Mike’s Musings:
Hints and Help from Mike Jay:
Crisis & Opportunity in Executive Leadership and Coaching

Mike Jay

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Crisis & Opportunity in Executive Leadership and Coaching

Hi, my name is Mike Jay. I call myself a Master Business Coach, but as most generalists I can turn on a dime and coach executives, entrepreneurs and even myself at times, although the latter is the most challenging. Some clients are, well, you know.

Anyway, I’ve been asked by colleagues to write a few words to you every so often as we work to put some clothes on executive coaching. First of all I’m not an expert. I live and work from a laptop that resides in a whole lot of places. Moving about seems to suit me pretty well and I have a tendency to chase the sun, hence my own relish of the web-work style as our friend Bill Gates wrote about in Business ~ The Speed of Thought.

Over the past few years, about 15 now, I’ve pretty much made a living coaching, so I do have a few “rings” on my trunk, but that shouldn’t carry much weight, at least as much as my belt carries nowadays. I was really doing well until I married my lovely Colombian wife who has proceeded to create gustatory opportunities a single man never knows but on occasion. Therefore as the incredible bulk, I do want you to know I carry a lot of weight, although my opinions should be digested with several grains of salt.

Now, to that executive coaching stuff. Actually, the way I see it, we’re headed for crisis and opportunity, may we be so lucky. We are at once paradoxically suspended between the tension of opposites as discussed by the great Carl Jung. I see so much opportunity around me that at times I’m unable to sleep. On the other hand, the impending leadership crisis keeps me up sometimes as well.

Some people will say that increasing one’s complexity of mind and spaciousness of thought is not correlated with happiness and quite frankly the tension seems to produce validity for those notions nowadays. I’ve digested at least 50 books this year, everything from Fritof Capra’s The Hidden Connections, Synaptic Self by Joseph LeDoux, Executive Coaching by Fitzgerald and Berger to Execution by Charan and Bossidy. Sprinkle those with Drucker’s new book on Managing the Next Society, The One Minute Millionaire by my old mentor Robert Allen and the Chicken Soup guy Mark Victor Hansen, along with the just released The Resilience Factor by Reivich and Shatte. I have at least another 50 started. There’s no way to keep up, catch up or stay up, is there...?

I’ll close this brief expose with some conclusions from The 2010 Leadership Report to put the executive coaching crisis and opportunity in perspective.

Forces of the Future.
- Globalization
- Hypercompetition
- Technology
- Board/Financial Market Expectations
- Emphasis on Customer Relationships
- Changing Organization Structures
- Employee Expectations
- Workforce Demographics

“Collectively these forces will accentuate and intensify current trends... senior leaders will increasingly need to possess highly refined skills in strategy development, change leadership, relationship/network management and the creation of executive teams.”

The Critical Compeptencies for 2010?
- Master Strategist
- Change Manager
- Relationship Builder/Network Manager
- Talent Developer
Derailers?
- Risk aversion — hesitancy to take business risks
- Personal arrogance and insensitivity
- Overly controlling leadership style
- Reluctance to deal with difficult people issues

Source: The Conference Board, *Developing Business Leaders for 2010*

I think that about says it, crisis and opportunity abound. Executive leaders and coaches will have their hands full in the next economy, which by the way, in case you haven’t noticed, has been here for awhile!

Until next time, may you live in interesting times,

**Mike Jay**

December 10, 2002

You mustn’t be frightened
if the sadness
rises in front of you,
larger than any you have ever seen;
if an anxiety,
like light and cloud-shadows,
moves over your hands and over
everything you do.
You must realize that something is
happening to you,
that life has not forgotten you,
that it holds you in its hand
and will not let you fall.

--Rainer Maria Rilke
[Quoted in Margaret Wheatley, *Turning to One Another*]

A creative genius, undoubtedly one of the founders of coaching. His death shocked so many of us that knew him. A huge loss. Many of the people who are now the backbone of the coaching profession would not be here today if it were not for Thomas and his enormous vision.

Thomas’ genius was in creating coaching tools and marketing them. His work was voluminous to the point of exhaustion. His intent was to bring coaching to the world at large . . . and he scarcely took breath as he worked towards that goal.

So much of the world of coaching has his finger prints on it. Like some of the great artists, his work and contribution is likely to be more recognized in his death than it was in his life.

Thank you Thomas . . . for your inspiration.

--Christine McDougall

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