

Why Telling Them Is Not Enough?

How to make more of your people's talents
Mike Schwarzer

Excerpt



A practical guide for modern organisational leaders and managers
to engage their people into collaboration and action

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www.mikeschwarzer.com

Introduction

Welcome to 'Why Telling Them Is Not Enough?'. A book that is written for you, you the leader, you the manager, you the coach, you the mentor. The key word is YOU. You, the person who is entrusted with the responsibility to deliver results that meet and exceed organisational expectations through its people.

Let me begin this book with the very essence what this book is about, questions!

Are you maximising the talents of your people? And how do you know that you are maximising the talents of your people?

Are they following you to where you want them to go? And how do you know that they are following you to where you want them to go?

Are they moving your business forward? And how do you know that they are moving your business forward?

If the answers are no, then this book might just be the key to running your operation with a new forward moving dynamic, ease and fluency. If the answers are yes, then you might recognise a pattern that makes you effective and one that can be replicated.

This book is designed as a resource, a practical guide, to help you engage, or better *involve*, your people into collaboration and action as well as strengthen your organisation's learning and performance capacity. A capacity that gives your organisation greater flexibility in its ability to bridge the gap between where it is and where it wants to go.

Exploring your world, if in business or in private, with questions can open your mind and lets you look beyond the filters and smoke screens that may taint your perceptions and understanding about what you think you see and know.

In this book you will have the opportunity to explore a dynamic change vehicle that is highly focused on creating and moving towards end results. And if mastered will allow you to elegantly move your people and your organisation from where you are to where you want to go!

This vehicle is designed to engage more of your people's talents into action. Invite greater responsibility and ownership. Develop flexibility in their ability to position their thinking and decision making. And furthermore stimulate creativity and open new possibilities for them and your organisation.

Using this vehicle is not limited to engaging people at micro levels of operation such as managing people, delegating, training, coaching, mentoring, negotiation, mediation and so forth.

You may also consider the vehicle's services to position your organisation's macro system. Engaging it to construct and structurally align your purpose, vision, values, culture, systems, strategic & operational activities, micro levels of operation, and current reality. As you can see, the micro level of operation in this model is an element of the bigger macro environment of your organisation. And as such is not an isolated and independent function. But in a systemic sense an integral element. Without proper engagement this can interfere with an organisation reaching its goals. Slowing it down and reducing its competitiveness.

The Dynamic Change Vehicle

So far we have discussed the use of questions in engaging your people to achieve greater performance and collaboration. Let's assume you like that idea but you are unsure on how to tackle this approach and you may ask "So how can I become good at this questioning stuff?"

Well, thank you for asking! The way you become good at asking questions is, firstly, with the help of a model or vehicle and, secondly, with lots and lots of practice and feedback.

The dynamic change vehicle that I am about to share with you will provide you with a dynamic structure and system that gives you direction and acts as a reference point to keep you on track.

The practice will allow you to develop and transfer the new skill from your intellectual understanding into your neurological muscle, as a new behaviour (unconscious competence).

Continuous feedback will allow you to track your progress, fine tune your skill and make adjustments along the way. *"He who would learn to fly must first learn to walk and run and climb and dance; one cannot fly into flying."* Nietzsche

Alliance of three elements - Framing, Dialogue and Navigation

The dynamic change vehicle I am describing here engages an alliance of three elements – *"Framing, Dialogue and Navigation"*. They work interdependently in a systemic non-linear motion with each other.

1. Framing!

You don't know much about frames? Think again! You use and you are exposed to frames all of the time. At work, at home and everywhere you go. Your own frames and the frames of

others. Frames control and drive your every move. Or as I like to call it "The Frame Controls the Game!"

So what is framing and what games are you playing?

To think is to frame. When you have thoughts and experiences you put them into a frame. You have to put them somewhere to be able to process them. You process them into a context, give them an identity and attach meaning to them. Through frames you organise your meanings and understandings about your world and by doing so construct mental models that become your reality. And it is this reality, which is unique to you, that influences your perception, beliefs, behaviours and your actions.

It influences how you respond to your environment. How you feel! How you motivate! What you excited by! What you resist! What you drawn too! How and who you trust! Who you will follow! And the list goes on.

This probably doesn't happen to you? But have you ever been in a situation where you felt pressured to live up to someone else's expectations? If you have had that experience, you have bought into their frame. On the flip side, have you felt mesmerised into action by someone else's energy, way of thinking, attitude and so on? You have also bought into their frames. In both cases, you have responded to their frame games. Which one was the more useful one to you?

