



igniting engagement



## BREAKTHROUGH COACHING

*Businesses are increasingly turning to coaching as a way of becoming more competitive whilst realising the fuller potential of their people. However, there is little clarity about the different contributions of different coaching approaches. In addition, few practitioners set out clearly how to help clients achieve exponential performance improvements, how to genuinely create inspired individuals and dream teams, how to hot-wire personal growth back into the wider business, or how to instil a coaching culture that supports continuous improvement in line with the strategic plan. This article explores these questions through sketching a 'breakthrough' model of coaching and illustrating its core principles with mini case studies.*

### The Work Context

Today's challenging commercial climate demands more for less from people at every level of a business. For companies to survive and thrive requires more customer focus, more change agility, more teamwork, more initiative and responsibility, more innovation, creativity and enterprise... the list is daunting. Workplace pressures to perform at higher levels than ever before have widened the disparity between what people are skilled and trained to do within the parameters of a job description, and what a 'continuous improvement' culture actually requires of them. Employers, who increasingly need more for less, are faced with the dilemma of how to free up the discretionary effort of their people.

There is no single, simple answer to this question of course. Developing more collaborative work environments may help achieve strategic business goals and maintain high levels of customer satisfaction. It may also go some way towards ensuring that personnel at every level feel more valued and motivated, as well as more willing to go the extra mile.

Executive coaching has a role to play here. Whether the starting point is 'stuckness' or 'stretch', coaching adds value to everyday performance management issues such as helping a manager who finds it difficult to delegate, or helping a failing team find a new way forward. Coaching also enables 'rising stars' and 'fast trackers' to develop greater depth, and helps broaden leadership and other capabilities when there is nothing specifically to 'fix'. A coaching culture contributes to a more rewarding workplace - in terms of both job satisfaction and productivity.

However, is the current form and nature of coaching enough to help achieve step-change in people's relationships with themselves, with one another and with

their organisations, such that a different balance of give and take is achieved and people don't feel so short-changed by the prevailing 'more for less' mindset? How can coaching help people look beyond the conventional outcomes of goal-achievement to the bigger end-game of personal and organisational transformation?

### What is Coaching?

At its simplest, coaching is a process for producing insight and action. It enables purposeful change by focusing on the achievement of extraordinary results. It is a professional relationship with an individual or team that supports personal development as well as business growth. A coach provides specialised input in the form of questions, insights, concepts, observations, principles, perspectives, feedback - sometimes even active experiments - that are intended to build personal or team effectiveness. The results are greater clarity of ideas and plans, greater focus, greater levels of achievement through breaking through limiting beliefs and providing frameworks for excellence, and ultimately - greater personal satisfaction.

Coaching helps people tackle the internal obstacles that interfere with personal and team success. It is a deeply practical way of illuminating 'blindspots' and understanding what makes us tick, so that we can release more of our potential and experience more focus and flow in work - as well as more generally in life. Coaching generates greater self-awareness, helping us identify self-limiting beliefs and behaviours, develop greater self-responsibility and understand how our talents can be used more effectively. It often helps people get to the underlying causes of personal and performance blocks - like finding the thread that will unravel the sweater - so people get sustainable results at work that often have implications in other areas of life.

Coaching supports management in that it is usually action-oriented and solutions-focused. However, it complements rather than replaces management - the skills are different. While managers often benefit from developing coaching skills, a coach establishes a different and more specialised relationship with an individual - one that it is not based on organisational hierarchy and accountability - on the psychology of the carrot and the stick - but on the psychology of trust and through partnership. While improved performance is a common focus for managers as well as coaches, within the greater freedoms of a coaching relationship people and teams can achieve greater all-round learning and development which translates into sustainable performance improvements on the job.

## Beyond Improved Performance to Breakthrough

Breakthrough coaching is about transformation - of the person, team, project and wider organisation. Its starting point is about developing a particular quality of insight and awareness that sees patterns and builds on strengths to move towards desired states, rather than beginning with weaknesses to correct, things to fix and other deficit models of need.

