

Access to Excellence

Photo: Friendship Hall, Khartoum Sudan.

Newsletter Spring 2006



It's Springtime in the UK as I write this, a time when change is all around us as nature wakes from its winter slumbers.

As the days grow longer and warmer we realise that we are not immune from nature's influence. We find ourselves invigorated and the challenges we face all become a little more achievable.

At times like these we

realise just how much the way we feel impacts on what we are able to achieve.

It is sad when within organisations we find ourselves rationing the very things that feed this sense of wellbeing.

Whilst we struggle with limited budgets and man-hours, encouragement costs nothing, takes hardly any time and can have a remarkable and long lasting effect.

Why not take the time to encouraging someone you work with today. You never know what might happen.

Steve Unwin

"Flatter me, and I may not believe you. Criticize me, and I may not like you. Ignore me, and I may not forgive you. Encourage me, and I may not forget you."

William Arthur

Excellence in Africa

3rd International Quality Conference

Khartoum, Sudan 8–12 March 2006

"We do not believe in ourselves until someone reveals that deep inside us something is valuable, worth listening to, worthy of our trust, sacred to our touch.

Once we believe in ourselves we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight or any experience that reveals the human spirit."

E. E. Cummings



It was my great pleasure to speak at the 3rd International Quality Conference organised by the National Presidential Programme for Quality and Excellence in Sudan.

This was my first trip to Africa. I wasn't quite sure what to expect and could not have anticipated the warmth with which I was

greeted. From the moment I arrived my hosts could not have made me and the other speakers more welcome.

As you may know, Sudan has had a difficult recent history, with a civil war ending early last year. The conference, held at the Friendship Hall in

Khartoum, took the theme of:

'Sustainable development in the Sudan of unity and peace in the context of national goals.'

With speakers from the USA, Middle East, Asia and Africa the conference covered a wide range of topics from sustainable development of oil



View from the River Nile

reserves, through to people management issues.

I had been invited to deliver two papers on the subject of change. The first examined the beneficial use of tools such as the Balanced Scorecard, and the second looking at the key role people play in sustainable change.

The conference benefited from high level government support. It was opened by the President of Sudan and closed by the Senior Vice President, providing direct links between the conference discussion and government decision makers.

Underlining this connection, the speakers

also contributed to a report for the government detailing recommendations derived from the conference discussions.

In addition to the conference, a highlight for me was the rest-day which included a musical evening and my first trip along the River Nile. Both were wonderful experiences and provided a brief but valuable insight into the country, its people and culture. As a result I was able to enhance my second presentation by sharing how I had been changed by the experience.

The conference and trip were full of new experiences, and I hope

to have the opportunity to see more of this fascinating part of the world.

Many thanks to Prof. Hadi Altigani, Salwa Ibrahim the support staff, fellow speakers and delegates who made the trip so enjoyable and worthwhile.



Click the link for more about the trip to Sudan
www.accesstoexcellence.co.uk/html/iqc.html



Traditional Sudanese Song and Dance Troupe

Writing

www.change-ability.com



As some of you know, for some time I have been working on a book to capture some of my thoughts about change.

These ideas form the basis of presentations I give, and underpin my approach to working with organisation to create improvement.

My writing journey has mirrored my experience

of the journey of change.

At first I simply captured 'notes to myself' I focused on 'What to do' based on my experience of creating change in organisations.

Eventually I began to realise that 'What to do' was not the determining factor for success. Indeed the desire to be told what to do was at the core of why change so often fails.

Real change is a function of what we are being, not what we are doing, the product of questioning, not of having answers.

This presented an interesting challenge, since even to say that 'there are no answers, only questions', is to present an answer.

Thus the writing changed direction. Instead of a text on 'What to do', it shared something of 'How to be', inviting the reader to explore and think.

To this end I have begun to write stories to share the concepts and ideas of change.

The first features three animals, and how the way they see the world conditions their ability to

"Once in a while it really hits people that they don't have to experience the world in the way they have been told to."
Alan Keightley

"All truly wise thoughts have already been thought a thousand times; but to make them truly ours, we must think them over again honestly, till they take root in our personal experience."
Goethe

"We need quiet time to examine our lives openly and honestly. . . spending quiet time alone gives your mind an opportunity to renew itself and create order."
Susan L. Taylor

change.

It's a book that does not set out to present answers or instructions, but I hope will stimulate your thinking to help you discover yours.

