



ROYAL AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

**Catching a Glimpse of Inspiration:
how my research journey is making a difference for my
management practice**

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I declare that the dissertation embodies the results of my own research or advanced studies and that it has been composed by myself. Where appropriate, I have made acknowledgement to the work of others.

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Abstract

This dissertation is the autobiographical story of my serendipitous research journey (an “ontobiography”). The personal shift in knowledge and interior understanding – my response to the Delphic demand ‘know thy self’ - is the crux of my thesis.

My aim is to demonstrate how elements of my life and the management and educational journey taken over the last three years has taken me through the equivalent of HND/CMS and DMS programs, culminating in this Masters.

I narrate a story of how I have added to my APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experience & Learning) by engaging with propositional theories of management education, and through healthy comparison with the realization of my own management practices. This Continuous Personal Development through my living research journey, focused on being the leader of a management team in a successful Mercedes-Benz franchised dealership, has given me another opportunity to make what I know (and what I don’t know) about my management practice explicit. It can then be held open to evaluation through a process of educational accountability as I present my living knowledge to the academy.

My narrative account is crafted in a postpositivist tradition, what I call a ‘critical living theory’, by which I mean an approach to living theory alloyed with a critical edge. I believe that the journey is educative in the first person with potential second and third person relevance for anyone working in a team or a private sector organisation. The purpose of my research journey is to validate my management practice as a form of relational communication that has evolved out of working with my team, as a celebration of personal development and research into management education.

Along the byways of this journey I have sometimes felt uplifted and it is this unconscious emotion that I have come to term inspiration. Through my management praxis as a team manager I have glimpsed inspiration, and become aware that it is not a living standard of judgement that is associated with orthodox management practice. In my thesis I hope to have made a beginning, a contribution, to changing that.

Key words: management practice, CPD, APEL, team, “I”, relational, reflexivity, communication, trust, empathy, inspiration.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	iv
1) Introduction.....	1
2) Practising Management with my Team	16
a) The high performing team.....	26
b) Inspiration glimpsed through the art of team management & maintenance	30
c) Inspiration glimpsed through ancient wisdom and ethics for the modern world.....	37
3) Inspiration	41
b) Review of literature exploring what inspiration means for others.....	43
c) Inspirational Standards of Judgement	48
d) My “i” of inspiration theory.....	52
4) Questioning my establishment	60
a) The power of truth and the truth of power	61
b) Lets get critical! I am a garagiste, I am not	66
5) Methodology – dead or alive?	70
a) First Person Inquiry.....	74
b) Insider and Outsider Research	77
c) Innovative Methodology (Dadds & Hart, 2001).....	82
6) Summary	88

7) Further Research.....	91
References	92
web site references	96
Appendices	99
Appendix One	99
Appendix Two, “The AK47”	108
Appendix Three.....	125
Appendix Four	126
Appendix Five	127
Appendix Six.....	129

1) Introduction

The purpose of this introduction is to explain to the reader why I chose my research enquiry and to tell the story of how it became a research journey. An introduction to James Edgerton, and how I came to be embarking on this journey in the first place, is contained within Appendix One.

I frame my thesis as a living theory account (Whitehead, 1993) of how I have learnt through the development of my working practice with my team represented as a narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and make my claim to have experienced *inspiration* in my management and organisational practice.

My dissertation is a personal narrative account that also shows how I have come to appreciate my research journey as a contribution to my continued professional development (CPD).

At the heart of contemporary business practice is a concern for, and commitment to CPD, which is now a professional feature of organizational life. While CPD is seen to be a driving force for personal change and improvement in terms of one's business and management effectiveness, it is also an organizational expression of the kind of quality improvement that Donald Schön recommends for the development of the 'reflective practitioner' (1983).

Marshall (2001) recommends self-reflection as a critical practice of inquiry and in the course of my research enquiry I have come to see why she takes this stance. My thesis unfolds the importance of Marshall's self-reflective practice as a form of inquiry as I tell my story, and craft a narrative.