For example, while its focus is solutions-oriented, breakthrough coaching doesn't necessarily begin with solving problems (the dilemmas of the past) but with seeing things for what they are and then creating something new and purposeful to move towards (the opportunities of the future). The thrust is forwards. The paradox is, of course, that problems are resolved in the process but so much more can also be achieved by beginning 'out of the box'. This more creative approach is in line with leading research on peak performance in areas as diverse as sports, arts, psychology and business by experts such as Lynch, CsikszentMihalyi, Maslow and Hamel. What's more, the theory works in practice. In one session of breakthrough coaching, a manager in a NHS Mental Health Services team explored how to deal with a disaffected senior member whose skills and experience were vital but whose manner was causing serious issues with team morale and affecting service delivery.

*"When I went for coaching I hadn't realised that I was so fixated on the problem that my energy was draining away and my sense of big-picture possibilities was shrinking. I thought the problem was with this one woman, but I got insights into how we were all contributing to our stuckness. She was just standing for something we didn't want to look at. This process helped me to step back, see things freshly and get a more realistic sense of what was possible. Somehow, things changed without me having to force anyone or anything. The process opened up possibilities I didn't realise existed, and we all ended up feeling a lot freer."*

In cases like this, results are not always achieved in a conventional, linear problem/solution manner. Crucially, the exploration of the situation includes feeling states, team history (especially looking at critical incidents and the defining moments of the culture) and team structure, organisational purpose, and desired future states. The process is quick (in the case of the NHS Manager, we spent one hour together) but the results are often more rich and subtle and the effect on people more energising. Learning also occurs at both individual and team levels. How does the breakthrough coaching process work? Most performance coaching models have a clear structure which encourages clients to set goals and objectives, gauge current reality, plan a critical path between the two and after execution of a task, conduct some sort of learning review. Breakthrough coaching builds on this tried and trusted success formula but is different in a number of fundamental respects. The image is not so much of rising steps but of an expanding spiral, where the client's burning issue is examined from different perspectives and subjected both to creative twists and rigorous reality checks.

## The INSPIRE™ Model

The acronym 'INSPIRE™' summarises the breakthrough coaching model. The acronym suggests a process for exploring the client's - and the coach's - Inner state, fundamental Needs, desired and possible Scenarios, ways of Prototyping solutions, Implementing, Reviewing and Embodying change.

### INSPIRE™ - The Breakthrough Coaching Model

I = Inner State	Self-awareness - identity, esteem, beliefs, values, uniqueness, Emotional state, performing frame of mind
N = Need	Organisational & personal needs, links to purpose, desired state, resources to achieve goals
S = Scenarios	Dreams, visual stories, pictures of alternative realities, visual approaches & kinds of resolution
P = Prototype	Practical experimentation, fast-tracked imperfect 'draft' solution tested for 'proof of concept'/learning
I = Improve	As well as implementing the refined solution with belief & confidence, real-time learning implies improving it too
R = Review	How has the process gone, what new concepts, behaviours etc in self / others / environment, changes to inner state
E = Embody	Integration of learning & change into Being, alignment with self-image

This model is inclusive and integrative, in that it enables the breakthrough coach to value and to draw upon contributions from NLP, Transactional Analysis, Gestalt, Systems Thinking and other orientations. In this way it is definitely not a 'one size fits all' approach but is flexible and predicated upon what works with different people in different circumstances. Importantly, the breakthrough coaching model is scaleable - it works with an individual, with a team and even with a whole enterprise, and it works within a single coaching session or across a longer journey of some months. It is also transferable - it works in leadership coaching, executive coaching, performance coaching, skills coaching and life coaching contexts.

