

# Why Telling Them Is Not Enough?

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



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

# **Why Telling Them Is Not Enough?**

How to make more of your people's talents

## **FREE eBook**

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## 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!

## 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."* Neitzsche

### 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 are excited by! What you resist! What you are drawn to! 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?

He realised that he inadvertently played by their personal rules of their game and more importantly that he didn't have to buy into them. A huge load was taken off his shoulders. Instead of being controlled by the frames of other people's ideas and opinions, he repositioned his own frame of reference. Replacing it with the rule

that opinions of others were only that, opinions. That allowed him to view ideas and opinions as information and choose which information was useful and which wasn't.

### **Nobody makes you do anything without your permission**

I want to note, that sometimes we play by other people's frames not because they intentionally want to control our thinking. Often this is far from their mind. But more by our own frames and games that we put onto ourselves that make us believe that we have to live up to some else's imaginary expectations. Here is a little line for you that you may like to keep in your treasure chest: "Nobody can make you do anything without your permission".

This book is loaded with frames. It starts with the headline. It's framed as a question. A question designed to arouse your curiosity. The frames throughout this text are written and placed with intention to engage the learner in you. With the purpose to open, question and stretch your mind. To recognise patterns in your organisation's people management that may prove limiting and costly. To identify the champions in your organisation who have the natural flair to engage people and model their strategies. And trigger your curiosity in exploring your own capabilities and make you a better contributor to your world.

### **The orientation and texture of your framing is critical in engaging people into action**

So, are you genuinely serious about your business? Do you see organisational learning, continuous improvement, and good people management as a vital part of your success? Then the orientation and texture of your framing is critical in engaging your people into action! Framing that generates the energy to move forward and that provides a foundation to cultivate and maintain relationships that are supportive and in alignment with your organisational vision and goals.

That reminds me of an experience. After a coaching session at a client's home, I got to speak with her spouse. A semi retired gentleman who spends a lot of time on his hobbies. Painting model

trains and solving jigsaw puzzles. He was extremely passionate about these activities and very proud in showing me his work. I have to admit, model trains have never been much of an interest to me in the best of times. And I absolutely have no patience for jigsaw puzzles with thousands of pieces. Yet I was excited viewing his work and listening to his accomplishments. I was on a high full of energy and joy when I left their home. I was quite mystified to how something that would normally bore me to death gave me enjoyment and pleasure. And then it hit me. It was the orientation and texture of my frame of mind.

Having just been in a coaching session, where my energy and attention was fully focused towards the person I was working with I was still in that same mental space when talking to her husband.

What I discovered wasn't that I got excited over model trains and jigsaw puzzles. Instead, because he was in such a joyful state and my mind was tuned to him, I was able to I enjoy his enjoyment! It wasn't about me, nor was it about his hobbies. It was all about being in and supporting his space with his energy. What an insightful learning experience!

When you are engaging your staff where is your attention and your energy? What are the frames that you operating from in getting the best out of your people? More importantly, how are they working for you? And how are they working through the eyes of your people and your organisation?

already champions at running races. I am their coach to help them get even faster smarter. (What about that for a frame?)

So back to you. How do you coach or develop your people? Do you give them the fix, by imposing your solutions on to them? Or do you encourage and engage them into coming up with their own solutions? Which one would make them more independent? And which one would be more beneficial to your organisation's growth?

### **3. Navigation!**

So far you have explored the concept of framing and dialogue.

How do you know where to start and where to finish the change process? And how do you know which path to take to help your people through a transition?

There is one ingredient missing yet to make it a dynamic change tool. You need a navigation device, a road map. This road map will provide you with a structure within you can facilitate, track and lock-in the change process and progress.

### **Four Navigation Phases**

A useful navigation model that works well for me consists of four phases – *motivation, decision, formation, and consolidation.*

Without the right motivation it is going to be very difficult for anyone to achieve long lasting change. Being motivated by necessity such as a threat will only last until that threat is eliminated or reduced. Hence if you are trying to make your people perform with pressure, think again! However, being motivated by possibility generates a momentum that seeks solutions. And wouldn't that be a better proposition? Of course, just because someone is motivated and excited about something doesn't mean that they are going to do it.

