

## It's the taking part ... *and* the winning for Penny Mallory

May 2004



Penny Mallory was the first woman in the world to qualify to drive a World Rally car, becoming National Ladies' Champion Rally Driver in 1993. She is a well-known journalist, TV presenter (her credits include *Driven*, *Watchdog*, *Britain's Worst Roads* and *Top Gear* amongst many others). Penny is also keen on furniture renovation and painting, as well as being the mother of two young daughters. (So an expert on work/life balance too!)

In an exclusive interview for Coachlines, Penny describes how Coaching helped her with her two latest goals – running the London Marathon and presenting a live television chat show.

**Q:** When did you decide to run the London Marathon, and why?

**A:** I decided in December last year – and as to 'why', well that's the big question! I have spent so much of my life being unfit. At school, I hated exercise and did everything possible to get out of sports lessons even painting fake injuries on my legs. So, deciding to do the London Marathon was the most extreme, insane thing I could possibly do. But that was exactly the reason why I chose it – I wanted to prove that I could do anything at all that I put my mind to.

**Q:** When did you decide that it would be helpful to work with a coach?

**A:** I started training and was really motivated, but as the date of the event got closer, I really started to freak out. I decided to go to Mike for help primarily with the pain that I was experiencing when running. I felt that I just couldn't go on.

**Q:** What did Mike do for you?

**A:** He helped me focus on getting rid of the pain, as well as reminding me of everything that I have achieved so far.

**Q:** How did this help on the day?

**A:** It worked brilliantly. I had stored in my brain the things Mike and I had discussed and I used these techniques throughout the race, particularly when things started to hurt. Of course, these are also techniques that I can re-use at any time for any purpose, not just running 26 miles!

**Q:** So how did you do?

**A:** I completed the Marathon in 4.54 hours and although this was a bit slower than I'd hoped for, I was absolutely delighted to have got around.

**Q:** I understand that you have also worked with Coaching for Success in terms of your career as a television presenter?

**A:** A real challenge for me – and something that I really wanted to do – was to host a live television chat show. Obviously using an earpiece, dealing with a live audience and guests is extremely demanding. You have to do so many things all at the same time – and make it all look very easy. I worked with Mike on visualising how this situation would feel, and how exactly I wanted to perform.

**Q:** What has been the result of this work with Mike?

**A:** Well, three weeks ago, the dream of

"I wanted to prove that I could do anything at all that I put my mind to."

doing this became a reality. I stood in for someone and they liked my performance so much that they've given me a series of programmes over a sixteen-week period. The show, which airs on digital television, is called *Men & Motors Live* – and it involves everything I was looking for – cars, live chat, guests, viewer phone calls. The first time that I presented the show, it was amazing: it was exactly as I had visualised!

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## Thinking of having an 'awayday'?

Based on four years 'fly on the wall' research, a team in France has produced a thought-provoking report which studied eight leaders and the changes they and their staff experienced. They came to the conclusion that there are four key tensions with which new leaders must come to grips with:

- relationships – 'get connected' – the need to achieve a balance between getting close enough to people to connect with them whilst remaining detached enough to make tough decisions
- direction – 'get real' – how to deal with the realities of the past and the present, without losing sight of future aspirations
- frame of mind – 'don't panic' – the need to keep an open mind about the new business whilst drawing upon experience to reach conclusions and take action
- boundaries – 'know your limits' – how to be yourself and set limits as to what you can do, whilst at the same time delivering what the company needs



Along the way, they also potentially overturn some well-established views on modern management: team building happens better through conversation rather than awaydays; changing the people you work with can be a way of avoiding real problems and charismatic leaders can be dangerous. Stimulating stuff!

## More on Leadership

We have noticed a number of articles and research reviews on the perennial subject of leadership recently. Some recurring themes are:

- The importance of staying true to your values
- Develop a passion or vision of how you want things to be
- Draw on this passion when you communicate

Firstly, where it may all come from— Psychology Today reports some research by Bruce Avolio, Ph.D., director of the Center for Leadership Studies in the U.S., on the upbringing of a number of leaders in industry and the military: *"we found that Mom and Dad can instil us with the tools and drive to lead. Both senior VPs in high-tech firms and the military leaders we interviewed had very involved parents who set challenging goals, translated failure into "how to succeed next time" and lived by high standards of moral conduct--helping their kids to appreciate diverse views".*

### Experience from the front line - values in leadership

A recent report in Director magazine discusses how examples of good military leadership – in this case from the Gulf War – can be utilised in the corporate world.