The coach's role is to act as a creative catalyst - to hold a space for generative new insights to emerge, to trust the client's resourcefulness, to support active experimentation with new behaviours and approaches, and to maximise learning and growth throughout the process through deeply honest dialogues. The art of breakthrough coaching is to use minimal interventions that get maximum results for the individual and organisation. Rather than working in a strictly linear sequence, moving the client step-wise from one 'level' to another, the breakthrough coaching model enables the coach to focus on perhaps only one aspect of the awareness/action/reflection cycle. This is not a 'colour by numbers' approach - the model is a springboard, not a sofa! Furthermore, this approach is 'state specific' - that is,



it begins with developing awareness of the inner state of the client, the outer state of the project/organisation, and the space between (which is also the domain of the coach). Awareness of self, task and relationship is deepened and enriched as the other cycles of activity in the breakthrough coaching model (such as envisioning desired scenarios and taking action) are unfolded.

### The Model at Work

The model is best brought alive by briefly explaining the essence of each element and illustrating it with client examples.

#### Inner State

Breakthrough coaching begins, and remains rooted in, developing a profound awareness of our inner state from moment to moment. Newly-published research by Peter Senge and others at MIT is showing that the mindful development of one's inner state has a decisive impact on achievement. William O'Brien, former CEO of the Hanover Insurance Company who was interviewed as part of the study, has summarised his experience of leading change in global businesses by saying that *"the success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervener"*.

This point was brought home dramatically during a series of coaching conversations with the Managing Director of an independent UK consultancy serving the SME sector. The MD was thinking through the implications of establishing his company in its first overseas office. The business had an exciting 'big idea' to form a strategy around, that would unlock funding from governmental and regional business support agencies, while getting important PR that would establish the business's profile at a stroke. In addition the big idea was low-cost and low-risk.

In principle, everything seemed fine. However, this strategy did not have a hope of success, despite sympathetic market conditions and the resources that the business could invest. While the MD gave lip-service to the idea, he could not believe in it until he believed more in himself. Other personal and professional needs had to be acknowledged and given preference, in the domain of his family as well as of his work. The breakthrough coaching process involved helping the MD over a period of six months to explore his purpose, reconnect to his passions and open up to new experiences (including horse-whispering!) so that he was more confident about moving into the unknown. As he put it, *"I became more aware of my inner strength and learned how to put myself into a state of clarity and decisiveness before acting. I learned how to work with 'ripeness' rather than forcing something. The time I invested in exploring my own process is now paying dividends as the business process is moving ahead more smoothly."*

Recognising our uniqueness - who we are at a core level - helps us to be ourselves in the most powerful ways possible, and is the cornerstone of any transformation, for a brand just as much as for a person. This point is similar to one made years ago by tennis star Tim Galwey, who originated 'Inner Game' approaches to coaching. This

concept realised that between people of broadly similar technical abilities, on a tennis court as elsewhere in life, winners are the ones who play a better 'inner game'. Building on this powerful idea, breakthrough coaching involves exploring what Gestalt psychologists and management gurus now call 'presence'.

It is only recently that systematic approaches to cultivating 'presence' are finding a fuller place in management and organisational development. Presence is developed, in part, from exploring your identity (who am I when I am at my best?), intentions (what do I really want to achieve?) and interpretations (how do I make sense of what happens to me?). Presence implies the ability to be fully present - to work in the here and now, seeing things for what they are. When we lose ourselves it is because we try to see things through concepts and constructs and memories, rather than with simplicity and immediacy. Presence also implies the ability to manifest your uniqueness. This is the quality of being that is the source of your personal power and therefore key to your leadership, influencing skills and general success, for it is only through your uniqueness that you can be inspired and creative.

Presence is developed less through laboriously building skills and competencies, and more through removing mental and emotional barriers so your uniqueness, your essence can show itself. In this respect the breakthrough coaching process, at its heart, is like Michelangelo's chisel - it aims to help clients remove every bit of stone that is not David.

#### Need

Putting yourself 'in the zone' before you work on your goals is firstly achieved by centring yourself, becoming present, getting familiar with your changing inner state. The second vital aspect of achieving peak performance or breakthrough is through really familiarising yourself with the business need as well as your core need. This shifts the focus of your attention towards an outer target (while not detaching from your inner state - a 'both/and' approach that philosopher Ken Wilbur terms 'incorporate and transcend').

