

# MENTORINK™ NEWSLETTER

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## IN THIS ISSUE

### On Mentoring and Luck: Part 2.

There's a long-standing myth that it's luck that gets you a mentor. Last issue, we were introduced to one scientist's research on "luck" -- how people differ in their outlook on life and the impact this has on success. On page 4, we continue the saga.



### Books Mentoring and *Intellectual Capital* - Part 3 (Conclusion)

Thomas Stewart's *Intellectual Capital* deals with many things including concepts that will have an impact on making mentoring (and coaching) choices. While he does not explicitly label it this way, read on to see some of the implications. (see page 2)



## FUTURE ISSUES

- Mentoring Timeline visits Hollywood
- Mentoring and The Tipping Point
- On luck - Four Principles (Conclusion)



### Feature: The Cost of Coaching

Overview of a multi-million dollar industry.

*Luck is a matter of preparation meeting opportunity. ~ Oprah Winfrey*



### Mentoring Timeline

visits the design world (turn to page 5)



### Mentor Muses©: In times of crisis, how will mentoring help?

The opportunity was too good to pass up. This issue seemed perfect for a treatment. (see page 6).



### Ask Mentor

Some interesting statistics, research reports and findings are offered in this column. If space permits, in future months this may alternate with *from The Virtual Mentoring Library*©. Turn to page 6.



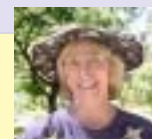
### Ideas under inspection

In some programs, partners "get together" to discuss a challenging idea that relates to how people view the world generally and their jobs specifically. For one sample, turn to page 4.



### From the Editor

Past issues have carried every thing & any thing on knowledge transfer using mentoring and coaching to support blended learning. Happy reading to all.



Your editor: *Marilynne Miles Gray*



## on Intellectual Capital - Part3



## (conclusion) "Around the water cooler" ...

Stewart makes a series of intriguing, if sometimes arguable, points about learning and training.

Just-in-time: He describes a large training-less organization that gave staff competency maps (expectations of what different employees should know) and made them "responsible for learning what they don't yet know or enhancing what they do to perform their current jobs, not to prep for the job on the ladder's next rung." In other words, just-in-time is important.

In keeping with this notion, research carried out by Watson Wyatt Worldwide between 1996 and 2002 (on human capital practices to increase shareholder value) agreed with this emphasis on just-in-time. It was discovered that prudent use of people resources was necessary or (if done poorly) this and other like activities had the potential of draining company value up to 33%. Specifically, when employees were given training for career advancement in excess of current needs, there was a -5.6% expected change in market value to the firm associated with just this one practice.

Thus, the emphasis is on being cautious about developmental training for the longer term. In fact, Watson Wyatt sees this as a "counter-intuitive finding" because such a practice is normally "applauded by conventional wisdom". While not wrong, these activities often are not well executed especially since they are very complex. And the designers of knowledge transfer programs using mentoring and coaching processes need to be aware of the importance of the just-in-time element.

Taking initiative: Stewart notes the onus is on staff at the individual level to undertake the learning, schedule it, track their own achievement (as opposed to mere participation).

But it goes beyond this. As he notes: "The relationship between individual learning and an organization's human capital -- not just its stock of knowledge but its capacity to innovate -- involves groups even more than it does individuals. It makes sense that a corporate asset should be social in origin."

Groups and teams around the watercooler: Stewart makes the case that learning happens in groups not alone and in isolation. However "not every group is a learning place... You can't create communities like this by fiat." He suggests people bound together by common problem sets, common pursuit of solutions thus then embody a store of knowledge. Such groups have (1) a history (2) an enterprise (as opposed to an agenda) (3) a shared culture as a way of dealing with the world and the learning that takes place in it. It's one thing to simplistically suggest complex learning can occur as they "exchange tips at the watercooler" but this overlooks some crucial issues.

First, no one knows what's being passed along at the

watercooler; second, it's unknown just how much the "expert" tipster really knows; third, the learner's further need to know is also an unknown. After that, we must take into account the necessity to practice, hone, refine, get feedback, and so forth. It takes more than a few minutes between sips of water to master the art of running a department, making a great speech, chairing a meeting, writing a report, and the list could go on and on.

