

## REMOTE COACHING



*Whilst many might naturally expect that coaching would take place face to face, Coaching for Success has a long history in providing its services over the phone and by email. Kamilla Enggaard Have, who lives and works in Denmark, is a keen advocate of telephone-based coaching.*

Q: What first interested you in coaching?

A: I had been promoted to the job of National Sales Manager for a Danish pharmaceutical company. My manager, who had helped me achieve

**Quite simply, the whole coaching experience has been fantastic.**

this role had also been promoted, and I had a new boss. I was concerned about the lack of continuity between my two managers as well as the challenges of my new job. I now had twenty people working for me. My 'old' manager had worked with Mike Duckett at Coaching for Success in the past and he recommended that coaching might be useful in helping me to feel successful in my new role.

Q: How did you work with Coaching for Success?

A: I had about ten or twelve one-hour lessons on the phone over the course of a six-month period. I should say straightaway that this approach suited me extremely well. I had a very busy job and I think that if I had had to meet with a coach, I would have been tempted to cancel on the basis of work pressures.

The hour on the phone, however, meant that the sessions could be fitted in at the end of the working day - and also that it was a solid hour of coaching, without any time spent on chitchat or coffee making!

Mike and I worked through a number of different areas, including defining how I would like to see myself as a successful manager and how I could visualise when I had achieved success. Clearly much of this type of 'measurement' is qualitative, but Mike and I drew up a list of ten descriptions of success to help me have some clear objectives or goals. He also gave me a set of really useful tools for a wide range of management situations as well as helping me deal with the culture shock of a new boss.

Q: How successful do you think the process has been?

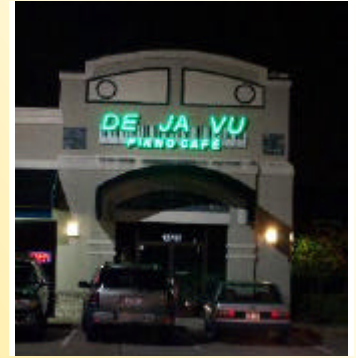
A: I had set myself the goal of achieving all the ten objectives on my list by the end of December and in fact, I had completed them by the end of August. Mike's work with me on 'assertive practice' has been invaluable and I must have used this model more than a thousand times and always found it very useful. The coaching has been extremely successful for me, and I felt secure in my new role very quickly - which I am sure would not have been the case without his help. He also helped with some coaching across our management team, where two of us were experiencing lots of problems. We just couldn't get on at all. With Mike's help in defining our roles and evaluating our values, we had a major breakthrough. So much so, in fact, that the colleague with whom I was having difficulties is now one of my best friends both in and out of work. Quite simply, the whole coaching experience has been fantastic.

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## DIGGING INTO DÉJÀ VU

Déjà vu is defined as ‘any subjectively inappropriate impression of familiarity of a present experience with an undefined past’ (Neppe 1983). Research into déjà vu has been patchy, with recent work focusing on whether the ‘experience’ is a precursor for epilepsy. So far no definite link has been proven, although some argue that brain pathology could underlie déjà vu, but involve an innocuous ‘happening’ that we all experience. That is, spontaneous firing of neurons in our brain happens occasionally, and this experience is similar to a muscle cramp. Most of these seizures go unnoticed, but if they occur in brain structures that process familiarity (e.g. the hippocampus) such a misfiring may create a feeling of intense familiarity seemingly disconnected from the present experience.



Despite the scientific uncertainty about déjà vu, a number of facts are known:

- 2/3 of the population experience it
- occurrences are brief (typically 10-30 seconds) and common reactions include surprise, curiosity and confusion
- it is triggered by the global setting although spoken words sometimes elicit it
- it is more likely indoors while relaxing or enjoying recreation
- it occurs more often in the afternoon and evening, and towards the end of the week
- it decreases with age
- it is more common in those who travel and remember their dreams
- it occurs more frequently in those with higher levels of education and income
- it is less common in people with conservative politics and fundamental religiosity

[Brown, 2004]

