



The Big Blue Box Ltd

Putting On a Professional Performance

The Background

O is new to the organisation and her manager sees her as having potential for senior leadership roles. She is very keen to make career progress and has excellent professional qualifications.

The coaching objectives are:

'To ensure I had the confidence and self belief to do this and to ensure that any lack of confidence was not holding me back from being successful.'

The Process

This is the story of our first session which began by discussing her personal objectives.

O described:

'Wanting to make maximum impact over the next 12 months and recognising that I had to demonstrate both capability and appetite to progress...

I want to be able to test myself, to drive, not just to tick over, to build a brand new team – to shape and design. I want to be able to step up, to differentiate myself, to achieve promotion.'

As the conversation progressed and O was able to relax so she began to identify some of the more immediate outcomes she would like to achieve from her coaching sessions.

There was a feeling of tension and urgency in O's language, there were also indications that her self-belief and confidence were not going to support her ambition; that she was perhaps trying to be something she felt she ought to be.

In the confidentiality of the coaching session O was able to accept:

'...but I need to be comfortable in my own skin, to grow my self-belief around my capability, I need to change more!'

As we talked about the whole of O's career, life and her story to date, we identified that one of O's 'outside' interests is the theatre and acting.

We explored this theme as a metaphor for her own performance in her 'theatre' of Life and Work, comparing O's preparation for a role on stage to preparation for her role in her career.

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The Outcomes

The comparison of her approach to her career and profession to her approach to amateur dramatics brought an immediate 'Ah ha Moment' of insight.

'Oh I can't believe it, it's so obvious isn't it...

I can really see some of the things I haven't been doing.

I wouldn't dream of going on stage without learning my lines ...

and I'd listen to the director,

and I'd research the character too!

I'd get the costume right.'

O realised that, compared to her approach to amateur acting, her approach to real life and work was 'unprofessional'.

There is often a tendency, at the moment of 'insight', when suddenly an answer is found, to rush straight in to 'Action' without pause for reflection, observation, analysis or planning.

We used the rest of the time in this, our first session, to put in place some activities that would allow pause for reflection and consideration of the learning.

O started a journal to capture her thoughts and feelings, she was asked to listen to her own 'self-talk' and increase her self-awareness, to identify around her those colleagues whose 'performance' she admired.