



The Big Blue Box Ltd

Back to Childhood

In this case a client willingly explores her early background, to achieve remarkable new, life changing insights.

The Background

The coaching project brief was to assist this senior leader develop her leadership skills.

G manages through close control and detail management. She wanted to understand what led her to work in what she feels is a:

'controlling, stressful and inefficient style'.

G approached the session with determination, openness and honesty, having decided at the conclusion of our previous session that it would be appropriate to look at her leadership and decision making style.

The Process

We investigated some examples of what G thought where the behaviours she wanted to change:

G made snap decisions –on a whim. And making decisions quickly often led her to rethink and then revise them, causing her team of direct reports to learn to await the rethink!

G described:

'Chucking a hand grenade into a meeting and then leaving the room...avoiding conflict situations and difficult conversations'.

G's strategy only really existed in her head, nothing current, or in the future was committed to paper, consulted or shared, giving her a significant lever of control. She was very open about the motivation:

'It allows me to control the business...but I can spend whole days on this detail - I never say 'I don't know'... I need to know... I need the respect!'

We began to look at G's formative experiences and how she had learned these behaviours.

Gentle questioning brought out very clear memories of significant incidents in her childhood. There was no recollection of direct praise, unfair and hurtful comparisons were made with siblings, and there was parental 'fury' at her dyslexia. G had had 'panic attacks' brought on by uncertainty, for which she had some therapy and had developed a powerful set of behaviours to enable her to manage her situation.

There was a long pause. It was suddenly apparent that this was a 'light bulb moment' for G.

'I can now see what all this has made me...It's made me driven and controlling!'

We explored how this had shaped her leadership and relationships with her fellow directors and her clients. G had begun to develop a new understanding of her behaviour.

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The Outcomes

The uniqueness of the coaching relationship created the opportunity for the coachee to safely explore her background, enabling her to see and understand herself in a new way.

We agreed that immediately G would take away these emerging insights and discuss them with her partner at home.

G speculated that having seen this controlling behaviour, her husband would probably be very grateful that, at last, a change was possible.