

The Baobab Centre
Inspiring potential and growth



January 2007 Newsletter

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Dear Colleague

2007 has now begun and the team at the Baobab Centre would like to wish you all a fruitful, relational and, altogether, successful year.

You will have noticed that we did not send Christmas cards this year. We felt we needed to do our bit for the environment and we have taken the opportunity to send you, instead of a card, the enclosed 2007 triangular desk calendar which we hope you will find useful.

As usual, at the beginning of the year we all think more carefully about how we might develop our businesses and support our people. We, at the Baobab Centre, can help you with the latter. Our personal development programmes and small group training provision has developed over the past few years and you will find details of this comprehensive service in this newsletter. If you would like to talk with us about your specific needs please do get in touch.

We are also delighted to announce that one of our team members, Roy Searle, has moved to Northern Ireland. He continues to provide coaching and training in England; however, his move has provided us with the opportunity to offer our services across the waters as well.

This year the Baobab Centre is proposing to hold another three forums for HR Managers and all those responsible for HR matters. Details for the first meeting are offered in the enclosed flyer. In addition, we are introducing a separate forum for senior managers and directors to discuss issues of leadership, change management and any other matters they might commonly experience. Details will follow later on in the year.

We would like to remind you that we can provide support on most matters which relate to the people within your organisation at all levels. Please ring us if you would like to discuss counselling, coaching, management issues, personal development programmes, human resource support, mediation, conflict resolution or any other specific support you might require in managing and developing working relationships.

You can receive information on our services by ringing our office on 01904 559755 and asking for Rob Ma'aye, by sending us an email at office@baobabcentre.com or by visiting our website at www.baobabcentre.com.

Wishing you an excellent year!!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Manar', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Manar Matusiak

What is personalised development training as offered by The Baobab Centre?

The problem with many training packages, whether they are delivered in-house or by an outside organisation, is that they often miss the mark.

My personal experiences of attending training days is that on any given day I might learn one or two things which are new and relevant to me, but usually not more than that, and I am often left feeling that although I may now understand some new theory or technique I still have to overcome the hurdle of knowing how to apply the learning in my context.

My own experiences reflect established understandings of how adults learn (Knowles, 1984, Dennison and Kirk, 1990), i.e., adults do not internalise learning unless they can relate it to their own circumstances and put it into practice. Ignoring this makes many training courses a waste of time and valuable resources.

As a provider of training and development we often experience organisations requesting training within unrealistic timeframes. Requests for training, such as stress management, within three hours is not unusual. My response to this is, "Go and buy your employees a book." Gaining information only may be more effective through a book and such a short timeframe will not allow for the crucial issues of personal application.

If you accept my personal experience and established theory as outlined

above, then there are, it would seem, three central and vital parts to providing training and development if it is to be effective and good value for money.

- 1. It must be relevant to the individual or group receiving it.*
- 2. It must provide the necessary theory or information and knowledge of skills and techniques.*
- 3. It must provide space, time and support for each individual to discover how to apply these theories and skills in their own context.*

This is why we provide personalised development programmes and small group training in the way we do.

A development programme is designed specifically for an individual, paying careful attention to their particular issue and needs, and exploring how they might apply the new learning. In addition, the agreed content can be altered as the sessions progress and as the individual's needs change. The programme can be paid for as a day's training but provided in smaller blocks of time as appropriate for the employee, i.e., a day's training can be offered as eight separate hour sessions.

Packages designed for a small group include adequate personal time for application issues and a **free** follow-up service by email for a given period of time. This allows participants time to try some of their new competencies

Every package is designed to meet the specific needs of the individual or group concerned. **Every** package can include issues from across the range of competencies and workshops offered by us. **Every** package can include a range of skills and approaches offered by our staff, for instance, pulling in coaching, counselling and training techniques.

What is Personalised Development Training continued...

and discuss any difficulties they may encounter with the trainer who worked with them. Group or personal facilitation can be arranged as a follow up service.

The Baobab Centre also offers **open** personalised training sessions accessible to individuals and organisations. The advantage of the open training session is that participants have the opportunity to meet others who may have similar issues, but who are experiencing these in different environments.

All training is delivered to groups no larger than 15 people, so that it can be personal, relevant and experiential.

To give an idea of how a package of services might be brought together in a personalised development programme we have put together a case study for you to consider.

Individual or group training is offered on the subjects below which are also mapped against the MSC National Occupational Standards. The list is not exhaustive, so let us know if your needs are outside of the subject areas provided. Please visit our website for cross referencing to MSC standards.

If you would like to know more about how our programmes work or have any questions please contact us. We are happy to engage in speculative discussions about how our services may be personalised for you.

Gayle-Anne Drury

References

Dennison, B., & Kirk, R. (1990). Do, Review, Learn and Apply: a simple guide to experiential learning. Oxford: Blackwell.

Knowles, M. S. *et al.* (1984). Andragogy in Action. Applying modern principles of adult education. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Absence management	Money, sex and power
Anger management	Motivational gifts
Assertiveness	Performance management
Bullying in the workplace	Profitable values
Change management	Recognising the power of differences (conflict resolution)
Coaching (an introduction)	Recruitment and selection
Counselling (an introduction)	Spirituality in business
Emotional intelligence	Stress management
Inner reflection, outer performance	Surviving loss including bereavement
Leadership and motivation	Team building
Listening skills	Understanding yourself and others
Mentoring (an introduction)	Work life balance

Case Study

This case study may help to demonstrate how a personalised development programme and personalised group training might work in practice. **This case is fictitious and any resemblance to actual individuals or situations is coincidental.**

Bob was conscientious and sociable, and put in extra hours to support his company and colleagues. After a short time he was promoted, and soon after he divulged that he was experiencing extreme personal problems. The company reduced his workload but Bob started taking more and more time off work. When this was addressed with him, he signed off sick with stress.

