

The Baobab Centre
Inspiring potential and growth



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The Groves
8 St. Peter's Grove,
York, YO30 6AQ

Tel: 01904 559755 or 07913826399
Email: office@baobabcentre.com
Website: www.baobabcentre.com

The future depends on what we do in the present Mahatma Gandhi

Dear Colleague

Spring is traditionally a time when cobwebs are swept, old things are thrown out or recycled and space is made for the new things we would like in our lives.

At The Baobab Centre, in looking forward we have had to look back, as we are often being asked questions which relate directly to our philosophies and ethos. We would like to share our responses with you and we hope this will provide you with a stronger feel for why we do things in the way we do.

Q. Why are your coaching fees so much lower than those of your competitors?

A. At The Baobab Centre we see coaching as part of a continuum of learning which will benefit both the individual and the organisation. We do not believe in the sheep-dipping (superficial quick fix) philosophy; nor do we believe that only the few should benefit from the service. For coaching to benefit the organisation, a coaching ethos is needed and, therefore, coaching should be accessible to as many people as possible within the organisation and this means keeping the cost per individual as low as possible. Furthermore, by keeping our coaching fees at the same level as our counselling fees, this provides individuals with the flexibility to switch between the two if needed. Similarly, sometimes it is necessary to reinforce training with individual coaching. By keeping the fees low, coaching becomes a more viable follow-up service for organisations and enables us to build skills with our clients.

Q. We are bombarded by glossy materials from a variety of training organisations. Why do you not use the same marketing strategy and why should we use your training?

A. We believe in building relationships with organisations and ensuring that any training we deliver meets their needs, and the needs of the individuals they send on courses. Large training seminars provide information, but do not address how theory can then be put into practice in the workplace. At The Baobab Centre, we keep our training groups small, so that each delegate can work on their own issues within the context of the training. We prefer to deliver training within the relationship we have with each organisation – for this we do not need glossy marketing and we prefer to keep our marketing costs low so that we can ensure our services provide value for money.

Please feel free to comment on the above answers to our frequently-asked questions by emailing us or telephoning our office.

In the meantime, we would like to draw your attention to our article relating to counselling approaches, as well as our up-and-coming two-day seminar on the systems theory approach to improving performance in the workplace which you will find within this newsletter.

We would like to assure you of our continuing support in all relational work-place matters.

Yours sincerely



Manar Matusiak

Look out for these weekend training sessions

Systems Theory
(System of profound knowledge)

Increase production, profitability and morale the proven way

2-day seminar
24 and 25 May, 2007: York
Closing date 30 April, 2007

In 1950, Japan was so technologically behind, it was unable to produce radios required by General McArthur for the post-war occupation. Twenty years later Japan was so technologically advanced that the United States had lost 50% of its market share of the technology market to Japan (Scholtes, P. R., 1998).

Question: how was it possible for Japan to become so productive in less than a generation?

Answer: one of the major contributors was Dr. W Edward Deming's System of profound knowledge.

Since Japan's success, companies worldwide have implemented the *System of profound knowledge* successfully starting with the US in the 1980s. It is a way of thinking and working that has produced results in all types and sizes of organisations – manufacturing and service, public and private. Common examples of success include: halving the end-to-end time for planning applications; payroll errors reduced from 75% to 2%.

Systems thinking provides the means to understand work as a system. It leads to the design and management of work from the outside-in, managing flow rather than function. It requires the development of different measures and methods and different ways of thinking. These principles can lead to reductions in the number of steps, reductions in end-to-end time, reductions in waste, improved service, improved staff morale and reduced costs.

The concept of the theory is simple and is based upon four key areas:

- appreciation for a system;
- knowledge of psychology;
- knowledge about variation; and
- theory of knowledge.

Examples of organisations that use this systems theory and where they use them can be seen in the next column:

Local authority/housing associations

Housing applications, housing repairs, adaptations, sports centres, arts and venues, community centre bookings, planning applications, building control, road repairs, street light maintenance, vehicle access to properties, waste collection, revenues, benefits and payroll.

Police organisations

Response policing, call centre management, prosecution reports, justice process, CID, criminal injuries and firearms licences.

Fire services

Fire prevention and response system.

This 2-day seminar will cover the concepts of this useful theory and set it in today's working context. It will also help delegates explore ways in which the theory could be implemented in their workplace.

Reference: The Leader's Handbook, Scholtes, P.R., 1998, McGraw Hill, New York

The seminar will be set out as follows:

Day One

Introduction to the systems theory
Understanding people and their dynamics
Understanding how people learn
Understanding how organisations work, learn and change

Weekend training sessions continued...

Day Two

Processes and variation

Understanding the links between people, learning and processes

Formulating action plans for possible implementation

Facilitators for this seminar will be:

Nigel Burchell

Nigel has worked as a public service manager for twenty years. His main interest is in modernising public services and creating services that customers want to do business with and people want to work for. For the past five years he has worked on learning more about *Systems theory* and sought to apply it within the workplace.

Gayle-Anne Drury

Gayle-Anne is a trained manager and a practicing psychotherapist whose primary interest is in encouraging growth within individuals. She has ten years' experience in personal counselling and works as a workplace coach and trainer. She regularly facilitates groups, away days and personalised training sessions on a range of developmental, managerial and organisational issues.

Nicola Neath

Nic has fifteen years' experience in individual and group training. She

is a practicing integrative counsellor with an interest in creative techniques, power dynamics and difference and diversity. She has a background in retail management, business and community project administration and voluntary sector training. She specialises in team dynamics, communication, time management, team building and non-violent communication.

Manar Matusiak

Manar has sixteen years' experience in the field of general management and has worked in a wide range of industries and sectors. She has worked as a teacher in both primary and secondary schools in England and abroad. She is a strong believer in the learning organisation and specialises in setting up and developing organisations and their people. She trains and coaches in leadership and team development.

Roy Searle

Roy has over twenty-five years of leadership, personal and organisational management development experience. He has a deep interest in promoting relational management in order to help people, organisations and communities realise and develop their potential. Roy is an experienced leader, a personal and corporate mentor and spiritual director and leader of both secular and faith retreats. He writes and lectures on issues of relational ways of living.

Another future training session to look out for will be on: Death

Death is inevitable. It is the one thing that affects us all. For some it sits as the root of existential conflict between our wish to continue to be and the inevitability of our ceasing to be.

Different cultures and religions offer different means of understanding and reconciling death but there seem to be very few places where we can talk about how we feel about it, how we approach our own death and the impact of the death of others upon us.

This workshop aims to provide a space and structure for people to explore their own notions, fears and hopes for dignity in death. Issues that will be covered will include:

how we cope with the death of others; supporting bereaved people; cultural differences and rituals; preparing for our own death and supporting people who are dying.