Need energises the field. It produces the drive to see what is most needed and to act. Needs are often described differently in business for instance, we can call them goals, objectives, critical success factors, even vision and purpose can stand in the place of fundamental organisational needs. Many years ago Abraham Maslow codified different levels of need into a hierarchy that ranged from basic survival issues to what he described as 'self-actualisation' - the need human beings have for psycho-spiritual growth.

It is often overlooked in the hurly-burly of business that these needs co-exist and are ever-present. Yet within a business it is clear that there are often different - and sometimes secretly competing - levels of need. For example, the over-riding business need might be different from the needs of a new Chief Executive who has to change the Board composition, and departmental heads and project leaders might have conflicting personal or political needs at any given time in implementing a



strategy. Needs are 'nested' in organisations like baboushka dolls. When these different levels and types of need are not acknowledged and aligned, nothing seems to fit and work splutters and stalls. On the other hand, when different personal and business needs are put into relationship, shifts can occur for leaders, teams and for the business as a whole.

This was the case for the Chief Executive of an international publishing company who worked assiduously over the course of two years on his personal leadership development as well as on how he could help free up the creativity of the business. As he put it, *"I wanted to know why we were finding it so difficult to successfully create product in the business, as it's our lifeblood. I also needed to learn to sit more comfortably in my work as a leader."* Over the course of two years, this CEO received a combination of 1-2-1 leadership coaching, was introduced to peer-coaching groups, experienced intensive two-day skills-transfer workshops in an innovative coaching methodology (so he was more able to model approaches with the Executive and Senior Manager teams) and attended, with some members of his senior team, open access coaching workshops to resolve ad hoc issues that came up in the business.

After looking deeply at some of his personal patterns, this CEO saw that he needed to feel less burdened by carrying responsibility for things he was not professionally qualified to do. He said, *"I think a lot of what has stopped me doing things is guilt. I felt guilty at not being good enough at things I thought I should be, and hid that and did nothing. Somehow last summer I got to a place where I said well, actually, I may not be good enough at Human Resources or whatever and so where can I get help, rather than I ought to be and hope I am or that no-one notices. That seems to be a shift that I made in myself, and so I brought in HR specialists which actually created an explosion of need, which we have not completely managed successfully but it has actually opened up all sorts of things. It has given us a forum to actually deal with things that we were not able to talk about or get resolutions on... [Coaching has] opened up all kinds of ways of being, ways of interacting differently, and has helped us open a space in the business."*

This is a perfect example of a shift that a leader makes personally which co-creates a parallel process in the business. As he said, *"Nothing has been culturally imposed. It has all sort of grown out of the need to free energy..."* While he is talking specifically about the business's need to create viable new products, he could also be referring to his own personal development.

#### Scenarios

In addition to managing inner states and developing need-awareness to provide the rocket-fuel for transformation, the breakthrough coaching model also extends thinking on goal-setting by focusing on building 'living scenarios' - detailed, moving pictures of preferred realities. At one level, these scenarios are visions of the future - not just empty wishes like "I want to be number one in my field", but *visual* and *visionary* images of what being number one would actually look like, feel like, smell like, sound like, taste like... The scenarios need to be grounded in reality,

so you can believe in them, while at the same time having an element of stretch. Clem Sumpter, a strategist with Anglo American Corporation in South Africa, believes that scenarios that are potentially transformational need to be built upon an understanding of the 'rules of the game', list key uncertainties, summarise options and point to decisions and action. This approach goes way beyond goal-setting - effectively you are building a powerful strategic framework for success. The key is to think visually.

The design team of a world-class household goods manufacturer we worked with needed to rethink how it serviced the needs of internal customers in the profit centres. The challenge for the management team was to keep pace with the business-wide culture change programme the corporation was rolling out, and to ensure the continued relevance of its global design offer so 'customer-colleagues' would not look outside the business for design services.

