not sit comfortably with us.

So, in the face of all this difficulty, we offer you a piece reflecting on change (what is the real question?), a crossword (to distract you for a while), some information about changes in The Baobab Centre (two bits of good news!) and an offer to join us on a weekend of discovery on something none of us can change (death is universal).

As always (no change here) we welcome your thoughts, ideas and feedback on this issue. We hope it will facilitate your thinking and reflecting on some of these important issues in these times of upheaval and we hope some of you will want to engage with us as we all seek to find positive ways forward.

Gayle-Anne Drury

# Do You Have To Change?

From the day we are born to the day we die we change. This is inevitable. Our bodies grow older and our minds become ever fuller from knowledge and experience.

However, despite the inevitability of change, we have a very ambivalent attitude towards it. We welcome change and use phrases such as 'getting into a rut' or 'if you don't move forward, you stand still' or 'that's so yesterday'. These phrases indicate that we think lack of change is bad. And yet at the same time we resist change, because it takes us out of our comfort zones.

Our attitude towards others mirrors this love/hate relationship we have with change. We want to believe we accept and respect everyone for who they are. At the same time we can find the conflict resulting from difference too difficult to cope with, so we try to change others to be more like us or we try to avoid the discomfort of being around them. And yet, we want others to accept us for who we are and we don't like it when they want to change us or if they try to avoid us.

We strive for harmony, but that is only possible if we make the effort to change to accommodate others' preferred way of being and when we do that we are not being true to ourselves. So: 'to change, or not to change?' Is that the question?

Some of us take pride in not being a sheep and not being swept up by the tide and, in fact, this in itself can bring about great changes, such as the ideas introduced by Galileo and Darwin. Sometimes we decide to stand up to the trends of our day, but over the generations the strength of social change is stronger than any one of us and

our conscious thinking alters altogether, so for example we would no longer consider wearing Elizabethan clothes or sending children up chimneys. At other times we have little control over changes happening during our lifetime, such as when laws are passed. Whatever the type of change, change is inevitable.

Even if we really go out of our way to resist change, the world around us changes and so our relationship to everything around us changes even if we try to stand very still. As our relationships change, our reactions become different and, as a result, we change. Change is inevitable.

We are living through a time of upheaval with political and financial changes to our institutions which could equal the changes of the industrial revolution. Whether we like it or not, life as we know it is changing and with change comes confusion and uncertainty. Perhaps, then, the question we should be asking is 'how should I deal with change?' rather than 'to change, or not to change?' Maybe we should stop trying to avoid change and start concentrating on being able to manage and survive more effectively in changing situations.

Perhaps try jotting down how you might manage yourself more effectively with a specific change you are facing currently, in this blank space:

Manar Matusiak

Change for me is ....

As a way of starting to face change you may also wish to consider these questions:

- Do I know what my role is during the time of change?
- How can I improve my support systems?
- Do I need to support others?
- Do I know what my role will be after the change?
- How can I try to understand the other point of view?
- How will understanding the alternative views help me?
- Why is it so hard for me to change or let go in this situation? What am I afraid of? Can I manage these fears in some way other than just resisting the change?

- Are there other alternatives to my view or the other view being suggested? Does this help?
- Why do I need things to stay the same? What would the real consequences of staying the same be?
- What would be the real consequences, both short term and long term, if the change was to go ahead?

## Change for us: introducing Julie....

We are delighted to introduce a new team member, Julie Hopkins. Nic has worked with Julie in a different setting for 6 years and it is great to have Julie join us as she will be an additional asset to our team. Julie will be helping us with delivering our training and increasing our resource for Myers-Briggs work, including working with Manar Matusiak in developing team days focused around Myers-Briggs. We are all looking forward to introducing her to you in person.

Julie's particular interest is in helping individuals reach their potential and achieve better, more effective relationships with others through development of greater self-awareness. She has 14 years' experience of working as a counsellor in a range of settings, including business, higher education, private practice and the voluntary sector. She is an Accredited Counsellor with the BACP. She has also worked as a trainer and facilitator of groups on a range of developmental issues, both within university settings and in private and public sector businesses. Previous experience includes consultancy work in career and stress management. Julie is Myers-Briggs trained and enjoys using this tool to help people understand themselves and their choices at appropriate junctures in their lives.