## BOOK REVIEW



### Carole Caplin

Mike Duckett of Coaching for Success has contributed towards the new book by Carole Caplin; ‘LifeSmart: Get the Facts, Follow the Steps, Feel the Difference’. Carole

is lifestyle advisor to, amongst others, Cherie Blair. The book covers a wide range of issues including health, orthodox and complementary medicine, physical pursuits and food – and the role of coaching. If you’d like to review the book, we’d be pleased to publish your comments in a forthcoming issue of Coachlines. (As always you can purchase a copy directly from our website)

## ODD-ity

Human Givens Journal reports that ‘ODD syndrome (Oppositional Defiant Disorder) is a new condition reported by American doctors to describe children under ten who argue with adults and refuse to do what they say.

*Editor: Is this a classic example of putting a diagnostic label on something that may not even exist. As soon as a label is applied, there can be a tendency for some to believe that this is what they’ve been ‘suffering’ from – and then start ‘living the label’.*

*Whatever happened to ‘being cheeky’!*

# FROM THE CORPORATE WORLD TO A TOUR OF THE REAL WORLD

## PART ONE



**Nathalie Plumet started working with Coaching for Success when she was a Senior Business Analyst in the market research department of pharmaceuticals giant, AstraZeneca. Having gone through redundancy from**

**that company, she changed her life completely, travelling to amongst other places, Mongolia, Vietnam, India and Australia.**

**This is part one of Nathalie's journey of discovery with Coaching for Success. Part two will appear in the next issue of Coachlines.**

Q: What made you turn to coaching and how did you think a coach could help you?

A: Coaching sessions with Coaching for Success were recommended to me by my line

**"The thought of going alone was scary, the thought of not knowing what was next was even scarier."**

manager whilst I was working at AstraZeneca to help with some communication and stress management issues. At first I was not sure how coaching could help as it was an entirely new concept for me. However after a few sessions I soon realised that coaching provided a great opportunity to tackle not only specific issues but to look at wider perspectives and to learn new techniques in terms of communication, career and life management.

Q: How did find your sessions?

A: My coach is a great listener. He didn't have all the answers for me but instead he made me think differently about my issues, about my priorities at work and in my personal life. It was a great experience from which I was able to understand why I had communication issues at work, and how best to deal with them. He also helped me with

stress management techniques, which meant that when I was made redundant, I could look at this more constructively and more effectively.

Q: How did your coach work with you?

A: We mostly worked face to face, with sessions ranging from two hours to half a day. After my coaching sessions, I realised a number of important things relating to my career and my personal aspirations. I have always been a bit scared about the unknown, about the need to control my environment, about being away from my comfort zone. This anxiety created a lot of negative feelings in all aspects of my life. Coaching helped me to understand how counter-productive these thoughts were, and how a successful life is whatever I define it as – other people's views should not be of paramount importance. We worked extensively on needs, beliefs and attitudes. After ten sessions, I felt that it was really possible for me to do what I wanted, even if my cultural background (*Ed: Nathalie is French and grew up in Paris*) was very different to that of my work colleagues. Together with a number of other changes, I realised that I was ready to tackle the unknown and live outside my comfort zone for a while.

Q: Where did the idea of travelling come from?

A: Coaching helped to realise that it was possible to take time out to go travelling. It gave me the strength to prepare for and to live my travelling project to the full. I left the UK alone with the idea of travelling for twelve months across Asia and Australia. The thought of going alone was scary, the thought of not knowing what was next was even scarier. However the sessions with my coach helped me to build my strength, determination and courage. He helped me to focus my thoughts and my actions for what lay ahead.

*In the next issue, learn more about the effect that travelling has had on Nathalie, how it has influenced her approach to her career and personal life and the benefits she believes she has gained from both this and her time with Coaching for Success.*

## LIFE AT THE TOP: CORPORATE CONUNDRUMS

### PSYCHOPATHIC BOSSES?

A team at the University of Surrey has reported that a sample of senior British managers averaged higher scores in self-reported measures of histrionic, narcissistic and compulsive personality than did two samples of former and current patients at Broadmoor hospital.



