

Access to Excellence



Photo: Greenwich University seen from the Thames

Newsletter Spring 2007

Best viewed using Acrobat Reader. Available free from www.adobe.com



"When we walk to the edge of all the light we have and take the step into the darkness of the unknown, we must believe that one of two things will happen. There will be something solid for us to stand on or we will be taught to fly."

Patrick Overton

A lot has happened since writing the introduction to last Spring's newsletter and I'm no longer the person I was.

We shouldn't mourn. One of the challenges we all face is that we can't change whilst staying as we were.

To really change we must be prepared to let go of who we are.

This is frightening, and often we make the noise of letting go, whilst holding firmly to the past and simply calling it the future.

To truly let go, we must step into the unknown, not knowing what we will become.

As we step forward, we face the second challenge, that of not regretting time spent as what we were.

We invest a lot becoming what we are, and it is easy to mistakenly see leaving this behind as evidence of failure.

These are big challenges but the butterfly that never takes to the air is no better than a caterpillar, and the oak would not be mighty if it couldn't live with having

been once a tiny acorn.

There is only this moment in which to change and the decisions we take in the instant called 'now' shape our life.

In Spring we unleash the magical power that exists in even the tiniest seed.

We can scarcely imagine the power that exists in each of us, if only we dare let go and release it.

Best wishes

Steve Unwin

*"If not you, then who?
If not now, then when?"*
Hillel

'Letting go' released.

Life is made of millions of moments, but we live only one of these moments at a time. As we begin to change this moment, we begin to change our lives.

Trinidad Hunt

The book 'Letting go', is now available.

Sustainable change occurs not by doing, but by becoming something new.

'Letting go' explores the fears and challenges we face when letting go of certainty and embracing real change.

We often know more than we realise, and the book sets out to help reveal our own understanding of change, maybe helping bring clarity to some area, or opening our mind in another.

The book has three parts.

- An engaging introduction.
- An insightful and illuminating story.
- Carefully selected quotations to provoke your thinking.

I wouldn't be so brazen as to promise that the



book will change your life, however lives are changed in moments, by little things, by new thoughts, fresh ideas, or perhaps seeing something familiar in a new and unfamiliar way.

By this process, mountains are moved, armies raised and marvels created.

I hope you enjoy the book and it helps you to change and improve your work and your life.

Find out more and buy 'Letting go' at www.photonbooks.com



Available from photonbooks.com. To find out more, please visit www.photonbooks.com

Connectedness

I have a friend who takes the long route home, to allow time to remove his 'work frame of mind' and replace it with one suitable for home. For him, as for many, work and home life are disconnected.

Organisations have their customs, rituals and practices, often even their own language, all of which help create this separation.

We can see examples of this division elsewhere. We for example separate science and art, work and play, and categorise almost everything.

This can seem useful. In a fast changing world we don't have time to learn what really is, and categorising things lets us quickly absorb something new, into the pigeonholes of what we already know.

When we disconnect we simplify our world and we make it manageable. However although it suits us to see the world this way, what we then see is not the real world.

One of my favourite quotations is from Chief Seattle, chief of the Suquamish tribe around 150 years ago.

*"All things are bound together
All things connect
What happens to the Earth, happens to the children of the Earth
People have not woven the Web of life
Each is but one thread
Whatever we do to the Web, we do to ourselves."*

In many religions and cultures this interconnectedness is deeply inbuilt.

However it is a paradox that at a time when technology gives us unprecedented ability to connect, our thinking is so disconnected.

Our world is a knotted ball of string where a discovery in Mexico, may close or open a factory in Scandinavia and a decision taken in South Africa, may soon alter the lives of children in Asia.



This interconnectedness creates challenges. As Carl Sagan so eloquently put it.

"To create an apple pie from scratch, you must first create the universe."

So we choose to ignore the interconnectedness, and treat the world as if constructed from disconnected events.



We choose single threads as problems, and call the ends 'cause' and 'effect' as we seek their solution.

Sometimes our solutions fail and sometimes they work, and when they do we call it success.

But this 'success' is not the discovery of some secret, but the purely chance alignment of what we guessed and what was needed.

Rather than the search for answers, we need to identify questions, the questions that will let us explore connections to understand the world as it is, not the world as we would like it to be.

However our craving for solutions is so powerful that even the tools which would unlock connections are pressed into service to provide answers. Dispiritingly, tools such as the Excellence Model become little more than the means to find the best answer for a world that doesn't exist, rather than a tool to understand our world of interconnections.

The impact of seeing the world through answers or questions is explored in the second change-ability title, **'Travellers'** which will be published in the summer.