There have been crisis moments in my work during the past three years where I have had to develop my agility at understanding the dynamics at work and it is through these moments that I've sharpened my appreciation-in-practice of Marshall's ideas. My research text explains those moments of crisis, and through my reflection on these, and

the stories told I demonstrate the practical importance of critical self-reflection for managers in organisational life.

Central to my thesis is the idea that learning through action research and self-study brings management practice, reflection and further enquiry together – what I term a process of ‘management self-education’ - in enabling me to *catch a glimpse of inspiration* in my everyday working life and relationships. My judgement is that this would not have arisen without the disciplined framing of an exploratory action research enquiry.

In telling this story I am concerned that the process will come over as self centred and self indulgent. A weakness in some action research accounts is that the focus on the ‘I’ at the centre of the research (McNiff et al, 1996) seems to leave out one’s group dynamics and relationships with others in the workplace, and that all management practice is taking place within a wider context of capitalism. While MBA programmes seem to focus on universal models and theories for all managers in any organisation context without the subtlety of differentiation of business contexts: a kind of one size fits all approach. This is not to be disparaging but to provide the reader with the kind of choices that are available in management education.

While my story is focused on my practice, my intention is to situate my management practice in context. First, in the context of my business and my team colleagues. Secondly in the context of the retail motor vehicle sector of what is a globalised industry.

I hope to show in my chosen form of representation the value of multi media approaches in supporting reflection and understanding, and for stimulating improvement in my management practice. My account includes highs and lows, affirmative feedback and criticism, too. Above all I want my account to be realistic because I want the reader to enjoy the journey of how I have extended, enhanced and on occasions, improved my living management practice. I claim that this is a form of management knowledge, but

not the sort you find in textbooks. Therefore, I hope to show that textbook knowledge and living theory knowledge can be complementary, both/and, not either/or.

To support this I include video clips of how I facilitate team colleagues at work, and by reflecting on my actions have been able to improve my management practice. Video clips are also of the Masters peer group, and my supervisor showing how these are all forms of valid reflection. Because of this form of representation there is a strong first and second person weave within my research enquiry.

Influenced by Whitehead's dialogical form of enquiry, in his published work of 1993, I have set out the remainder of my introductory chapter through a series of questions and answers. Hopefully this question and answer approach will help me to establish a rapport with my audience (Whitehead, 1993:5) and take you closer to my understanding as I communicate (introduce you to) what matters in researching the development of my management practice and knowledge as a 'living theory account', a 'self-study'.

Who is this enquiry for?

For me. I do not wish to sound selfish, or be self indulgent, but I cannot pretend that primarily this enquiry is not *for me*. It is. Undertaking another attempt at higher education has been niggling away at me for many years. Whilst my varied working experiences have equipped me with a bank of knowledge that can be counted towards APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experience & Learning), I, perhaps reluctantly, acknowledge that to get on further in *the establishment* need CPD (Continuous Professional Development). The; training, knowledge, process, journey and accreditation of a Masters is likely to be of benefit to *me*, my family (*us*) and my organisation (*them*).

For us. Secondly, this enquiry is *for us*. The *us* at any one time is dependent on my immediate environment, my *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1993). The *us* could be you and me, as action researchers, or as team members in the context of my work, the garage business. I believe in what William James, in his book of 1890, *Principles of Psychology*, termed

multiple selves. We choose to demonstrate a particular self in a particular situation in that there is no unified self-concept, but multiple selves. My own term for this is my *adaptive habitus*, and I think that I am only truly my one “self” when at home, with my family. This is why family time is the most relaxing and stress relieving (well, most of the time!). For the *us* that is the academy, this dissertation and the enquiry’s aims are to provoke and research into what I did not know, add to my knowledge bank (epistemology) that I have acquired over the years, realize (crystallise) that tacit knowledge into a format that can be recognised and validated, and put it *out there* as action research theory for us to peer review. For the *us* that is the garage business, the aims are to give an outcome for what I have been doing on term time Wednesday afternoons for 3 years, the fee, a return on Pentagon’s investment in my CPD, and improvement in my organisational management practice. DaimlerChrysler UK staff often say that if something is to be managed, it must be measured, so the inevitable quantifier of the success of my improvements in management practice is an increase in the bottom line of my department’s profits. It is also required that along my journey I have acquired knowledge of established, propositional, management theories to demonstrate (or remonstrate) the point.

