

WORLDS AND OYSTERS

AN EXPLORATION OF INNOVATION

*If you always do what you've
always done, you'll always
get what you've always got.
Do something different.*

Yes ... but what? Easy to say but not so easy to do. The options available to you are totally dependent on how innovative you are. You and new ideas - do they share the same breath? Or do new ideas only arrive from other people - and sometimes it can be a long wait?

How innovative are you?

It's a big question. Your answer determines the quality of the life you lead. If you have been sensing that life is passing you by, or that you are in a rut, then this could be the moment when you are presented with the key. It's now up to you to decide what you do with it.

Being innovative means that problems, big or small, don't faze you. You have the freedom to dream up and take on new solutions. In the extreme, you may become solution junkies - actively on the lookout for problems to have the fun of discovering new solutions!

Having limited or dormant innovation results in the same old problems recurring. This may be less easy to spot if it is disguised with different people in different contexts. At which point the habitual responses kick in, with the same degree of limited lasting effect. If you are very good at this then you will have made an art form out of coping, getting on with what life throws at you. People may even admire you for it. But guess what -

life isn't going to get any better. Some people get all the luck - and you're in a different queue.

Your Trance

So what trance are you in? Cast your mind over the past week. What problems have you encountered? Being locked out or losing your keys; getting lost; not having someone's phone number; having computer difficulties? How did you respond?

Did you shout, beat yourself up, blame others, get angry, keep on doing the same things hoping something different would result, give up, despair - or wait for the knight in shining armour to come along and magically make it better.

And then how quickly did you recover and regain your thinking state, and begin to work out what to do next?

Now count the number of times you surprised and delighted yourself by responding differently. Either in your emotional response, or the way you considered the problem. What problems did you decide this time to tackle head on, as opposed to avoiding? What new ideas did you come up with, and tested for the first time?

If you are not naturally innovative, or respond within a narrow band of behaviours, then all you will be doing is putting old solutions onto constantly recurring problems - and wonder why you never seem to get ahead.

If you want something different, you need to notice first of all what **you** are doing which is not working, if you are going to have any chance of coming up with something different.

Your Emotional Response

**Event + threat + protection
= retreat**

When we feel threatened it is our instinct to curl up foetally, emotionally as well as physically. I remember when I was horse riding and something untoward happened (like the horse moved!) my knees would automatically rise up jockey style, and my hands would seek my chest. Sadly, as I found to my cost, this is the opposite to the required response which is to lengthen your leg and keep your hands low. Stops you falling off apparently, but it is totally



counter intuitive. Same with skiing and golfing. Whenever stressed the primary response is to tense the shoulders so raising the centre of gravity, instead of relaxing downwards.

This state of threat automatically and completely obscures any likelihood of innovation. Openness and outward curiosity? Forget it! Basic survival is the order of the day. Draw in your horns instead of staying out there looking for what to do next. The moment then passes and you end up reaping the 'rewards' of your timidity and cope with the consequences.

Event + curiosity + no fear = advance

The key is to become able to view sudden or unexpected events as non threatening, so that your natural fight, flight, freeze response doesn't fire off your misguided adrenalin. What if you were to view such challenges as a possible doorway into a new way of being?

A sports coach declared, *"I love it when I get an athlete who doesn't respond to my methods, since I know I am about to get free learning. My repertoire has increased and increased over the years because of these athletes, and my faith in what can become possible has increased with it. I have become more and more ingenious at finding ways of responding to each individual so that it becomes an exciting game of detection. It makes the success all the more sweet!"*

Let the frustration of the setback act as a trigger for your curiosity. The minute you feel that fight, flight or freeze response, that's your signal to look further.

*"The noblest pleasure is the joy of understanding." -
Leonardo*

Understanding the Problem

You no doubt know that rapport is about minimising the differences between you and the other person or object. And sponsorship is about holding a moving balance between tenderness, fierceness and playfulness.

You can apply this thinking to your problem. Instead of fighting and wrestling with it, seeing it as your adversary, sponsor and be in rapport with your problem as the starting point for creative and exciting innovation.

Always look at the wider system. Einstein is often quoted as saying the solution does not lie in the problem space - so look beyond. John McWhirter offers these spatial predicates to take you outside the confines of the problem. Think **of** it, **about** it, **around** it, **beside** it, **in** it, **through** it, **throughout** it, **extensively throughout** it, **out** it, **beyond** it, **way beyond** it, **back to** it, **overall**.



Studies of the Shoulder and Neck,

Robert Dilts in his modelling of the anatomical drawings of Leonardo Da Vinci discovered that da Vinci would 'get inside' the foot, or the arm - intuitive model or second position - and he would seek to feel all the interconnections within that physical system, and the sequence of actions. He would also seek to discern how the object grew and developed and explore which elements would become worn and wither first.

Thinking systemically exploring function, time, space and the relationships between each, Da Vinci would gain a deep understanding of what he was drawing. And so with any problem.

In addition, to deepen his understanding further, Da Vinci would transfer that human anatomical system into another totally unrelated one. So if a house were a leg, where would the knee be? Having clarity on the complexity or simplicity of the presenting system would throw up new ideas of where the leverage points might be.

What stops you?

The age old NLP question. People when asked why they didn't take the initiative in a particular exercise often come up with these basic responses. The shocking thing is that this is often how they approach their life in general. Do any of them resonate with you?

- ★ I didn't want to look foolish.
- ★ I wouldn't be listened to.
- ★ Others would come up with better thinking.
- ★ it wasn't worth the effort.
- ★ I was waiting for more information.
- ★ I didn't know what the rules were.
- ★ I didn't know if it was my place to.
- ★ Others were nearer to it.
- ★ I didn't hear it all.
- ★ I was waiting to see what others would do.
- ★ I didn't want to seem pushy.

What would happen if you could?

Well the words World and Oysters come to mind...

So here's to some excellent problems and setbacks to whet your appetite and let your innovative juices begin to flow.