I hope to get this book published later this year and will of course

update you in future newsletters.

Change-ability.com
I've created a dedicated website which contains up-to-date information on this and several



Click the link to find out more
www.change-ability.com

other writing projects.

These include other stories, guides, a novel and a book that will gather together some of my favourite quotations.

"You have to lead people gently toward what they already know is right."

Philip Crosby

Book Review - The Art of Possibility

I remember seeing Benjamin Zander at one of his lectures seven or eight years ago, and being inspired by his message. This book captures much of Benjamin's philosophy for 'Transforming Professional and Personal Life'.

Jointly written with Rosamund Stone Zander, it draws on her experience as a family therapist, and that of Benjamin conducting the world's orchestras, including the Boston Philharmonic. The book takes the form of a 'How to' but instead of providing strategies to overcome life's obstacles, invites the reader into a world of opportunities.

With many references through analogy to his life in music, the book sets out a dozen practices which will bring the power of opportunity into your work and home life. The practices

are all simple. Each provides a story based explanation of its value drawn from the authors personal experience in the USA and UK, and straightforward instruction on its use.

As always with the best advice, there is no rocket science here, and the book is the more powerful for this.

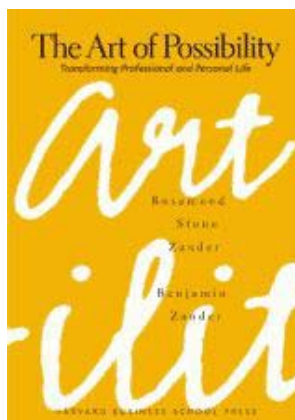
For example 'Giving an A' simply suggests that we approach everyone we meet prepared and ready to see them at their best. This very act will already have created energy to improve outcomes and create new opportunities in what they achieve.

Real examples bring the ideas to life and illustrate their true value.



Click the link for more book reviews
www.accesstoexcellence.co.uk/html/book_reviews.html

And if you know a book that you think I might like, please drop me a line at mail@accesstoexcellence.co.uk



This is a powerful book and I found some of the insights and examples quite moving.

I thank Martine Vanremortele for another brilliant reading suggestion. I heartily recommend this book to everyone determined to improve their lives and in search of simple ways in which to begin.

"To a great experience one thing is essential, an experiencing nature. It is not enough to have opportunity; it is essential to feel it."

Walter Bagehot

"The greatest administrators do not achieve production through constraints and limitations. They provide opportunities."

Lao-tse (604- 531 B.C.)

EOQ 50th Anniversary Conference

Antwerp, Belgium

May 28 - 31

The EOQ 50th Anniversary conference takes place, May 28 to 31 in Antwerp.

Unlike most other conferences, delegates choose one of eight routes to experience. For example they may perhaps spend two days roaming the battlefields of Waterloo discovering leadership best practice, learning about risk by building the fireworks for the grand finale, or

developing team-working as the crew of an ocean racing yacht.

The Art of Questioning

With the support of George Parker, (a magician), Cyriel Korthleven and Sahar Pasche we'll be running a route called 'The Art of Questioning' in which we will explore the power of using questions to create a transformed future.



The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed.

Albert Einstein.



Click the link for more information
www.eoq50years.org

7th International Conference of Quality Managers

Tehran, Iran

July 16 - 19 2006

It is my great honour to be invited to speak at the 7th International Conference of Quality Managers in Tehran, Iran in July.

I'm delighted to be delivering a paper on 'The Power of Uncertainty'. We will explore the reality that to succeed in a changing

world we must spend our lives beyond the edge of what we know and learn to relish the feeling of not knowing.

As is the custom, the conference will be held twice to accommodate the audience of 5000 delegates. Other speakers include James Harrington from the USA

and Frank Steer, past president of the EOQ.

Having enjoyed my first visit to Tehran last year, I look forward to an exciting conference and the opportunity to meet friends old and new.



Click the link for details of the conference.
www.qm-conference.com

Access to Excellence was created in 2001 by Steve Unwin to further thinking, development and use of organisational improvement ideas. In addition to publications and presentations we work with public and private sector organisations to create real sustainable improvement built on understanding change. Please feel free to contact us to discuss any aspect of improvement, whether your requirements, ideas or issues, or just to share your thoughts.

Many thanks for taking the time to read the newsletter and I wish you every success on your change journey.

"You must trust and believe in people or life becomes impossible."

Anton Chekhov

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