



The Big Blue Box Ltd

Leadership And Recognition

This case provided powerful messages for both the coachee and for his manager – which would affect the culture of the organisation.

Sometimes the key to motivating people is so obvious and simple. As leaders we are often so focused on achieving 'the task' that the human needs are forgotten. As individuals we can be driven by powerful forces we sometimes don't even recognise, such as the Values we inherited in childhood, or a sense of Duty.

The Background

K, the coachee, is a high potential manager, the head of a business function, with a significant career behind him and a very promising future. He would frequently over-commit his diary and would often be found 'multitasking'. Coaching sessions were rearranged to accommodate sudden crises. His health was an issue that he often neglected in his drive to be seen to be achieving.

In our first coaching session K was desperately trying to finish an email whilst holding a conversation. Hitting 'send' K immediately realised that the internal email was mistakenly sent to the client!

The Process

In conversations it became clear to K that he was trying to earn the respect and recognition that his father had never shown him and that he was driven by those values of hard work, self sacrifice and 'doing the right thing and the right thing will happen'.

In one coaching session together we invited K's very driven and highly respected business leader to join us to share the discussion.

So focused upon the meeting had K become that he forgot to bring his medication with him – suffering an attack in the meeting - forgetting to look after himself as his sense of 'duty' and 'doing the right thing' had driven him.

Upon his recovery he was reminded that he also had responsibilities to his wife and family!

The conversation turned to the topic of Recognition.

I asked K's manager 'How did he tell K how well he is doing – how good he is?'

K's manager replied:

'Well... I don't [tell him he's doing well] ...

I realise that we just drive to achieve a goal, do it and then move on to the next ... we never celebrate the successes... and we make an issue of the failures too!'

'OK then how would you tell K how good he is?'

'Mmm ... I would say that – when I leave this company that K is the only person I would take with me.'

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K was stunned by this comment; he'd never before had that kind of powerful recognition from someone he respected!

K was in tears.

His manager paused for thought – he hadn't realised how important feedback, thanks and recognition could be.

He resolved to make sure that in future he ensured that recognition and thanks were part of his own style.

The Outcomes

For K this coaching enabled him to see for himself what was driving him and to see some of the symptoms of the current imbalance of his perception of himself, to hear how others really thought of him and to reassess how he should manage himself in future.

This case also illustrates how the impact of a coaching series can impact upon the 'stakeholders' – the sponsor, the 'boss', peers, reports and team members, and the wider organisation and its culture.