Over a nine-month period, the management team was supported to refocus its approach, from a conveyor-belt service that took design briefs and produced containers and graphics, to become an innovation hot-house with a mission to change the nature of innovation within the business. Approaches included team-coaching for the senior group of 4 managers (that employed visual 'thinking tools' such as brand wheels, 3D coaching methodologies such as fullerine mapping, voice dialogue and constellations); best-practice visits to facilities of non-competing companies in other business sectors so the team could see for themselves how physical environments were structured to deliver innovation; occasional visits to off-the-wall environments such as zoos to obtain inspiration; and facilitated 'show and shape' workshops for their wider teams to get on board with the thinking and co-create the new approach.

Interestingly, the management team decided not to publish conventional reports outlining its rationale and approach, but to prepare and share a series of hand-illustrated visuals as talking points between the design team and its different customer groupings. At one point, the entire purpose, vision, strategy, roles and methodologies were summarised by a team member in powerful colourful graphics on a fantastic A3 poster, which became the reference-point for the whole team's work. The effect was to produce engagement and genuine collaboration from the customer groups, and it captured the imagination and motivation of the design team. A number of the specialist coaching tools we used became appropriated by the client. Mixing conventional, dialogue-based coaching with more creative possibilities also bridged the gap between personal development of the senior managers and the business development imperatives of the management and staff teams. The visual scenarios become more than outputs of thinking - they became the medium through which focus was created, talent was aligned and action was enabled.

#### Prototyping

The natural next step is to try something rough-and-ready out in action, in a controlled way. Designers call this



prototyping. It is, effectively, a creative experiment that doesn't have to be perfect its purpose is to set up vital feedback loops that enable you to refine your approach. Prototyping is based on the principle that we learn more by doing than by planning and that we get further faster. This can contribute to risk-management practices. It also begins to 'prep and prime' the wider team, company and market for responses that will support a project's objectives, and so it aids the wider organisation's learning.

For example, we worked with a newly-formed innovation team in a high-street retail company. The Director was under pressure from the business to deliver short-term results, yet her team was not ready - in terms of skills, confidence or resources - to provide a quick 'big win'. In executive coaching sessions with her and separately, with the team, it was decided to undertake a few fast-tracked micro-projects - effectively, prototyping ideas in the early stages of the innovation pipeline that were not ready for commercial implementation. Three ideas were trialled over a six-month period not as mass-market roll-outs, but in small stores, in selected geographic areas. Each project had the potential to shift customers' perceptions of the brand, to test-market possible revenue generators, to refine or even transform the company's new product development process, and to refocus the innovation team by letting them cut their teeth on customer-facing projects.

The company took all three ideas to market, each with imperfections that management was mindful of. As prototypes, each project had the potential to deliver great returns in terms of Director, team and company learning about new ways of being commercially flexible and engaging multi-disciplinary project teams (operations people, store managers and sales staff, marketers, directors, suppliers and others). However, as part of a breakthrough process, the prototyping did not add the value it could have done in this instance and each project was abandoned after initial data were in. There were several reasons for this, including timing (the company was under short-term financial pressure and conditions were not conducive to learning and longer-term investment) and employee communications (insufficient attention was paid to explaining to staff that these fast-tracked prototypes were work in progress, so the outputs cut across usual quality standards).

More substantively, when prototyping is used in isolation from the other aspects of the breakthrough coaching model, results will invariably be compromised. More attention needed to have been paid to the inner state and needs of the Innovation Director at a time of intense pressure, to the inner state and needs of the immature innovation team and to the business at a time when city analysts were unsympathetic. The lack of early systemic alignment at the level of inner states and needs meant that critical groups were requiring different results and pulling in different directions without realising it. Discussing different scenarios with the Board might well have surfaced some of these tensions and improved top-level backing. After the prototyping experiments, the Executive team might well have understood more fully the need for improvements to be made before reviewing the work. The Innovation team itself certainly learned lessons

from this process, and transformed its business model as a result - successfully embodying the learning.