Personality dimensions such as superficial charm, lack of empathy and perfectionism were common between the

managers and the patients, although managers scored lower on antisocialism and paranoia.

The authors conclude that senior business managers appear to possess elements of psychopathic personality

**“The authors conclude that senior business managers appear to possess elements of psychopathic personality disorder ...”**

disorder that have been referred to as the emotion components and they closely resemble characteristics known to be beneficial to achieving in a senior management role.

They classify such people as ‘successful psychopaths’ – people with personality disorder patterns but without the characteristic history of arrest and incarceration. A word of caution before you apply the label to your own boss: the research sample was very small and thus cannot be taken at face value!

### ...OR CHARISMATIC LEADERS?

A study undertaken at the Free University in Amsterdam has shown that firms in which the chief executive was reported by staff to display charismatic leadership, also tended to be firms in which the staff expressed a positive attitude to their work. Such firms were also the most profitable. These correlations were stronger in companies experiencing uncertain times and/ or if the chief executive actually owned the business.

*Editor: clearly the danger for any organisation in this situation is that if a company is ‘dominated’ by one charismatic leader, this person becomes virtually impossible to replace.*

### ‘OLDER’ ENTREPRENEURS

A recent survey, the findings of which were published in Director magazine, indicate that businesses started by people aged over 50 have more chance of success than those started by younger entrepreneurs.

They identified the key characteristics of ‘older entrepreneurs’ who typically would have ten to fifteen years experience before launching their own venture, as:

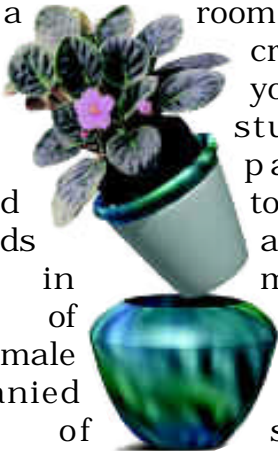
- knowledge of the market both technically and personally
- knowing the key individuals in the market – and knowing them well, not just as names
- self-knowledge
- increased realism about what can be achieved
- better people skills
- focussed
- financially prudent

## ISSUES OF TASTE, SIGHT AND SMELL

### CHOCOHOLICS – HELP IS AT HAND

Researchers from Flinders University in Australia report that the craving for chocolate – experienced by chocoholics worldwide – can be reduced by subjecting them to dynamic visual noise (such as that created by a fuzzy computer screen) – when being shown pictures of chocolate bars, ice cream and so on. They conclude that ‘according to working memory theory, dynamic visual noise reduces craving by interfering with food-related images held in the visual-spatial sketchpad.’

**PLANT POWER** Work undertaken in Japan appears to prove that putting a plant in a room will help improve creativity – but only if you are female. In a study where participants were asked to think of as many words related in as possible meaning to a number of target words, the female students (accompanied by a plant) thought of significantly more words than those without a plant; the room contents had no effect on the number of words generated by male students.



**A NOVEL SMELL** At the Universities of Toronto and York in Canada, subjects were asked to read positive and negative passages from novels while simultaneously smelling a pleasant or unpleasant odour. When the student read a positive passage, they reported that an accompanying pleasant odour brought the story to life far more than a nasty odour, evoking more emotion. On the other hand, when students read a negative passage, there was no difference in the influence of an accompanying pleasant versus unpleasant odour.

*Ed: Heston Blumenthal, Chef at The Fat Duck, is renowned for his creative dining experiences and delighted guests attending his Mad Hatter's Tea Party by wafting different aromas to accompany different courses. E.g. Coffee aroma led to an immediate increase in conversation volume and animation!*

### ...AND THE NO-DIET DIET

There has recently been extensive coverage in the media of the sounds-too-good-to-be-true no-diet diet. Professor Fletcher's team at Hertfordshire found

**“Putting a plant in a room will help improve creativity – but only if you are female.”**

that by simply doing something different each day, people lose weight. This can include, for example, not watching television, travelling to work using a different route or visiting a new event. Volunteers lost an average of 11 lbs following the no-diet regime for four months. They had to choose an option to be an introvert or an extrovert for a day, and then twice a week, they would be something different. The reason, according to Professor Fletcher, that this approach works is that it encourages people to break their routines and think more carefully about the decisions they make.

