



The Big Blue Box Ltd

'I Bought Myself A Train Set'

The Background

B was introduced as a senior manager who has had potential but who may have reached a ceiling, his difficult behaviour was now becoming 'career limiting'.

As he reported at the end of our coaching series:

'I had very little time for anything or anybody outside of work due to trying to do everything for work. The situation was not evolving and was more likely to implode.'

The Process

Even at our first meeting, B was very keen to get started and met me at the reception area where we were introduced by the project sponsor. We passed the 'chemistry test' and were quickly into a deep discussion.

B said that his wife felt he needed a new challenge, describing his workplace as:

'a difficult culture that felt like a melt down!'

She really wanted him to have more time for his family. As B said,

'Generally, I am stressed and totally focus on work over everything else 24/7.'

He went on:

'I am very keen to develop my career but have found myself constantly being pulled back into the day to day, due to key team members not performing.'

Talking about his style he described a:

'structured approach, ... with energy but controlling, - 'give it to me, I'll get it sorted!'

B described his behaviour with his direct reports:

'I'm constantly checking, checking ... I have to make all key decisions for the day to day running of the operation.'

But as the conversation continued so B became increasingly calm, open and objective.

'I must seem paranoid... I need to trust the team more... I need to back off!'

As he finished there was a long silence and the emotions were clear.

'I really need to change, ... I want to change, ... I need to pull the team up, not put them down, I need to manage my behaviour... I need a plan.'

We discussed two simple models to help B develop his 'self awareness' – a route to building his emotional intelligence. Our first meeting finished, agreeing to use those models.

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B was clearly affected by the first session and in our second session, about 3 weeks later, his excitement was very clear.

'It's had a real impact on my attitude and priorities, and a real impact at home – we are getting on so much better, my wife has really noticed the difference...she says I'm listening, that I'm thinking.

It such a less stressful experience at home, we are getting on so much better!

Later, as B reflected, he reported:

'Following the first meeting I was very keen ...to reflect on the meeting, to talk to key parties (both personal and professional) and get feedback...I spent a great deal more time with the team planning and delegating key projects and deliverables.

I also engaged with my wife and agreed changes I could make to improve our home life.'

'What become apparent was that this was having a very positive impact on performance and work life balance.

I had an epiphany at my son's school parents evening,... I went to the parents evening instead of going to a work meeting!...I learned about the school and I've changed my view [about my son's choices].'

Again we settled in to a calm and reflective session and the insights began to flow.

'I've always had the feeling of a clock ticking – to get things done - to be in control. ...My behaviour is just like my mother behaves – my mum won't let things go! Too much 'duty', too much 'business focus', I can see the 'rails' I've been running on ... the benefit of taking time to consider... to reflect.'

The changes were clearly happening.

'I'm even driving my car differently, when the red mist comes down I'm avoiding the conflict, I've got more energy, more time. ...

It's absolutely 'top to bottom.'

During our second and third sessions B's growing ability to manage himself, rewarded across all areas of his life, impacted upon his self confidence. We were able to extend our conversations to develop a more 'strategic' approach. We began building B's ability to be aware of, influence and manage other people.

Success was immediate. Upfront, planned preparation work considering longer term goals and development before a key meeting with a major client was rewarded by immediate client feedback:

'That was the easiest [planning] meeting we've ever had!'

As one of B's peers also reported,

'I couldn't believe it was you in that meeting, you behaved so differently.'

With significant improvements in all areas of his life, we began to note the scale of the impact, to examine some of the triggers to 'slipping back', and how to maintain his growth.

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The Outcomes

In our final session we met with B's MD and his HR sponsor to review progress, evaluate it and agree a plan for the future.

It was an emotional moment as B openly and honestly reported his observations, and received affirming feedback from his MD and HR.

'I'm delegating...stepping back, ...I'm coaching my team – influencing them, not dictating... I have a much more considered approach...I'm calmer- I'm getting a lot more done – because I am calmer!'

'Home life is unbelievably different – it's quality time with the kids ...My eldest son said "You are so different with mum"'

...I've lost weight... and I've signed up for the 3 peaks challenge....

I've even bought myself a train set.'

This is B's Evaluation report summary

'This coaching is and will change my life in a very positive way but more importantly the positive impact on all around me is really feeding my positive energy. It will enable me to reach my true potential which, prior to these coach sessions, would have been unlikely.'

'It now enables me to take a very different approach to all situations, both personal and business – I am finding I am being approached more by various parties for advice and guidance on lots of different subjects.'

I now have a 5 year plan for my whole life and even if ultimately I don't achieve everything I am planning and working towards, I will be a great deal closer than I would have been, but I will also be a great deal happier, as will those around me.'