This case study illuminated some of the ways that executive and team coaching might be better integrated with the wider business development process. Where there are high-investment, high-risk business processes such as innovation, it is more beneficial to ensure that key players (such as the Executive Directors, or senior project partners) from other departments in the delivery cycle are also receiving coaching so that there is a shared mental and cultural model of development. Coaching-friendly processes such as Action Learning could also be usefully deployed. In addition, coaching could be used to develop wider business philosophies such as continuous improvement and culture change. Clearly it helps, too, if the whole organisation has a coaching culture, which this client did not. With only one or two individuals and teams receiving coaching, enterprise-wide benefits will not be fully experienced.

#### *Improve*

Having trialled an approach or two, and adapted the approach throughout the prototyping process, the next cycle of activity is to implement and continuously improve your individual solution or approach, even in real-time. Coaching helps develop the habit - in an individual and team - of continuous improvement. There are examples from many companies about the way coaching helps to drive continuous improvement into the culture of a business.

The focus of general improvement processes is to identify the many small things that could develop efficiencies. The theory is that mass incrementalism over time can deliver more value than occasional exponentialism. In a breakthrough coaching approach, this philosophy is extended by helping people - paradoxically - to spot what they need to stop doing, and also to see how achieving a different balance of 'factors in play' can produce winning results. Peter Keen, British Athletics Cycling Team Coach (the man who shot to fame when he helped Chris Boardman achieve his Olympic breakthrough some years ago) believes that aiming for perfection is a dead end.

*"Winning at the highest level is not about achieving perfection, it's about making fewer mistakes than the rest."*

The principle here is to work for the best combination of elements, rather aiming for perfect 10s on your critical success factors or evaluation criteria. The image is one of a graphic equaliser, where the various slide controls are all differently aligned rather than all turned full-on.

Ty Francis (Consulting) Ltd delivered some presentation skills coaching using video-camera playback over only two one-hour sessions with a Vice President of a multi-national pharmaceutical company. The VP had a series of important and sensitive presentations to make to the workforce, and needed to feel fluent to deliver his core message without being scripted, and also confident to handle questions 'off the cuff'. The combination of coach and camera provided a perfect feedback loop that enabled him to hone his unique delivery style so he came over as being authentic, and in charge of his message. He could really see how he needed to stop doing the things he



believed would make an effective presentation, so his genuineness came through, and also how he didn't have to be perfect in the sense of repeating exactly the same delivery to each audience - he could adjust the variables of tone, speed, facial expression, body language and parts of his content according to the different groups he was talking to, which helped him communicate more naturally and be seen to be more trustworthy at a difficult time in the business.

In another example, Ty Francis (Consulting) Ltd's 'SparkCatcher' peer-coaching process was used to develop individual continuous improvement practices for a group of ten consultants and managers from non-competing businesses. In a SparkCatcher set, over six one-day per month meetings, people gain powerful insights into their underlying patterns and those of their organisations - insights that support sustainable growth and development for the individual and the organisation. A participant commented, *"The insights I got from the group into how I do things, and how else I could consider approaching things, enabled me to improve where previously I couldn't see any room for manoeuvre. Because the group met over several months, I had the support and stretch to go deeper than I had in other training and development sessions. I started changing things at work, and realised that I was also changing."*

#### Review

Naturally, continuous improvement implies ongoing review and is part of any rigorous professional's work ethic. However, it is clear that in the daily grind of business activity, making time to step back and take a more strategic 'helicopter view' is difficult. It is also vital - in the dual sense of being important and revitalising. When it is not done well, stepping back can be a distraction from the work, but it has the potential to add significant value. The question is, how?

Periodic, big-picture review is an essential aspect of a breakthrough coaching model. A useful question to help people get beyond simplistic, post-mortem listing (*"This was good, that was bad, we'd do x differently but keep y the same..."*) in the style of a SWOT analysis, and point them towards more mindful, useful deeper-level learning, is "Why does it work when it works?" Offering this question recently helped galvanise two top-flight public sector teams who have to work closely together into a more powerful, collaborative working group. They saw how each person and function had an important place in delivering overall customer-facing value. Good review not only builds teams, but moves the business forwards faster.