In The Hitchhiker's Guide to Knowledge Management (August 2003), Kevin Oakes, Click2learn CEO in giving his definition of Knowledge Management (KM) points to the shortcomings of the water cooler approach. "KM is one of the most common catchphrases used ... to cover a wide spectrum... Yet so far, there hasn't been an industry-wide consensus of what KM really is... some people use information and knowledge interchangeably .. they aren't the same. Information basically refers to any content that can be communicated. Knowledge refers to content communicated in a context.

"There are two main types of knowledge... Tangible knowledge can be captured and represented physically -- for example, digitally as a Word document. Transferring that tangible knowledge to other people doesn't require a person to deliver it; it can be used individually.

(go to page 7)

"Goals are dreams  
with deadlines."  
D. S. Hunt



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# Closing your eyes won't make it go away ...

At the watercooler...

In your dreams...

Driving home from work ...

✓ thinking career?

✓ planning career?

✓ talking career?

✓ figuring out how to make it work?

✓ puzzling over failure?



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## Mentoring Myth: Part 2

To launch The Luck Project back in 1993, for two years Dr. Richard Wiseman placed ads nationwide in British newspapers and magazines, asking people who felt consistently unlucky or lucky to contact him. Over the next eight years, he studied 400 men and women from 18 to 84, from all walks of life who volunteered for further research.

Then, he interviewed these volunteers, asking them to complete diaries, questionnaires and intelligence tests. If he got this far, he invited them to participate in experiments.

Wiseman claims his findings reveal unlucky people have almost no insight into many, basic causes of their good and bad luck. Wiseman carried out a simple experiment to discover whether this was due to differences in ability to spot opportunities arising out of chance opportunities.

*"People only see what they  
are prepared to see."  
-Ralph Waldo Emerson*



Before we travel this road further, it can be noted that the connection between this and mentoring (or behavioral and performance coaching as some call it), is the focus on people's insights into their own thoughts and behaviors. An ability to do this, of course, makes it much easier to make progress while an inability can make it virtually impossible to develop and grow. Certainly, it will taint the willingness of a **mentor** (or coach) to help in the process.

An experiment: Wiseman gave both self-proclaimed lucky and unlucky people a mock-up of a newspaper along with the following instructions: "Look through it and tell me how many photographs are inside." On average, the unlucky people took about two minutes to count the photographs, whereas the lucky people took just seconds.

Why the difference? On the second page, a message read: "Stop counting. There are 43 photographs in this newspaper." This message took up half of the page and was written in type that was more than two inches high. It was staring readers straight in the face, but the unlucky people tended to miss it and the lucky people tended to spot it. A second large message was placed halfway through the newspaper, reading: "Stop counting. Tell the experimenter you have seen this and win £250." Again, the unlucky people missed the opportunity because they were still too busy looking for photographs.

While this isn't "insight" *per se*, it is an essential ingredient in being able to stop what you are doing at this moment, register what is happening and possibly make adjustments.

Another experiment: Wiseman administered personality tests to his subjects. Results revealed that unlucky people are generally much more tense than lucky people. This he linked

to research suggesting that anxiety disrupts a person's ability to notice the unexpected. In one experiment, people were asked to watch a moving dot in the centre of a computer screen. Without warning, large dots would occasionally be flashed at screen edges. Nearly all noticed these large dots.

The experiment was then repeated with a second group of people, who were offered a large financial reward for accurately watching the centre dot. This, of course, created more anxiety. They became focused on the centre dot and more than a third of them missed the large dots when they appeared. The harder they looked, the less they saw.

Dr. Wiseman thinks this relates to luck. "Unlucky people miss chance opportunities because they are too focused on looking for something else. They go to parties intent on finding their perfect partner and so miss opportunities to make good friends. They look through newspapers determined to find certain types of job advertisements and as a result miss other types of jobs. Lucky people are more relaxed and open, and therefore see what is there rather than just what they are looking for."

Lucky people create their own good luck through their positive mental attitudes and behavior. In other words luck flows to the optimist much of which is dependent on perspective. Is the glass half full or half empty?

Now do your own little experiment. Think back to all those times you were intent on locating something -- a solution to a problem, for instance. What was your level of intensity? Were you blind to possibilities and the obvious? Would a mentor want to work with you under such conditions?

