



# WENTWORTH 1

Leadership, Teamwork and Self-awareness

## VIEWPOINT

### Changing Behaviour - side effects

I was with someone the other day who described how a colleague of his had come back from a week on Wentworth 1 and announced "I'm off to change my relationship with the HR Director". The response of those in earshot was "you're \*\*\*\*ing what?!?", but off he went and it worked - they now have a very different and much improved relationship. This was a "new" behaviour, and it clearly had a positive effect. I found it quite amusing because it was so direct and simple, whereas most behaviour changes are noticed over a period of time.

These days I almost take it for granted that there will be some change in people after one of our courses, but I still quite often get asked by potential new customers "can you really change behaviour on a training course?" I answer that we can't change it, but the participants can - all they need is a powerful training experience which increases their self-knowledge and gives them the tools and desire to change.

What I think is more interesting and contentious is the side-effects that significant change in behaviour can cause. If a powerful training course works, it will have an effect on people's behaviour which most organisations see as positive, but there are on occasions, significant changes which are not always seen in a positive light. For example: -

On the work front: -

1. People can return more assertive and be too challenging for comfort "I know I wanted him to speak up more, but not to become a pain in the bum".
2. People can come back and ask for a pay rise, either because they have learned to conquer some of their fears, or increased their sense of self-worth (or both).
3. People can choose to leave the organisation, because they connect with their lack of fulfilment and develop the courage to get out of the comfort zone.

And on the home front: -

4. It can lead to tensions in relationships where one partner has changed and grown and the other is the same. "You're not the same since you went on that course!" (Incidentally, there have now been over a dozen partners of previous Wentworth 1 participants who have come on the course themselves to "even things up"!).
5. On very rare occasions it can lead to a parting of the ways, because someone connects with their unhappiness and isn't prepared to continue suffering.

Most organisations are wise enough to realise that if a development course really does work, it can occasionally have unpredictable consequences, and they embrace that "risk". A few people are disturbed by such "side effects". Unfortunately, I cannot see a way of stopping them. I guess I would prefer it if things were simple and there were only convenient, targeted "positive" effects, but when someone arrives on the course they come as a whole human being, not just a loyal employee, and they will be affected by it in life as a whole.

Perhaps in a strange way it's still a measure of success if these side-effects happen. Or maybe they are not "side-effects" at all - just effects.

- AS/July 09

UPCOMING WENTWORTH 1 COURSE DATES

6 - 11 December 2009