

Developing people

We are often asked if/how we train people to be more emotionally intelligent.

This isn't possible: you can only train people to *do* something new or something better. Doing relates to behaviour and emotional intelligence isn't a behaviour. It's a complex mental construct - a highly complicated interaction of emotions and feelings, thoughts and beliefs, predispositions and capacity. It is however possible to *encourage* people to be more emotionally intelligent - and we specialise in creating the right *facilitating environments* in which people and teams can develop, grow and thrive.

This includes teaching people *about* emotional intelligence - but, as this is essentially an academic subject, we make sure that the topics we cover here are both relevant to the particular individuals and capable of being used by them.

Team development is centred around workshops (tailored, as ever, to meet the specific needs of the attendees and their employer) supplemented by bespoke one on one sessions of coaching, mentoring, guidance, teaching and consultancy as needed.

The workshops, and one on one sessions if used, form an integrated programme covering communication, leadership, management, teamwork, self improvement, business relationships and many other subjects. These can often appear 'fluffy' and unfocussed topics. It can be difficult to see how to apply learning about them, however interesting, to day to day work. Our courses are firmly situated in delegates' reality: the business process, the office, team meetings, acquiring clients, client briefings, customer service, negotiation with suppliers, and - let's be honest - resolving conflicts between team members, and so forth. They contain a wealth of case histories, and ideas of how to apply the principles in day to day work. Delegates are strongly encouraged to bring their own experiences to the workshops to be looked at.

We believe in the value of insight. If you know what is going on, and why, you can move forward—you understand how to move forward. The programme teaches a number of developmental models which show how individuals and organisations grow. The great value of these models is that they are empirical, not theoretical. They are founded on research in working with people and organisations. They supply practical insight which empowers people not only to see the way forward, but how to get there.

Having said all that, it is an essential part of our approach that we *do not offer any workshops or one to one work in anything*. We offer our ability to help clients make changes to their business (whether resolving issues or improving performance). We always start by helping clients get a good understanding of the purpose and outcomes of any intervention from us - in other words, what the business issues/challenges are and how they will know when these have been resolved or achieved.

Once we have a clear idea of the client's purpose and outcomes, we can develop a specific programme. Often, it turns out that there is less to do than the client imagined (for example, dysfunctional teams can usually be helped to work better simply by us working with their manager).

One thing is important: the participants in the programme have to be willing to be participants - any sense that an individual has that they are there 'by order of the boss' will need to be worked on before the programme can start. This means that immediate line managers also need to be on board. There is no problem for us in covert or overt resistance, it's just that that will be a symptom of a deeper problem than the client had anticipated and one which also has to be addressed.

Businesses are just people and, basically, everything we do in business boils down to interacting with other people. The better we can do this, the more successful we will be.

Jeremy Marchant