



The Big Blue Box Ltd

Hidden Barriers To Performance

The drivers for our behaviour are often very deeply rooted. These 'rules' can serve us well through life. But when we extend our experience beyond the scope of these rules then our learned behaviours can be disadvantageous to us. Seeking a solution we may reflect upon this situation and reach an understanding. But sometimes however, our analysis doesn't go far enough. We can be too close to the problem to see it objectively or entirely. A challenge to our assumptions is necessary.

The Background

E is a divisional director in a very exciting business. He is a highly respected leader of his team and seen as being a future senior leader.

E describes his career with some modesty and pride, having had exposure to issues and experiences that people in other walks of life would find fascinating.

The process

We approached the first coaching session with an agenda of getting to know each other. E talks through his career to date and we then move to discuss his ambitions and future career. He is aware of 'limitations' that are beginning to restrict his potential.

E presents himself as a highly capable and competent leader to his team and colleagues, yet is aware that his behaviour changes when in the presence of a higher ranking individual – he feels that he becomes obedient, subservient and doesn't assert himself, being deferential.

'I describe it like I am in the role of the apprentice – like I was in my early career.

I do what I am told, like I am being told what to do and how to do it, feeling that I would be told to 'do it again' if it was wrong.

I'm just being obedient.

And that is how it feels when I'm with one of my bosses, or the main board directors, or a senior client for example – see the other person as if I were their apprentice.

I need to get over this because it will hold me back.'

E went on to describe how in board meetings he would not assert his point of view and would hold back in the presence of more senior people.

E was encouraged to look further back at his life to find other examples of when he behaved like this and where he may have learned this behaviour.

Based upon the outline of E's life story outlined earlier in the conversation we looked at his relationship with his father.

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The Outcomes

This examination proved to be an *'Ah ha!'* moment.

E had not seen that his early relationship with his father, subsequently reinforced by the behaviours he was encouraged to adopt as an apprentice, had given him a very powerful model of how to behave with *'Authority'* figures.

E was delighted with the outcomes of the first conversation and left the session with some exercises to try and a lot to think about!

The agenda for our second session became clear.

In our second session E was able to share his new understanding, citing recent examples of how he had used his new *'Self Awareness'*. E had begun to identify the values, beliefs and behaviours that he needed to adopt.

E responded instantly to the challenge and objectivity of the coaching process, enabling him to embark upon a development path based upon a new understanding of himself. It has shown him what he can *'work on'* for the benefit of his teams - his ability to delegate and to develop his people, and his organisation; bringing his skills fully into the senior team dynamic and client relationships.