



## The Big Blue Box Ltd

### Flipping A Switch

Even the first session of a coaching series can have a life changing impact. It can happen almost immediately, it may not be obvious to other people, and it may not be in the 'required area' according to the original briefing. Sometimes unlocking potential can require quite a difficult journey to reveal what may be just a simple 'switch'.

#### The Background

The brief was to help E to become a better leader, to practice delegation, to bring on his team and step up into his new role.

E has worked for the business for several years, and he has recently been promoted into this role which his new boss had previously occupied.

#### The Process

Having passed the 'Chemistry Test' we explored E's story. E was from a comfortable background and large family with strict values. However E had been indulged, would seek out challenging experiences and later, had drifted in his career, achieving extreme highs and then reaching great lows. Being told to 'get your act together' by those close to him he restarted and rebuilt his career achieving his current senior international territory management role.

We explored how this translated into his behaviour at work, with colleagues, his team and with his boss. E felt he had settled well into the role, but could also identify some problems.

*'I know what the right thing to do is ... I know what I should be doing, but...  
When I first started my boss was all over me ... I'm feeling undermined, it's not  
the team that are undermining me ... I'm stubborn ... I'm a control freak.'*

We persisted into what became a fairly emotional, honest and challenging conversation. Reflecting on his story, E recognised himself and his behaviour: The insights began to flow.

*'I can see I'm behaving like a child, like I did when I was child, at home with my  
parents ... I've been stubborn and spoiled ... I need to be Adult!'*

We explored how this behaviour could be changed.

When asked to compare and contrast how he behaved with his clients and customers and how he behaved with his boss, there was a long, reflective, thoughtful silence. E nodded.

At the beginning of our second session, E was clearly more at ease.

*'That idea of seeing my Boss as a customer was amazing – it's completely  
changed my approach, my attitude....it's been like flipping a switch!...I used to  
see my boss like a parent, I see it differently now, I get to [the boss] in advance,  
I'm sharing stuff... 'I'm really trying to lead by example ... I'm much calmer, more  
genuine ...'*

*'I'm still struggling with the stuff around my parents. But I've started letting go  
of things, decluttering, realising that 'things' don't define me'*

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Registered in England No: 4401635

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We discussed several concepts including Emotional Intelligence, (in particular Self awareness and Self management).

We opened up the topic of 'having a plan', for his life and for his role and career, being 'strategic' and having a clear plan for the long term and how to assess the successful steps and milestones along the way. E could recognise that none really existed:

*'I'm being reactive when I should be being proactive...'*

Our third meeting found E refocused, more relaxed personally but also with a growing determination for his career.

*'I'd been so focused on the detail, I'd lost the vision and the strategy....I've just begun to 'join the dots together'.*

There was a feeling of strength that had not been apparent before, that E was more confident, with an emerging sense of purpose and indeed some courage to face the challenges. His conversation was focused far more on the real business issues. He was discussing bold initiatives that, in his new role, would be expected of him. He discussed actively engaging with the senior management team.

*'I've had some tough meetings with the senior leadership, but I have remained calm, having this awareness has opened my eyes.... Now, before I react I think! ... I feel calm and the stress has vanished'.*

*'I'm in an excellent place... I'm better emotionally and I can effect change. Previously I would have had an immediate 'fight' for something, now I realise that sometimes it's a 'War' not a 'fight' and I can choose...I'm learning to play the game. ..I'll continue to treat my boss like a customer...I need to have this calmness to run the race.... These changes have also been recognised by other people – by my Chief Exec!'*

Our coaching concluded by working on the plan for E's business and the new techniques he is going to use to deliver it. '

*I have a much better idea of who I am, as a leader, ... I'm not conflicted,...I'm going to build a consensus,... to effect change here and use influence over there,... but it's driven by the customer!... That 'Customer' thing was really powerful!....I'm working out how to influence people,... I'm going to apply a filter, make choices ...when I have a message to deliver I will choose the method.... It's a war not a battle!'*

### The Outcomes

E has gained several powerful, life changing insights that were initially quite personal and private. But these insights formed the necessary foundation for skills that were identified in the original coaching brief.