Controlling the frame

A very competent and highly accomplished senior executive I worked with felt enormously pressured by the advice and opinions of a number of involved parties on how to deal with a specific issue. In his mind he had to live up to all these people's ideas, opinions and expectations. And since these opinions varied from one another it was a challenge to satisfy them all.

The question was? Do you control the frame or does the frame control you?

what's the worst thing that could happen? You LEARN something!

So what have you learned so far? You have used questions to focus your intention and attention! And to evoke an intentional state that allowed you to put yourself into an ideal learning space. And these questions were framed with the intention to do so.

3. The Navigation Model

Now that you are clear on what you want to bring change too and you are in the right state for maximum learning, we can explore the navigation model using the four fundamental phases of - **Motivation, Commitment, Formation** and **Consolidation** (an adaptation from Dr. Michael Hall's Axis of Change) to take you from where you are now to where you want to be. As mentioned in part 1 of this book, these four phases will allow you to guide and track the change process and progress from the beginning to the end.

Phase 1. - Motivation

In this first phase of the navigation you generate the motivation to change. If you don't have sufficient motivation trying to change will be an uphill battle. To generate sufficient motivation you need something to move towards to. Something that has direction and clarity, and feels do-able and compelling enough to get moving.

You do this by establishing what it is that you want to happen or where you want to be, a desired reality. And also what you no longer want or where you no longer want to be, your current reality. Your desired reality gives you the direction and a reference point to where you want to move and your current reality gives you a reference point to what you want to move away from.

A point to move toward and a point to move away from! Why is that important you may ask? Here are a couple of reasons.

The first one, remember the saying "*If you don't where you going how will you get there?*" Knowing what you moving

toward, gives your mind direction and measure. Apart from knowing where you going, it will also give you a measure to gauge how far you are away from what you want to create and more importantly to know when you have arrived at your destination. At the same time, knowing your starting point is not insignificant either. *"If you don't know where you are, where will you start from?"*

Imagine you have just arrived at an airport in a strange city for the first time. And you have decided to hire a car to drive to the hotel that you are staying in. Where will you start your journey from? You may know that you at the airport. But do you really know where that is? So you perhaps get a street directory to establish where the airport is situated in relation to the city you in. Then you locate the area and street that your hotel is in and where it is in relation to the city. From that information you can make a connection between the airport and the hotel and work out an appropriate route to drive from point A to point B.

The second reason is this. Having a starting point, an end point and a strong enough reason to move from one to the other will generate tension. And tension seeks resolution. Just imagine stretching a rubber band with the index fingers of your left and right hand. The more you stretch it, the more tension you create, the more resolution the tension seeks. The more momentum or motivation it generates. Now relax the tension to a point where the rubber band begins to sag. How much tension is there now? How much motivation is there now? NONE! Let's say your right index finger represents the end point or desired reality, and the left the starting point or current reality. Take the rubber band off your left index finger. What do you observe? A rubber band hanging loosely on your right index finger. How much tension is there now? NONE! Now do the same with the other finger. What do you observe? I think you get the idea!

This principle is also referred to as structural tension. Just think of a time when you get things done easily. You may not do this consciously, but I bet with you that you are clear

where you are, you know exactly what you want and you have enough tension or motivation to pull yourself there.

Now think of a time when a project you work on seems like going in circles. I bet at least one of these three ingredients is absent or not sufficiently present. Or something else is in conflict with you completing the project. That principle is also referred to as structural conflict.

So what you really want to be able to master is the structural tension principle. This will give you a fundamental base to create long lasting change.

Learning Experience: Motivation Phase

Time to play and establish the direction, energy and motivation for the area you have chosen to work on. To do that, stay in your ideal learning state. From there explore the following questions which are designed to engage your mind and body into establishing your current and desired reality and generate the momentum to push toward your desired reality. You may like to write the feedback of your reflections down!

a) Current Reality – Moving Away from

Let's begin with what you want to move away from, your current situation.

Describe what is happening now?

- *What is the current situation?*
- *What is important about this situation?*
- *Is it moving you into the direction that you want to go?*
- *How and where is it moving?*
- *What is going on?*
- *What are you not happy with?*
- *What is not going well as you would like it to go?*
- *What keeps you in this place?*