



## The Big Blue Box Ltd

### **The Barriers To Performance Are Sometimes Hidden**

The barriers to performance are sometimes hidden – from the individual.

This case indicates that actions that simply address the symptoms of a problem are unlikely to bring results, sometimes in order to improve performance a degree of patient investigation must be undertaken to explore and identify the real causes and the barriers.

#### **The Background**

K is a high potential leader of a key team within a high profile organisation.

She is one of a small, diverse leadership team. K had been on training courses but that learning had not really been effective. A previous conversation with K had illustrated that there were significant issues affecting her performance at work, but K had not been able to ask for help as she felt this would expose a weakness. Seeing the impact of coaching upon colleagues K had requested coaching to assist her to integrate into her peer group, to feel able to challenge, to be more assertive and have a clarity of purpose.

#### **The Process**

In our first session it was clear that issues at work were affecting her feelings of self worth and confidence. It was apparent that all was not what it seemed in K's life. In the privacy of the coaching session K was emotional – strong feelings were unearthed as we explored her 'story so far'.

K's honesty with herself in the first session may have been a catalyst. To date, an apparent stability in her private life covered a turbulent childhood and family life.

Between the first and second sessions K's private life took a significant change and she was caused to address some immediate and painful decisions.

Bringing these events to the coaching sessions we were able to explore some deeply hidden feelings.

Looking back on all aspects of her life so far K realised:

*'I've never been able to talk about these things before; I've never taken the time to think.'*

This was, as K described it:

*'A golden moment'.*

Summarising the insight in her second session she noted:

*'Suddenly I was able to recognise my fear and go there. I was always thinking – 'If I do something - what will go wrong?' My fear is so much worse than the reality. I was really risk averse but now I can begin to think 'what if I don't do something - what will happen?'*

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By our third session K was realising the benefits of expressing herself clearly and being appropriately assertive. Her feelings of self worth returned and she was more confident exploiting her new skills and confidence at work and in her private life.

Our final session was used to support her progress and discuss some of the issues that had arisen, precipitated by K's new approach.

### **The Outcomes**

The coaching was a catalyst for K.

Under pressure at work, a need for change was apparent. Events, coincident with the coaching support enabled K to see herself in a different light, enabling her to understand herself better, and take action.

She was able to rebalance her role at work such that relationships with her team and peers improved and her manager remarked upon the change.

Her ambition and feelings of her own 'potential' and capability were significantly enhanced.

K is now seeking to extend her role and take on new challenges.

She has managed an important conversation with her manager, '*resetting the understanding and contract*' between them.

She has corrected and rebalanced other relationships at work and in her life. Her courage to address issues of uncertainty has increased as has her understanding of herself.