For Them. Thirdly, my enquiry is *for them*, and that leaves the other person/party, depending on where you fit into the *us* and *them* second and third person relationship as described above.

The *for me, for us, for them* concept is one of the ideas of Judi Marshall (2001) (cited in Reason & Bradbury, 2001).

What are the beginnings of my research enquiry?

I am responsible for after sales in a DaimlerChrysler franchise that retails Mercedes-Benz and Mitsubishi Fuso ‘brand’ commercial vehicles. It is an excitingly competitive business sector. A major focus of differentiation among retailers within the competition is service quality. DaimlerChrysler demand and make available management development opportunities within their franchised dealership network and encourage

Continuous Personal Development (CPD). I came across the MSc in Management Studies in my search for an appropriate development programme.

But that is not the only reason for my journey. I now realise that my formal academic study was ‘unfinished business’ for me. I returned to school in my forties. In taking this risk I have come to see that I have more to give in my life, both at home and at work, and the self reflective, participating enquirer kind of action research study has, with some major challenges and the benefit of a three year time period, unlocked a different “I”.

What is the organisational context for my enquiry?

My organisational context is managing a team in a Mercedes-Benz main dealership called Pentagon. <http://www.pentagonmercedes-benz.co.uk/>

The boardroom’s vision is “To be the most profitable and successful dealer in the franchise and market leaders in the area”. With the strap line of “Committed to Excellence”. My perception of the company, and I hope without betraying any loyalties, is that we are at a very interesting period in the company’s history and potential development. As we stand, there is no real five-year plan. The three main shareholders are at retirement age and it is therefore logical to surmise that we are for sale. We have also received an invitation to an MBO (Management Buy Out). My problem is that the negotiating angle from the stand point of the directors who will not be able to retire, is difficult. I have a very different valuation perspective and whilst fixed assets irrefutably have a market valuation, the current goodwill valuation has been built up by the very people who are now expected to pay for it. My team has done too good a job and made the company too expensive for us to purchase.

How do I improve my management practice?

This evergreen research question, attributed to Whitehead (1988, 1993) and McNiff (2002) and Hartog (2004), is central to first person living theory. The idea behind studying management for my masters was to add the benefits of gaining an awareness of propositional theory to my APEL, whilst conducting an enquiry into my business life. What Action Research enabled me to do was to see the contradiction that is my multi-faceted “I”, observe, reflect and learn about myself whilst being a participative enquirer. The resultant knowledge I believe has improved my practice both organisationally and privately. This is my claim, which I evidence through my narrative in this dissertation.

Why Living Theory?

Living Theory gave me the scope to enquire inwardly and outwardly with and without my team whilst actively participating in our every day working lives. I draw on my APEL as a basis for my CPD which when combined with propositional theory from a part-time taught masters programme and a peer review group, can reasonably allow me to claim that “good” knowledge has been crafted.

“Whitehead (1989: 42) claims that the propositional form “masks the living form” which in its own right can generate valid descriptions and explanations of an educators (in my case manager’s) practice and development. Without denying the importance of the propositional theory, Whitehead argues for a “reconstruction of educational theory into a living form of question and answer”, which may include ideas drawn from propositional theory but which exist not as stand alone proposition but within the explanations given by practitioners of their practice, characterised by questions of the kind, “How do I improve my practice?”” (brackets are my addition). (Hartog, 2004).

And:

“generating a living form of theory by studying their own practice.”
(McNiff, with Whitehead, 1989). www.actionresearch.net [November 2004].

Why did I choose self-narrative autobiography?

The methodological approach that I want to share with you, the audience, is the story of how I, with no first degree or further education academic qualification, is attempting to merge his experiential management knowledge acquired in the non-vocational garage business, with a part time taught and supervised masters. The research was into my own management practice whilst in the workplace, working with my team of managers whilst being supervised and guided by my educator, peer group and study into propositional theory. I call this my “ontobiographical” account in which I point to my living standards of judgement to which I hold myself accountable and warranted of being regarded as an action researcher.