Lieutenant Colonel Tim Collins is regarded as having delivered a pre-battle speech which had all the hallmarks of inspiring leadership, a subject which is included in many executive coaching sessions. Exhorting his troops to 'tread lightly' and to 'be magnanimous in victory' are classic examples of instilling clearly defined values which have a tremendously important role in establishing strong leadership. The article expresses regret that the values aspect of leadership seems to be largely ignored in today's business environment – but that the value system of leaders is what drives the creation of an ongoing, sustainable enterprise when they are turned into strategies and objectives

## Leadership (continued)

### Body & soul: values and goals the Anita Roddick way



A recent interview with Anita Roddick, founder of the Body Shop, revealed that she has many skills which would prove valuable to other

company bosses. Fortunately, these are largely attributes which can be coached. For example, the article comments *"...like any good communicator, Roddick can focus on a target and use emotive language to make a point."* We firmly believe in the power of using emotion and emotional speech rather than relying on standard 'business-speak'.

Anita Roddick's success is inextricably linked to her 'values' – the Body Shop was created based on her values regarding fair (in the widest possible sense of the word) trade. The article states *"When I talk to students, I teach them to not think about business*

***"You vision something and you start talking about it in the present tense, like it's already happening."***

*but of an honourable livelihood. Think enterprise, think anything, but when you think of business, you shuttle yourself off into a small version of a large corporation with all the language."* This type of entrepreneurial approach to business can indeed be coached by focusing on the qualities that make an entrepreneur or an 'out of the box' thinker and a passionate communicator.

Her clarity of vision is to be envied. *"You vision something and you start talking about it in the present tense, like it's already happening."* Coaching has a key role to play in helping people to clarify their goals. This is a technique we use a lot when helping clients clarify their goals in a way that builds-in the energy to achieve them

## Acting as if

### Just believe ...

Training people to do the job above their own – rather than just seeking to refine their existing skills – is a rare occurrence in today's commercial world. Only relatively few companies appreciate that in a growing business, it makes sense to grow their staff. Coaching for career progress often includes the message: "Do you see yourself (already) as the managing director, top salesman, chief engineer etc. And how would you behave in this situation if you were?"

The power of believing that you can achieve something - no matter how elusive it may seem - should never be underestimated. Mike Hatter, an engineer with the RAF based at Benson in Oxfordshire is a classic example of this. Ever since childhood, he had dreamed of being an RAF officer, but when he left school he simply didn't believe that he was clever

enough to apply for a commission. He took the next best step, in his view, and joined the RAF as an air frame technician, a job he has held for the last four years.

However, he didn't lose sight of his ultimate goal of becoming an officer. Although he felt any move towards that would not be for at least ten years. A chance conversation

with Mike Duckett changed all that - for good.

*to Mike about my ambitions, he just kept asking me what stopped me going for the commission earlier, what was holding me back? Over the course of various*

*sessions with him, it became clear to me that the only thing stopping me was my own lack of self confidence. He has - and continues - to help me to believe that if I put my mind to it, then I really can achieve my dream much earlier than I had ever hoped"*



## Acting as if...

Part of Mike Hatter's progress towards earning a commission is to transform his behaviour by constantly asking himself 'how would an officer behave in this situation'. Thus although in his current position he has no authority, he has learned to spot opportunities where he can take the lead and show initiative, and begin to put into practice some of the skills that will be required when he does become an officer. He continued: *"Before my work with Mike Duckett, I would know the answers to problems but would lack the confidence to speak up - and then would become even more frustrated when someone else jumped in ahead of me. That's all changed now as proven by my appraisals which confirm that I will achieve early promotion in just two years time which is a world apart from waiting more than ten years."* Mike Hatter is also keen to ensure that his new-found self-confidence cannot be interpreted as misplaced arrogance, and he has been pleasantly surprised by the reaction of his colleagues. *"I kept my ambitions secret for years, but the work with Coaching for Success has shown me that it is better to speak out both to managers and to friends. I have found everyone to be very supportive of my desire to win a commission, which again is helping me to achieve my goal."*

## No more choice, please!

No doubt you've seen coverage in the press recently on the problems associated with choice, the essence being that the more choice we have the less satisfied we are likely to be. Barry Schwartz is the author of a book entitled 'The Paradox of Choice' and a leading exponent of the view that too much choice can give rise to anxiety, unhappiness and even clinical depression. He defines people as 'maximisers' and 'satisficers'. The former never buy anything without checking out all the options and researching all the available material, but they will still feel dissatisfied. Satisficers, on the other hand, set themselves a choice (but within limits) and more often than not end up with something they are happy with. Schwartz's main concern, however, is that choice can make us all become maximisers ... a slippery slope towards being miserable.

He also explores the time that it can take to make all these choices – and how this detracts from what makes people happy such as close relations with other people and meaningful work. For example, if it takes someone three hours research on the internet to find the 'best' digital camera, that's three hours they have not spent with their friends and family.



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