*Editor: In coaching, we are consistently increasing people's awareness of the choices they are making (often when they do not realise that they are making a choice at all) ... and how these can lead to certain patterns of behaviour.*

## LEARNING CURVES

### ARE YOU TRYING TOO HARD?

Cambridge University researchers have come up with what appears to be proof that in some circumstances if you try too hard, your ability to learn can be impaired. Participants in the study had their brains scanned whilst being required to press buttons in both

**'not trying' could aid learning for simpler tasks.**

'random' and 'recognisable' sequences.



Button pressing in the latter was some 40 milliseconds faster than when the sequence was completely random, even though participants were not conscious of having learnt the sequence. When they were asked to explicitly

learn these sequences – in the second phase of the study – their button pressing abilities were slower than for the random sequence. Their conclusion was that 'not trying' could aid learning for simpler tasks.

*Editor: The researchers qualify that their findings are only valid for simple tasks. However in the case of coaching business executives, their determined, rational 'business-like' thinking can get in the way. Maybe this small piece of evidence supports the notion of relaxing and trusting you implicitly know the answer, rather than trying too hard.*

### TRAINING – BUT NOT LEARNING

E-Learning Age magazine reports that less than 30% of training course participants have discussed their training requirements with their manager before attending. Research has found the following 'disturbing' statistics about training:

Only 65% of course delegates

understood why they needed additional training

Only 44% understood what they were there to learn and had clear objectives (!)

90% of trainers admitted that not every delegate would understand why they were being trained

*Editor: These statistics confirm why so many people dread going on training courses and/or find them completely soul destroying. Coaching on the other hand – in contrast to training – is voluntary and involves working with the coach to identify specific personal objectives and work towards achieving these.*

### AND FINALLY, FAILING CAN AID SUCCESS

Colin Jackson, the world-breaking hurdler and now a well-known sports commentator, recounts how a close friend of his died from a nut allergy just as he (Colin) was about to start a



race. In a harrowing account in which he describes hearing his friend (also an athlete) choking to

death over the phone, he talks about how racing became pointless for a period of time after this tragic accident. It needed his coach to shout at him that he was letting down himself and also his friend by giving up, that got him back on track.

*Editor: For me the key message of this story is the way in which a person reacts to being knocked back and not getting what they want is often indicative of who will succeed in the long term. A little dose of failure – and coming to terms with it – is part of the recipe for real success.*

## MYTH BUSTERS

### WHAT REALLY MAKES YOU HAPPY?

Forget Gross Domestic Product. A team, led by Nobel prize-winning Professor Daniel Kahneman at Princeton University is advocating 'Gross National Happiness' as a new way of assessing a country's relative success. The team worked on the premise that money and good health were not necessarily the cornerstones of an enjoyable life. Working with a group of women, they found that sex, relaxing with friends and having lunch with colleagues brought the most enjoyment. On the other hand, commuting and too much contact with the boss were the



least pleasant activities. Surprisingly, taking care of children was also among the less enjoyable activities, despite people normally reporting that children are their greatest source of joy in their lives! On this point, Professor Kahneman remarks that when people are asked how much they enjoy spending time with their kids, they think of all the nice things, like reading them a story or going to the zoo. But they don't take the other times into account such as when they are trying to do something else and are being distracted by the children.

*Editor: is this 'reality' happiness rather than the accepted view of what makes us happy?*



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## About us

Coaching for Success provides executive and personal coaching that helps individuals perform to their maximum potential.

Our corporate client list covers a range of industry sectors, including pharmaceutical, retail, finance and construction, and high profile names such as Laing, AstraZeneca, KPMG, Abbott and Marks & Spencer.

Our coaches work with clients, on a one-to-one or group basis, enabling them to recognise the choices and opportunities available to them, to make decisions about career and personnel development and then to create and implement a plan of action designed to achieve success.

We deliver a comprehensive and confidential coaching service committed to your success—in whatever area you choose!