“Autobiography, like fiction, reveals to the reader a *pattern in experience* and allows a re-interpretation of the lives and experience of both the writer and the reader. To be powerful this pattern must be portrayed in a way that engages readers in a genuine act of seeing the essential wholeness of life, the connection of nodal moments. In seeing, the reader is enabled to see self and other more fully.” (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001)

My narrative is an autobiographical account of first and second person enquiry into my management, organisational and leadership experiences with a team (Clandinin & Connelly, 2002). By dipping in and out of my inner and outer arcs of attention (Marshall, 2001) I claim that I can demonstrate a living epistemology in that my subjective knowing has contributed to my objective understanding. (Ladkin, 2005).

Is there second person relevance of my enquiry?

My second person enquiry has been conducted whilst working within the team, initially through cooperative and appreciative inquiry, but on reflection, through an innovative methodology (Dadds & Hart, 2001). Excerpts from our dialogue and conversation are included in my narrative so that this traditional written medium can stand alone without

necessitating the use of multi-media. The fuller record and illustration of the enquiry process and methodologies being evidenced in the CD.

The  symbol of a camera signposts the reader to the CD.

Peer review of my work throughout the study period has influenced the content and thinking to give a more pluralist and dialogical viewpoint, primarily through critique.

“The willingness of fellow action researchers to suspend their own enquiries to engage with another’s is an invaluable tool and explores the phenomenon of generalisability.” (Whitehead, 1993).

Is there third person relevance of my enquiry?

The third person enquiry is evidenced by the changes to corporate life. The benefits can be quantified in the high achieving performance of the team in that we are the second most profitable dealership in the Mercedes-Benz franchised dealer network in 2004. The changes made throughout this enquiry have brought meaning to Pentagon as well as to “self”. An example is in my concern for my team members. It is centred on sustainability and it is with this heartfelt concern for their welfare that I have negotiated with DaimlerChrysler UK a contributory deal on an appraisal of our working practices by an outside firm of Organisational Development consultants, Automotive Advantage. Their work will commence in Autumn 2006 with probable implementation in the fourth quarter. I imagine that their consultancy will major on how the team create value (Porter, 1985). I claim that this action in the words of the QAA demonstrates my:

“development of positive and critical attitudes towards leadership, change and enterprise, so as to reflect the dynamism and vibrancy of the business and management environment” and “enhancement of lifelong learning skills and personal development so as to be able to work with self-direction and originality and to contribute to business and society at large”. <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/> [March 2005].

What makes my enquiry count as Action Research?

The MSc in Management Studies adopts an Action Research approach to learning. I returned to the RAC after an absence of twenty years to study for my Masters as part of my Continuous Professional Development (CPD). According to the Postgraduate Prospectus of The Royal Agricultural College Business School, The MSc in Management Studies is designed:

“To provide managers and professionals with the opportunity to conduct a problem-focused research inquiry into a management, organisational or professional concern using an Action Research approach.” (The Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, 2002/2003, 2004 & 2005).

This problem solving whilst personal developing format is attractive to both the individual (student) and the organisation, and is key if the organisation is the sponsor in both time and fees, which fortunately is true in my case.