However, as useful as this question is, its value lies in helping people look back and realise value deductively. How can review processes be set up in ways that help people look forward and work out value inductively?

Of course, review is concerned as much with evaluation (identifying value) as with learning (identifying knowledge). Many evaluation processes can have a 'wet blanket' effect on people as they are predicated upon externally-imposed measurement criteria, rather than upon jointly agreed frameworks for creating worth. However, research in

Australia on participative evaluation practices is showing that when evaluation processes are collaborative, values-related and future-facing they have the potential to add a generative rather than degenerative momentum to work.

Susie Goff, who is originating participative evaluation processes in public sector organisations and with community and civil groups around Sydney, says, *"My overarching experience of participatory evaluation is that it is a deliberative method of energising systems."* This is attributed to the fact that participants in - and those to be affected by - a piece of work determine, up-front and in advance, what will be evaluated and how, what the value criteria should be and even the recommendations for final reports. It sounds like common sense but is actually quite radical. As Goff says of her early experience in Australia, participatory evaluation can be *"... a business liability in a risk-averse market where winning contracts rested on tendering within a pre-agreed strategy by using pre-agreed evaluation criteria..."* So often at work we are not told where the goal-posts are, let alone engaged in designing and building them. Coaching that begins with participatory evaluation as a principle seems to help people mobilise differently around tasks, achieve more and embody their learning.

#### Embody

For there to be true transformation - in the company as well as in the individual or team - people need to make changes in how they are being rather than just in what they are doing. Ghandi put it perfectly when he said that, ultimately, *"We must become the change we want to see in the world."* This is about mastery, or in the less poetic language of management development, this is about unconscious competence. Embodiment enables us to move effortlessly and naturally from purpose to action in a way that is integrated and grounded.

Ty Francis (Consulting) Ltd provides highly unusual 'kickstart' experiences to show how to move effortlessly from inner states to embodied change. These experiences include horse-whispering programmes, aerial rope walking, wilderness work and others. Twin principles guide these programmes - we believe that how you do anything is how you do everything, and that novel experiences create the opportunity for novel insights. By working with horses, for example, your habitual ways of approaching projects, leadership, delegation, communication or other tasks can be paralleled and blindspots can be illuminated in surprising ways. Coaching conversations guide you from awareness of your own change process, into a deeper understanding of how you can use your self as an instrument of change with those around you. The horses (or other experiences) show that the most important shift is always the one you make in relationship to your self. For many, this shift of inner focus can transform their relationships and the results they get at work and in life.

As one participant, an experienced manager in the automotive industry said, *"I am moved greatly by our experiences and need to drop you a note to thank you again for enabling the start of my personal journey. We come this way but once and now more than ever, I must try to find my way. In the private space of my own home*



*and thoughts I can still feel the overwhelming beginnings of 'acceptance' by the horses and can still hardly believe that they & I worked together as we did. I feel very humbled and privileged that they would trust such a stranger and a novice as myself. I have lived all my professional life (or so it seems) in a conceptual, logical world where so often the needs of people conflict with the needs of a tough commercial world. My natural instincts have been buried deep and replaced over many years by learned behaviour, academic knowledge, tools, techniques etc. With your help, in only two days, I am now quietly determined to tap into my inner-self and if possible, begin to trust her."*

Only by focusing on your being as well as your doing will you be able to embody personal changes you wish to make. This final stage of the breakthrough coaching process ensures that any change is sustainable.

### **Beyond breakthrough**

Breakthroughs can be quite modest, such as seeing something in a way that dramatically changes your perspective and creates more spaciousness. In quite grounded ways this is quietly transformational (transformation is, after all, the result of a breakthrough). Breakthroughs are always co-created, as others fundamentally bring the inspiration to support developmental shifts. The art of the breakthrough coach is to support this natural, virtuous circle of inspiration, breakthrough and transformation. In this sense, the INSPIRE™ model is not like going steadily up a linear staircase, but more like spiralling dynamically upwards and outwards in a naturally expansive way.

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