Similarly, think of those times you worked with another person to solve a problem. Was your partner oblivious to the obvious? Under these conditions, can change happen? It just so happens Wiseman thinks the answer is "Yes."

Next issue: More about Wiseman's notions when the series is concluded with an outline of his Four Principles

### Ideas under inspection



Perhaps no myth is stronger than the belief that a motivated person will succeed. Effort leads to success... We live in America, with so many platitudes about motivation, and self reliance and individualism—and myths spun from them like Horatio Alger—that we find it hard to accept the fact that they are serious nonsense."

- Rose, Lives on the Boundary



## Mentoring Timeline© 1955 - 1957 A.D.

Any upmarket dressmaker can style themselves a "couturier". But, to the French, who take such things very seriously, the appellation "*haute couture*" is as specific as the word "*champagne*", protected by law and applied only to salons belonging to the *Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne*, a body with stringent membership conditions, which was created in 1868 by the first great couturier, Charles Frederick Worth.

A chain of mentoring exists in the multi-million dollar haute couture industry. To illustrate, the inter-connected lives of just two stellar careers have been chosen. It makes for a fascinating tale.

When celebrated French couturier Yves Saint Laurent retired in January 2002, it was the end of nearly 50 years as the preeminent figure in haute couture fashion. A rare phenomenon, he began his career at the top at age 21, and stayed there throughout his working life. An innovator, Saint Laurent achieved the kind of fame reserved for a chosen few, due largely to his artistic skill, flair for color and marketing savvy. Even those who have no interest in high fashion are likely to know the name and YSL logo synonymous with all the latest trends -- Rive Gauche ready-to-wear label, the perfume of the same name, astute licensing deals for accessories (such as purses, belts, shirts, sunglasses even bed linen).

*"Nothing great in the world has ever been accomplished without passion."  
-G. W. F. Hegel*

In 1954, when he was 18, he won three of the four categories in a design competition in Paris (the only prize he didn't win went to his contemporary Karl Lagerfeld, now at Chanel). Discerning the young Saint Laurent's huge potential, Christian Dior hired him in 1955 and he rapidly emerged as heir apparent to the great couturier, taking control of the design when Dior died unexpectedly three years later. Saint Laurent would say of his mentor: "*Dior fascinated me. I couldn't speak in front of him. He taught me the basis of my art. Whatever was to happen next, I never forgot the years spent at his side.*"

Having learned his trade at the house of Dior, he founded his own couture house at the start of the 1960s.

For his part, mentor Christian Dior achieved fame as a fashion designer in middle age. Born in 1905, he put aside his early training in political science and taught himself to draw. He started his fashion career selling drawings to couture houses and magazines. Later, he trained formally then in 1946, opened The House of Dior.

The first Dior collection shown in February 1947 was a

spectacular success. It was a complete contrast to the austere utility fashions that had prevailed during and after the Second World War.

Innovation and meticulous craftsmanship established the house of Dior as one of Paris' top couture houses. At the time of his death in 1957, Dior was the head of a multimillion pound organization responsible for nearly 50% of France's fashion exports. As well as selling couture, the house of Dior had been shrewd enough to recognize the potential of business in fashion, organizing licence and merchandising agreements to manufacture ready to wear, jewelry, accessories, and fragrances. A lesson Saint Laurent picked up on.



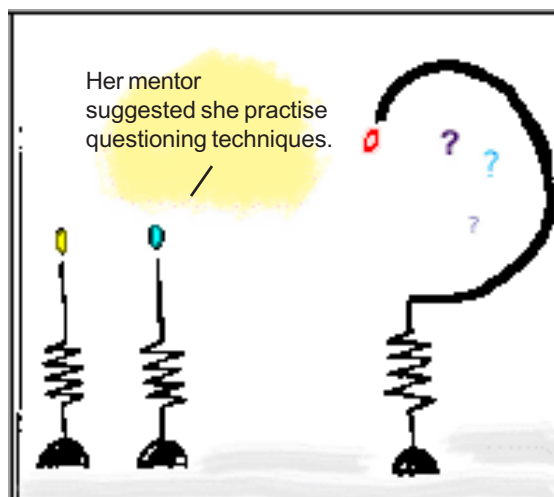
"*Designer fashion*", another frequently-heard term, is ready-to-wear, expensive, famous-label clothes bought off the peg in selected shops around the world. *Haute couture*, the most elite arm of the fashion industry, survived social changes albeit

with fewer clients but bigger influence (only 2000-odd clients compared to 15,000 in earlier years).