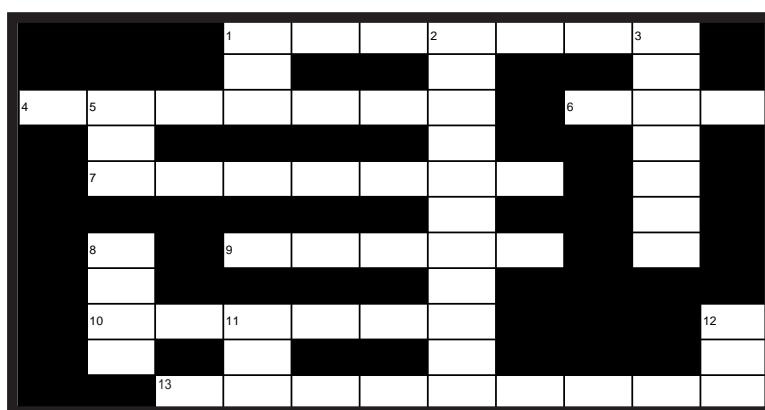
The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a useful tool for understanding how individual's different preferred ways of being can contribute to an effective productive team. The team day is a fun and interactive way for delegates to experience how different preferences and approaches impact on the successful

functioning of a team.

The MBTI team day comprises two parts: (1) a 2-hour individual assessment with each member of the team prior to the day together; (2) a full day for the whole team to enjoy interactive exercises highlighting possible areas of conflict and how these might be turned into positive, complementary, cohesive team work.



### Manar's crossword



#### Across

1. To move away from the norm (7)
4. To grow (7)
6. Question (3)
7. To bloom (7)
9. To make a change to something (5)
10. To alter (6)
13. To build up (9)

#### Down

1. It is time (3)
2. A change for the better (11)
3. To improve (7)
5. Part of the cycle of tidal change (3)
8. To jolt (4)
11. Carry-on (3)
12. To do something (3)

# The unavoidable change: Death

A couple of years ago we facilitated a weekend looking at issues surrounding death and dying. Although many people find this a strange and difficult subject it is interesting to note that the result of this weekend was that a group of people have continued to meet and work together on changing, expanding and deepening their experience of living.

We will be offering the workshop again in the autumn and thought it may be helpful to give you some idea of the questions which will be addressed during the weekend. These will include:

- Why should we think about death and dying?
- How has our society's approach to death developed and why is this significant?
- How do different cultures manage death and what can this teach us?
- What are your family rules and stories about death and what effect do these have on you?
- Whose life is it anyway? Who has rights during the dying process and at times of death?
- How can we think about letting go of the anxiety of death and of life?
- How do I want the end to be? For myself? For others?
- What will I leave behind and does this make a difference to the way I approach my own death or the death of others?
- What do we do with the body? How do we make decisions about funerals and other

rituals which will help us in the grieving process?

- What can we expect to happen to us when someone we care about dies?
- How can we work with our grief so that we survive in better shape?
- What will happen next?
- How does this person's death or pondering my own death inform my life?
- What do I need to do or think about now?

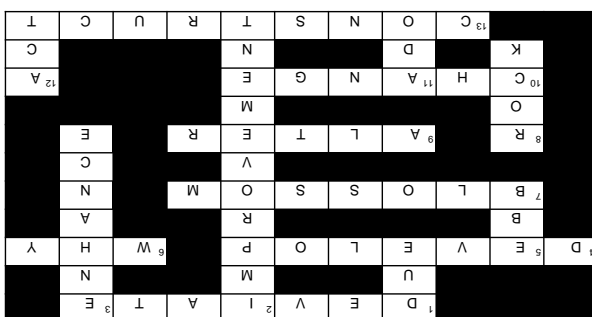
The weekend will provide some reflective space, a great deal of information, some times of depth and some wonderful fun. The group will be no larger than 8 participants with 2 facilitators, both of whom have facilitated this weekend before.

13th and 14th November 2010, at Nab Cottage, Rydal Water, Cumbria.

£250 for two days facilitation plus light refreshment, not including accommodation.

We hope very much this information will encourage you to consider joining us on this weekend, which we feel sure will change and promote your approach to living.

If you would like to join us please let us know by 1st October 2010 at the latest.



Crossword answers

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*All things are flowing Heraclitus of Ephesus c.535 BC - 475 BC*