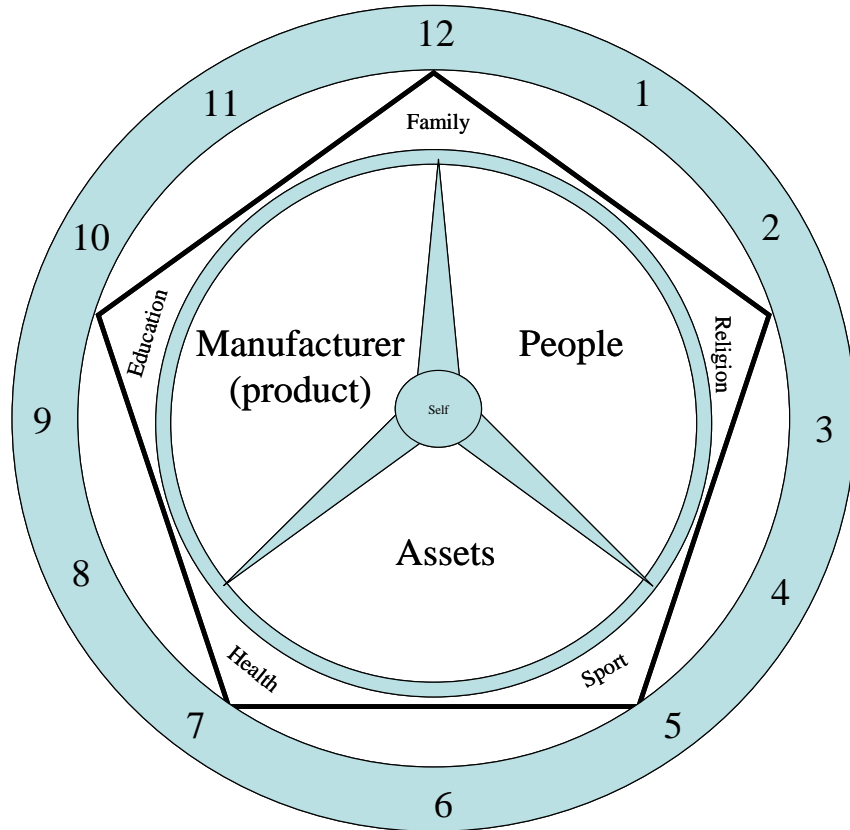
There are many definitions for Action Research, I chose this one as it confirms my enquiry as being crafted in its tradition (Prasad, 2005):

“...systematic inquiry that is collective, collaborative, self-reflective, critical, and undertaken by participants of the enquiry. The goals of such research are the understanding of practice and the articulation of a rationale or philosophy of practice in order to improve practice.” (McCutcheon & Jung, 1990, cited in Herr & Anderson, 2005: 4)

What standards of judgement became embodied during the course of my enquiry?

1). The biggest change has been the realisation of what really matters to me. It is without doubt home life and family. My organisational life at Pentagon is the method and what is more, it is not the only method that is available to me. This shift is evidenced by my

two different life model diagrams that I produced. One at the beginning of my enquiry, the second having started my journey.