*Haute couture* shows are the public face of an elite, rarefied world of the very rich, who can afford \$100,000 and up for suits and evening dresses, and the very famous. While some will dismiss this frivolity and superficiality, it still represents one arm of a huge clothing industry.

Yves Saint Laurent Haute Couture is entirely made-to-measure clothing, every stitch done by hand. This comes with the requirement of three to six fittings. As one notorious wag complained about the "riff-raff" movie stars buying: "*Patrons must be introduced at the Paris salons permitted to use the haute-couture designation, one cannot simply walk in the door to buy!*"

[Sources: *Le Firme*, 2000 and *The Age.com.au* 2002]







## Ask Mentor



Q: What research links mentoring to job satisfaction?

A: Back in 1979, Roche found individuals who had a **mentor** reported greater job satisfaction. Riley and Wrench confirmed this in their 1985 study. In 1998, the Hay Group did a survey of staff planning to stay with a current employer more than 5 years. **Mentoring**, coaching and feedback was rated third with 69% behind the type of work which received 89% and respectful treatment with 69%. In another study by Mobley, Jaret, March and Lin in 1994 found the presence or absence of a **mentor** is more important in job satisfaction than income or gender. Finally, in 1998, *HR Magazine* reported a study of professionals with **mentors** earned up to \$22K more per year annually than those without. And likely there is even more recent research we could cite but we'd need more space. Sorry!

*“Learning is not compulsory...  
neither is survival.”  
- W. Edwards Deming*

## Mentor Muses: In times of crisis, how will mentoring help?

(from page 6)

coaching initiative for crises situations. It seems clear that people can't simply be turned loose to try to cobble together what has to be learned.



So, in this case, the term “coordinated” is the operative one.

At the same time, while at a “super” level the content is typically organized and determined by someone other than the learner, each person gives and receives in the most user-friendly fashion the learning and practice.

P.S. How to communicate when there's no phone, no internet? In our area, ham radio operators volunteer to be trained and they practise each week for emergency situations. Now it's paying off. Fire-fighters send an experienced veteran in with a rookie. Other professions do the same.

As we leave this story, worry about the fact that the veterans who've survived the crises are retiring. “Green” people often operate without adequate support. What to do about this unprecedented situation? What to do? ~~

## on Intellectual Capital - Part3 (conclusion) Around the water cooler

(from page 2)

*“Tacit knowledge resides only in the heads of employees, and transferring tacit knowledge always requires human interaction. Most times, that's an ad-hoc process – ‘water cooler conversations’- rarely captured and reused. A true KM solution must address both the management and transfer of knowledge.”*

While it's true that communities of practice can't be brought into being by fiat, as Stewart claims, ironically, we must be proactive, organized and formal about creating climates in which they flourish. He cites the instance of two groups at Nynex each adopting new technologies at vastly differing rates. A formal study concluded different departments “never communicated informally, and as a result couldn't understand one another's roles and needs and couldn't solve problems together.” Some form of silo-busting was necessary.

Once this was understood, the various groups were “formally” brought together -- though this was probably a term shunned in the process. Formally “they created an environment that allowed informal groups to form around various tasks, which soon grew into a full-fledged community of practice.” The rate of adoption plunged from 17 days to 3 (a decrease of several hundred percent). Calculate the ROI for each person and savings are obvious.

It seems clear we need to watch our pronunciations about fiats. To get to this point of success, people had to be prodded, coaxed, encouraged, motivated, even shamed to take action in a step by step fashion even if it had the appearance of being an informal process. As we all know, the difficult stunts at the circus appear unstudied, casual, happenstance events that are carefully engineered to appear quite the opposite. Possibly this was the case at Nynex to ensure staff participation. And there's nothing wrong with the end justifying the means, in this case.

Some parting thoughts

Stewart's book is worth a read. There's probably a sequel in the works along the lines of *Good to Great* in which there's an extension and elaboration of original ideas or even a rethinking based on world events and technological developments since *Intellectual Capital* was first published (1997).