'Excellence: An Explorer's Guide' examines how we can understand and improve performance in our highly interconnected world. Available early 2008

"Success and failure are the same impostor."
Rudyard Kipling

"Most people think of success and failure as opposites, but they both are products of the same process."
Roger von Oech

'Smart' is an elusive concept. There's a certain sharpness, an ability to absorb new facts. To ask an insightful question. To relate to domains that may not seem connected at first. A certain creativity that allows people to be effective."
Bill Gates



How to Think Like Leonardo Da Vinci, Michael Gelb

If you are interested in change and new ideas, it's difficult not to be inspired by the life and achievements of Leonardo Da Vinci.

This book helped expand my knowledge of a man whose achievements spanned both art and science.

The body of the book examines what enabled Da Vinci's creative thinking.

Michael Gelb identifies seven characteristics which contribute to Da Vinci's remarkable abilities.

- **Curiosita**—An insatiably curious approach to life and continuous learning.

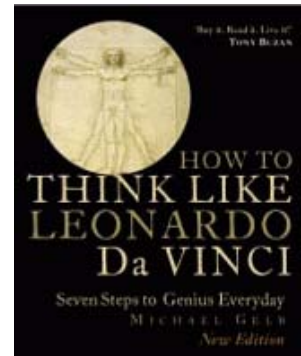
- **Demonstrazione** - A commitment to test knowledge and learn through mistakes.
- **Sensazione** - Continuous refinement of the senses to enliven experience.
- **Sfumato** - Willingness to embrace ambiguity, paradox & uncertainty.
- **Arte/Scienza** - The balance between art and science and whole brain thinking.
- **Corporalita** - Cultivation of grace, ambidexterity, fitness and poise.
- **Connessione** - An appreciation of interconnectedness, systems thinking.

Michael provides examples of each of these characteristics plus a host of exercises you can perform designed to enhance your own abilities in these areas.

This is an engaging book that has a host of ideas to help make you think more creatively.

I was so impressed by this book that it inspired me to create 'Essence of Da Vinci' which illuminates these seven characteristics through quotations and drawings.

'Essence of Da Vinci' will be available this Winter.



'To develop a complete mind – study the science of art; the art of science; learn how to 'see'; realize that everything connects to everything else.'
Leonardo Da Vinci



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

Presentation at 16th Quality Conference Czech Republic

At the end of March it was my great pleasure to make my first visit to the Czech Republic.

Ostrava, the third largest city in the republic, is close to the Polish and Slovak borders. My talk on the

power of embracing uncertainty was well suited to the region which has seen the decline of its traditional industries of steel making and mining.

During the visit my hosts took me on a tour

of the city's impressive mining museum and the evening was spent soaking up the atmosphere at the equally impressive Stodolni Street. Many thanks to Milan Hutyra and the friends I met.

"The only thing that makes life possible is permanent, intolerable uncertainty; not knowing what comes next."

Ursula K. LeGuin



Click the link to find out more about the visit
http://www.accesstoexcellence.co.uk/html/jakost_2007_quality.html

Asia Camp 2007, Nepal. 12th TQM Congress, Edinburgh

Asia Camp is a really exciting project, taking place 'on top of the world' in early September. It will bring together key influencers

to immerse them in three days of creative workshops to generate new ideas. I'm delighted to host the second day. Later in the month I'm

also speaking at the TQM World Congress in Edinburgh.

For more information please visit
www.accesstoexcellence.co.uk/html/news.html



7th International Creativity Conference, Greenwich, London

With the theme of 'Applied Business Creativity in 21st Century Organisations', it was my great pleasure to give the conference opening keynote address.

The conference was held in the magnificent buildings of Greenwich University, the former home of the Royal

Naval College, and in near The Observatory, the home of GMT.

The venue proved inspirational for what was a delightful conference. There were many highlights including the chance to work with Red Zebra and their creative rhythm, my first opportunity to be a

sculptors model, and learning how to use cartoons for creativity.

I was delighted to receive the 'Christopher Wren Cup' for best presentation (see picture) and would like to thank Kanes for the invitation and everyone at the conference for making it such an enjoyable experience.



The Painted Hall Greenwich



8th & 9th ICQM Tehran, Iran.

The 8th International Quality conference will take place in Tehran in July, and as usual will draw an audience of around 5000 delegates.

A warm and generous welcome awaits all who attend.

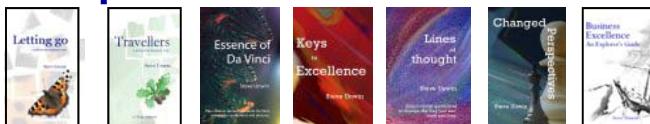
Sadly I'm not in Tehran this year,. However I am delighted that I will return in 2008 as an invited speaker at the 9th conference which will combine with the 14th Asia Pacific Quality Organisation

(APQO) conference. It promises to be a very special and unique event which I'm already looking forward to.



Click the link for more information.
www.qm-conference.com

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