

Leadershipmatters

January 2008 • Issue 13

LeadershipSouthWest 
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South West innovation

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our children?



Developing leadership capacity across the South West

Too Busy to Think? Become a 'One-Moment Master'

One of the recurrent difficulties that leaders in today's organisations face is finding time—time to think, to reflect, to digest information, or even just to 'be'. A recent article in the *Financial Times* (24 Oct 2007) cited research that indicates that the problem is exacerbated by so-called 'time-saving' devices, such as blackberries and mobile phones, which rather than saving time, often create more work as colleagues, clients and suppliers expect you to be available 24/7. The ever increasing pace of life, coupled with the fragmentation of the kinds of communication we use, can heighten stress levels and leave many of us feeling drained and constantly busy without necessarily achieving those things nearest to our hearts.

Martin Boroson, a consultant and trainer who has studied philosophy and business, trained as a psychotherapist, and practices Zen Buddhism, offers a meditative technique which recognises the realities of 21st Century life and aims to help those of us seeking peace within the whirlwind of activities we face daily. His book: *The One-Moment Master: Stillness for People on the Go* explains the technique and its benefits, starting with the foundation for becoming a 'One-Moment Master' a technique he calls 'The Basic Minute'. Even in the busiest of lives, Martin suggests, it is possible to find a minute to:

- Sit down
- Place your legs in a relaxed but fixed position
- Sit up
- Set an alarm for exactly one minute
- Place your hands in a relaxed but fixed position
- Close your eyes
- Allow your mind to settle into your breathing
- When the alarm sounds, stop.

Martin explains that he 'discovered' the Basic Minute during a half-hour meditation practice that wasn't going so well. His mind kept wandering to when the half hour would end, and he soon became convinced time had over-run and for some reason his alarm hadn't sounded. Finally, he opened his eyes to discover there was one minute left. Instead of quitting, he decided to use that minute to really focus on his meditative practice. To his surprise, the one minute of focused practice resulted in a surprising level of peace and equilibrium. The experience convinced him that in just a minute, it was possible to draw from a deep well of serenity that is always available to us. The 'Basic Minute' was born.

Since discovering the Minute for himself, Martin has taught the technique to coaches, consultants



and executives at Cass Business School, Roffey Park Institute, and the Irish Management Institute, and he is developing a course on this for the Institute for Management Studies. I met Martin when he presented his ideas to delegates of the CLS Southwest Cultural Leadership Programme, all busy, overworked professionals in the cultural sector, held at Dartington earlier this summer. I had just completed a week-long yoga retreat and had been anxious about how I might retain some sense of the equilibrium I had experienced during the week back in my busy job. The idea of being able to take a minute's 'time out' to recapture a sense of peace and re-focus seemed at once obvious and revolutionary.

I wish I could report that it's been a daily habit since encountering it – it hasn't. However, it has been a frequent enough habit that I have experienced its benefits. For instance, I find the time I most benefit from taking a minute is when I feel I don't have a minute to take. When I take a minute during particularly fraught times, I often find the eight things I am trying to accomplish in the next half hour can be whittled down to one or two essential tasks. Let me be clear, I'm not using the minute to re-prioritise or plan differently – I just find that by taking time out, I see my 'to do list' differently when I return to it. Some things don't

seem that urgent anymore. I can see who is better suited to take on tasks I've claimed as my own. I seem to emerge from a minute of focused breathing with a more spacious perspective.

Others report similar benefits. Chrissie Godfrey, one of the coaches on the Southwest Cultural Leadership Programme says that Martin's techniques provide her with a cure for insomnia. 'If I catch myself before I go into a hyper mode of mind turning, and just focus on my breath, the next thing I know, it's morning!' She introduces it to clients who want to find a way of reconnecting with their bodies—'the thing about the technique is that it's so simple, anyone can do it.' Its 'absolute' simplicity is what makes it distinctive from other 'self help' techniques, reports Paul Birch, a Change and Creativity Consultant who uses it himself and has also introduced it to clients. 'When I was first introduced to the technique, I was doing quite a lot of train travel. Instead of getting stressed out by late-running trains, I found by making a habit of 'taking a minute' I can maintain a more relaxed state. I've encouraged clients to use it as way of helping them get off the hamster wheel of activity. It enables them to get back in touch with what they're really here for.'

