

Mentoring for Change

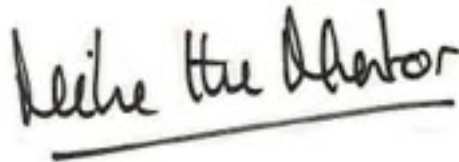
leadership, coaching, mentoring, storytelling

Welcome to the Mentoring for Change newsletter. I am devoting all of this issue to an unusual leadership formation model. It has four core elements:

- a psychological model (personal ecology)
- a profiling tool (the PEP)
- a philosophy of leadership ('subversive leadership')
- a methodology for forming leaders ('visual landscaping')

I hope you enjoy it.

With seasons greetings




Personal Ecology and You

We are all increasingly aware that we don't exist separately from our environment. Climate change, bird flu, terrorism – even the contents of our shopping basket – make the interdependencies between us and our surroundings very evident. We're all ecologists now! Personal Ecology starts from this ecological and relational view of individuals and focuses in particular on their inner psychological drivers and the unique set of relationships they inhabit in the world. This model is based on a number of theories including social constructionism, metaphor theory, impression management and attachment theory.

Within the metaphor we are each seen as managers of our personal ecology - the dynamic, ever-fluctuating matrix of relationships we construct around ourselves. We have all developed particular strategies to manage these relationships effectively. This model identifies seven core strategies (see below). Three of these are used to map 8 types of leadership power (see page 2).

Categories	Strategies
What you need	1. Self-expansion (eXpanding – Consolidating) 2. Front/Back Stage (Presenting – Reserved)
Who you are	3. Self-definition (Strong – Weak) 4. Responsiveness (FLexibility – INflexibility)
How you see	5. Empathy (eMpathy – eValuating) 6. Linearity (Forming – Ordering)
What you do	7. Control (PRocess – Outcome)

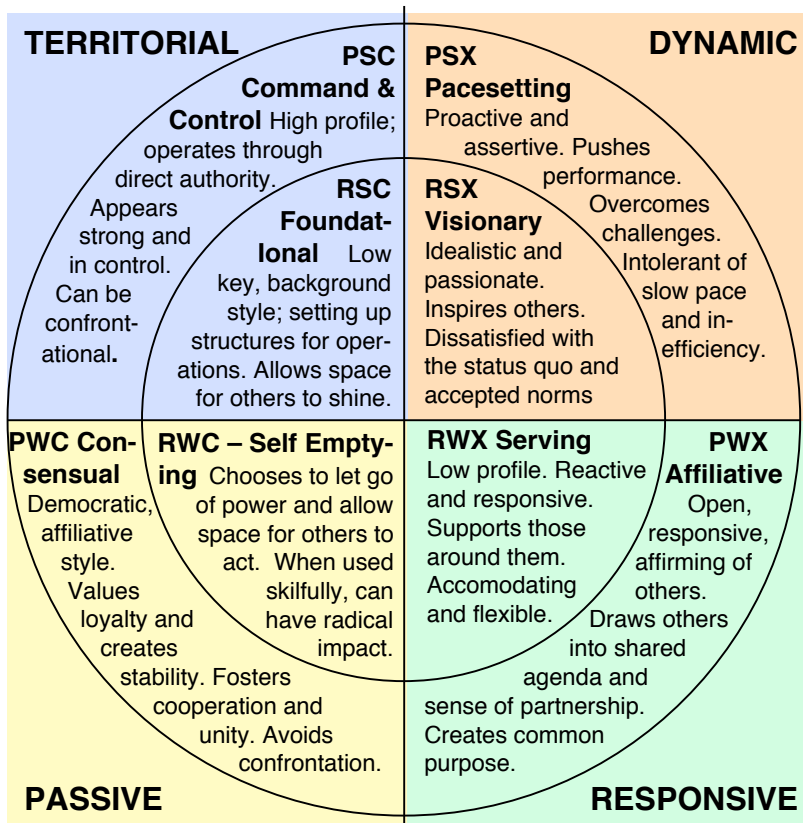
PEP (Personal Ecology Profile)

The Personal Ecology Profile (PEP) is a tool which enables individuals to gain a deeper self-awareness of their particular strategies and inner drivers. It helps people understand the psychological strategy which they have developed to preserve, present and promote their life; to understand how they can become more mobile and flexible in their behaviour; and to be empowered to make choices in their behaviour that will ensure better, truer and more supportive relationships.

Drawing on the ecological metaphor, participants are invited to create an imaginary world or landscape, in response to a series of verbal cues ("Imagine you are standing outdoors on a large plot of land ... Look around you and choose an area you want to make your own ...").

The highly personal visualised landscape that is evoked is a place that represents the psychological space the person inhabits. It reflects their needs; their sense of 'size' in relation to the wider world; their personal boundaries; how open they are to the influence of others; their sense of change and development; their willingness and need to allow people in or keep them out; their adaptability to the prevailing conditions; how they order and process tasks and information; and what kinds of motivation they have.

By creating an imaginary world in which the psyche can play out its own psychodrama, the PEP enables people to identify and resolve fundamental questions about their role, their character, their ability and their authority.



Leadership Signature Map

an important aspect of good practice since it will offer more choices in the exercise of power.

Visual Landscaping

I think Visual Landscaping is one of the most interesting features of the approach. The PEP asks us various questions about our internal landscape and from that tells us about the strategies we have developed to be in the world. The layout of our landscape and the things in it represent our beliefs about ourselves, our relationships, and who we are as leaders. By working intentionally with this inner world, we can change how we are in our outer world of leadership. For example we can:

- invite people into our imagined landscape as a way of exploring our relationship with them
- prepare for events in our outer world by working with them in our inner landscape
- remodel our landscape so that it better supports us in being effective leaders.

Leadership Signatures

Of the seven strategies, three are of particular relevance to leadership:

- **Self-Definition:** the strength and clarity of our personal boundaries. Ranges from Strong (S) (inner, mental landscape well defined against the wider terrain) to Weak (W) (landscape is open to and easily influenced by the wider terrain).
- **Front/Back Stage:** what we reveal and what we hide. Our front stage is what is explicit, visible, on the surface and presented (P); the back stage is what is implicit, hidden, and reserved (R)
- **Self-Expansion:** how we deal with change. Expansion (X) is when we extend our territory and acquire more; Consolidation (C) is when we stabilize and build up what we have

Combining these three strategies gives eight different patterns of power, each with its own characteristics (above). Most leaders will tend to favour one or two styles – more flexible leaders may use several styles.

This suggests the idea that a leader can be said to have a 'leadership signature'; a characteristic pattern of moves in which they make in their leadership relationships. A leadership signature will reflect the experience and expertise of the leader as well as the type of intervention they engage in. Expanding the range of one's leadership signature could also be thought to be

Subversive Leadership

Finally, what has particularly intrigued me about this whole approach is that it has a view not just of what leadership is but also what its purpose is. It takes a post-conventional view of leadership (see the top 3 levels of the leadership model in my previous newsletter) and proposes that being a subversive leader is about leading out of the freedom of having nothing to lose. From this place (RWC on the diagram) you have no need to defend yourself and therefore weakness becomes a radical and paradoxically powerful option. Walker's Law of Ecology of Power predicts that using a RWC style of leadership will evoke from others the equal and opposite reaction of PSX. Walker therefore suggests that emptying ourselves, particularly of the need for control, will release in others great power, power that no leader can teach, organise or buy. This has a strong resonance with what we seek to do in coaching in adopting a non-directive approach. In doing this we seek to create the space within which the coachee's greatness can flourish.

More at <http://www.subversiveleadership.com> and at <http://www.humanecogroup.com>

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