A decision needs to be made by the people involved. A commitment to work towards achieving desired results. The greater the conviction in the decision the greater is the commitment of the person in achieving that result or making the change. Without proper agreement and commitment by the people involved to move forward your project it can be a frustrating exercise. In the case that the

people you are working with are not ready to commit, you might have to go back to the motivation phase and review the strength and orientation of the motivation. However, if a concrete decision has been made to move forward then you can move on to the next stage, formation!

Once a motivation is established and a commitment is made to move forward you want to make sure that your people are equipped with the necessary resources to take the appropriate steps towards the realisation of the results or change. In this formation phase you focus on co-creating the necessary frames, strategies, and actions to make it a reality.

And lastly, you want to make the current development stick. The consolidation phase is designed to do exactly that, to consolidate and reinforce the progress made. Reviewing what's in place, determining any gaps that need to be filled and adding further resources as required!

This is a handy model to know. If you think of an experience where you were unsuccessful at guiding a person to change, what phase or phases were the sticking point to move them over the line? Were they motivated to make the shift? Did they agree to commit? Did they establish sufficient resources? Were their motivation, commitment, and resourcefulness complete and aligned enough to succeed?

## **Summary and Final Words of Wisdom!**

So, there you have it, the Dynamic Change Vehicle, consisting of Framing, Dialogue and Navigation. This is what you have just experienced. You used the navigation model through its four phases - establishing Motivation, gaining Commitment, creating Formation and performing Consolidation. Using it as a guide to help you generate the structural dynamics that establish and focus your goals, create the mental models, strategies and process needed, and produce the resourcefulness and energy required to accomplish your goal.

Within these phases, your thinking was influenced by the framing of the information and the questions within this article. The framing of the information and particularly the questions were designed to -

- act as a surrogate interaction or dialogue between you the reader and myself the author
- evoke a state and an inner dialogue within yourself that allows you to deliberately explore the creative facets of your mind that ultimately leads you to greater mental and behavioural resourcefulness
- apply the structural dynamics, mechanics and system to create and accomplish desired goals

Shaping your change facilitation craft and further assimilating and solidifying the mechanics of this model into your unconscious competence requires – PRACTICE!

With practice this model can become a potent tool in enhancing your and your people's capabilities to create the changes and results that you desire. And as you have just experienced the best place to start the practice is on yourself.

Allow yourself to be playful and flexible with the process. Some people might feel some uneasiness with the type of questions that they exposed to in the model. It may stretch your thinking. Just stay curious and playful and give them a go.

Furthermore, the questions themselves are only a few of many. Feel free to tweak them or create your own and adapt them to your particular project and environment.

Now that you had a little taste for yourself on how this model works you can begin using it to involve and engage the talents of your people.

Make sure that you provide a learning environment for your people and yourself. Explore the model in a collaborative and conversational way. This model is designed as a two-way dialogue. If you are the coach or facilitator, give them space to reflect on the questions and come up with their own answers. Avoid answering the questions for them or telling them what they should answer. However, you may give them examples to stimulate the conversation if they terribly stuck.

Basically, your role in this conversation is that of the Asker, Listener and Feedback Provider. You ask intentional questions that encourage participation and require the receiver to explore and respond with their own answers. You listen with intent to what is being meant. And you provide feedback with non-verbal gestures like head nodding and verbally repeating and summarising their responses.

This brings us to the end of this book. I hope you enjoyed reading, exploring, and learning it as much as I had writing it.

Until we meet again enjoy these parting questions!

***"What's your first step using this process to engage more of the talent of your people?"***

***"If we meet in 3 months time, what will you have achieved using this model?"***

## **About the Author**

Mike is a Transformation Professional and Learning Leader who helps leaders and organisations to solve the problems that they have not been able to solve elsewhere.

He works with the underlying mental, behavioural, and deeper innate dynamics that drive people's and organisations' thinking and actions. They learn how to tap into their inner and outer capabilities in transformational ways and lift their perceptual abilities to see their world, its problems and emerging solutions with fresh eyes.



At the organisational level, Mike's approach challenges the status quo and hierarchical thinking. He takes you into the world of living open systems and their self-organising nature. From there you will be able to create a workplace culture that naturally draws from the collective wisdom of all its people and that is highly adaptable to the changing winds of a complex world.

For more information about Mike visit **[www.mikeschwarzer.com](http://www.mikeschwarzer.com)**.