For 'advanced practitioners', such benefits are available in even a shorter span of time, a 'moment'. The word 'moment', Martin explains, comes from a Latin word meaning, 'a particle sufficient to tip the scales'. This small, seemingly insignificant span of time not only allows you to refocus and refresh, it actually alters one's relationship with time itself. By bringing awareness to the moment, every moment can act as a catalyst for refocusing our minds. In that way, being a One Moment Master, suggests Martin, 'offers us the opportunity—no matter how harried we feel—to experience deep stillness. In other words, dramatic change doesn't require a lot of time: it only takes a moment.'

The One-Moment Master: Stillness for People on the Go by Martin Boroson is published by Rider (2007) www.martinboroson.io

Dr Donna Ladkin, Centre for Executive Learning and Leadership, Cranfield School of Management, Cranfield University

The Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) events in the South West



'The Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) is the UK's largest management body. We are dedicated to raising skills and

improving workplace performance through our industry-leading qualifications and membership services. ILM will be holding two specialist events in the South West region in the coming months:

Coaching Masterclass, Bristol, Wed 6th February

Use coaching to improve performance within a management structure. Explore different coaching styles and discover which ones to use at key stages of performance management.

Crucial conversations, Exeter, Wed 16 April

Get the key skills to tackle tough conversations and break the culture of silence in the workplace.

The events start at 6.30pm and the admission price of £20 for member of ILM and £25 for non-members includes light refreshments.

We also offer early bird and group discounts. If you would like more information on a particular event or to book your place e-mail events@i-l-m.com.

www.i-l-m.com

Devon and Cornwall Branch of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

Our Employment Law Conference 14th March 2008 at Exeter Racecourse. An extremely popular and cost effective annual one day (0930-1630) conference for directors, managers, employers, SMEs, HR specialists and consultants. This year we shall focus on the top ten employer mistakes, managing employee terrorists, contracts, critical legal updates/reminders and an inter-active theatre company session looking at conflict resolution, grievance handling and mediation skills. Our programme is delivered by knowledgeable speakers and subject experts. The event provides lots of learning, opportunity for networking and should be fun too. You might even win a day's racing for two! We welcome members (£50.00 incl) and non-members (£60.00 incl). For further information, programmes and booking forms, contact Jean Stoneman at jeanstoneman@yahoo.co.uk or visit the website link at <http://www.cipd.co.uk/branch/devon/events>.



Regional events database up and running

The regional database of leadership events set up by Creating Excellence has been working well for several months now. Thank you to all who sent details of events and courses to us last year. To access the information go to www.creatingexcellence.org.uk and follow the link in the left side menu to leadership events. With the start of the New Year we now need to know all about the leadership events you have planned for this year. Please e-mail your information to Cherida.fletcher@creatingexcellence.org.uk.



"Transition Coaching – making a success of your job"

An event organised by the Association of MBAs
Speaker: Mo Cohen, Clinical Psychologist

Tuesday 29th January, 2008 6.45pm – 9.15pm
School of Business and Economics
University of Exeter



Changing role or changing organisations is clearly a challenging time, full of both potential difficulties and opportunities. Leaders must be able to ensure that they make these important transitions as quickly as possible, and navigate this period of change successfully. Transition coaching can be a key that helps people to achieve in 90 days what would normally take 6 months or more.

The talk will be interactive and will allow people to have a sense of the benefits of transition coaching

For more information, call Tricia Cox at the Association of MBAs on 020 72462686 or email t.cox@mbaworld.org.uk

New Year, New You?

January is the traditional time for resolving to make changes in both your personal life and your working life, so why not give yourself or your leaders a boost and book onto our forthcoming 'Effectiveness at Work' training workshop

Designed to improve personal performance and output through a detailed examination of self management, working relationships, time management and overall effectiveness, this course will provide you with tips and techniques to make a difference.

*Effectiveness at Work – 26 & 27 February 2008
0900 - 1630 – Plymouth Novotel*

For further details and/or to book a place visit www.quaestus.co.uk or call Linda Wilkinson on 01752 300192.



Hosted by:



Edited by Vanessa Ascough

Leadership South West
University of Exeter
Xfi Building
Rennes Drive
Exeter EX4 4ST

Email: Vanessa.Ascough@exeter.ac.uk



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