During his time off, Bob informed his employer that he was a compulsive gambler.

Bob was off work for several months. His team became disgruntled by his absence and some complained about having to cover his work when he wasn't exactly ill.

When he returned, the company offered a programme of a reduced workload and lighter responsibility to ease Bob back into his job. This was standard practice for employees who had been on long-term sick. Bob took offence and signed off sick again, putting in a grievance, claiming the programme was discriminatory and was because the organisation now knew of his gambling problem.

What could The Baobab Centre provide in this situation?

Working with the employer

Support for the manager could include:

- solution focused listening and person centred communication so discussions with Bob can be as effective as possible, facilitating a smoother return to work for all;
- exploring and understanding power dynamics, including how victim/persecutor/rescuer dynamics apply so that the relationship with Bob does not deteriorate further;
- mediation skills to negotiate with Bob concerning his programme of return to work and to ease his transition back into the team;
- working with the existing team to manage their anger and to support them in reintegrating Bob;
- supporting the manager and the team in understanding issues of responsibility and appropriate boundaries to ensure effective working with Bob on his return to work; and
- human resource support in the grievance process if required.

Working with the employee

A personalised development programme could include:

- providing counselling for Bob's personal problems, including his gambling;
- stress management, for effective symptom management;
- assertiveness training encouraging clearer communication;
- understanding issues of responsibility to help Bob acknowledge his part in his continuing difficulties;
- understanding bullying and discrimination to assist him in discerning his responsibilities and those of his employer; and
- solution focused listening and person centred communication to enable him to communicate effectively with his employer and the rest of his team on his return to work.

If you would like to read more example case studies please visit our website:

<http://www.baobabcentre.com>.

Personalised Training Sessions 2007

DIFFICULT SITUATIONS, PEOPLE AND CONVERSATIONS

2 March, 2007

The workplace brings people together under sometimes stressful situations: tight deadlines, high expectation of output, difference of opinion, changing roles, managing difficult messages, high pressure areas.

As work-life and work-relations develop people may experience difficulties: with the work; with each other; with clients or customers; with the employer. What do we do when work relations become difficult?

Aim

This training will look at dealing with difficult situations, difficult people and difficult conversations. We are offering delegates an opportunity to learn new skills and techniques for dealing with challenges they encounter in their day-to-day working relationships, as well as a chance to gather information on the legal implications of what they can or cannot say as an organisational representative in one of these situations. If we do nothing we can be sure that the situation will not go away of its own accord.

Participants will have an opportunity to bring case studies and consider their options.

The session aims to help you answer:

- How can I anticipate and prepare for difficult situations?
- How can I manage people in difficulty?
- How can I conduct difficult conversations?

Objectives

- Help people identify their current style of managing difficult situations.
- Share experiences of difficult conversations and identify what works and what doesn't.
- Give an understanding of the issues and power dynamics.
- Provide useful tools for communication in difficult circumstances.
- Look at the impact of difficult conversations on individuals, teams and the organisation.

What makes this training session different?

- This training will help you look at your situation and consider your experience, needs and options for dealing with your specific difficulty.
- It pulls together the legal and personal aspects of dealing with difficult situations.

To book a place visit: <http://www.baobabcentre.com/pdf/BOOKINGFORM002.doc> or call 01904 559755.

Personalised Training Sessions 2007

MANAGING STRESS EFFECTIVELY

22 June, 2007

Work related stress costs UK employers more than £353 million per annum (Health and Safety Executive Report, 1999). Our increasingly complex world results in increasing levels and complexities of stress. These rising stress levels are an accepted fact in 21st Century living and an entire industry has arisen around stress and its management in every part of life. Even so, up to 5 million people in the UK experience work-related stress at a level which makes them ill.

Stress can motivate us to speed up, step up and bear the pressure of life, it is a natural and helpful response in many situations, however, too much stress whether physical, emotional or psychological is damaging. It can lead to permanent injury, break down or failure. This can be the failure of a person, a system, a relationship or a workforce.

Aim

This day aims to provide participants with an opportunity to create their own approach to managing stress in their lives, whether at home or at work. The emphasis will be to help individuals build their own stress profile and to begin to make their own plan for managing their stress.

Objectives

- Define stress.
- Gain an understanding of the physical, emotional and mental effects of stress.
- Recognise the signs of stress in yourself and in others.
- Explore options for working with stress.
- Build each individual's stress profile.
- Explore different tools and techniques for coping with stress.
- For each individual to initiate their own plan to manage their stress more effectively.

References

Health and Safety Executive Report. (1999). Retrieved 4th December, 2006 from: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress.htm>.

What makes this training session different?

- This training will help you look at your situation and decide where the stress is and whether it is helpful or harmful.
- We will not offer to remove stress from your work situation, we will provide you with a deeper knowledge of yourself and how you respond to stress.
- Through the day we will look at a range of indicators and experiences to offer all participants a range of ways to detect, monitor, manage and value stress in their lives.
- It will give you a way of understanding stress so you can facilitate others.

To book a place visit: <http://www.baobabcentre.com/pdf/BOOKINGFORM002.doc> or call 01904 559755.

Our ideas, like orange-plants, spread out in proportion to the size of the box which imprisons the roots.

Edward Bulwer Lytton

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” —Margaret Mead

The first problem for all of us, men and women, is not to learn, but to unlearn.

—Gloria Steinem

**Time is a dressmaker specializing in alterations.
Faith Baldwin**

**Do not follow where the path may lead.
Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.
Harold R. McAlindon**

These quotes are selected and offered as bite-sized thought provokers.

The Baobab Centre does not necessarily endorse the individuals quoted or agree with the statements offered.