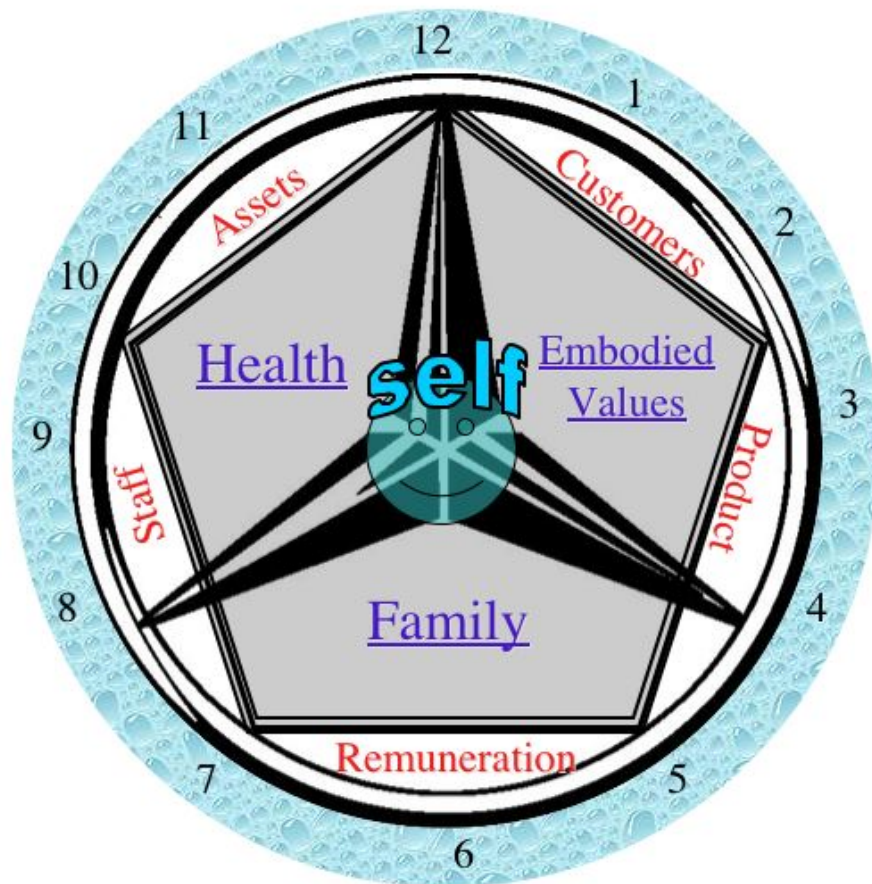


Version one and two demonstrate the change in proximity of values to “self”. Model One is objective and positivist, drawn in relation to the company being closest to self, when in work mode, but in reality, the company influences are outside family and self. The second life model is more subjective and embraces a more postpositivist view. I experienced *The Living Contradiction* (Whitehead, 1993) in that I hold certain values whilst at the same time experiencing their denial. In contrast, Frank Zappa’s song lyric, “You Are What You Is” is often not possible in the business world and I for many condone that we are to greater or lesser extents different people in and out of work – on and off the stage as it were. The term, “when I put my such and such hat on” is not rare. The two models illustrate the dominant habitat. Pierre Bourdieu’s Habitus (1993) and James Edgerton’s adaptive habitus. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habitus>). We must be aware of the extra effort and potential stresses in working within our own adapted behaviour, what I term as our adaptive habitus.

“The brain needs to work up to 100 times harder when a person is forced to behave outside an area of natural preference” (Young, C. European Strategy Director of Prism, June 2005, cited in Letters, *Management Today*).

“..... we can see that the personal identity of a single individual has many different aspects. In my own case, for example, there is a self that is a monk, a self that is Tibetan, a self that is from the Amdo region of Tibet, and so on.” (The Dalai Lama, 1999: 44).

Through the process of first person inquiry I am now able to *see* my “I” as the living contradiction (Whitehead, 1993) in that what really matters to me is wife, home, Kate, Ellie, Rosa, family and friends. This is the “home James”, the one more at peace. The “garagiste James” is less at peace, strained, impatient, gruff, frustrated and tired. Tired because of the extra effort necessary to produce the “adaptive habitus” through which I can practice as a garagiste and deliver a standard of living for my loving dependents. It is the effort of wilfully negating my home values whilst having to live out the prescribed functions of a garagiste that produce the inner tension.



2). Inspiration. I have seen inspiration, glimpses of, and it is this ingredient that I believe has driven me on through times of crisis. My study into this word has enabled me to make inspiration almost tangible whilst recognising that it will never be a materialist commodity that can be owned (Marx, 1977, cited in Prasad, 2005: 120).

3). My team. Without the hard work, commitment and dedication to the cause of my team I would not achieve. It is through clear communicative action (Habermas, 1979) empathy and humanness that we are all able to live and work, happily, as a functional, high performing community.

Summary of Introduction

My research enquiry started out as an inquiry into my team, my team leadership, and how my business team contributes to business performance as defined by key performance measures in the Pentagon group of companies.

My research journey actually became something else, something more, without losing sight of the original research enquiry's aim.

My research enquiry produced four interrelated outcomes; the account of their evolution and emergence in the course of the practice of my research is presented in my *research text* (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000):

- 1) I tell a story of my life and work experience to the extent that this autobiographical account is relevant for understanding my embodied values, my sense of identity, and my appreciation of my management practice.
- 2) In this story I make explicit my tacit knowledge of my management practice in a way that shows the important differences between a living theory of management and traditional text-based theories of management. Text based theories of management are not 'bad' or 'inappropriate' they are importantly different and abstract from live and living theory accounts of management practice. Text based approaches to management theory propose universal, 'best fit' theories and models, prescribe management practices for all, and produce homogeneous theories of management that tell me what to do. Living theory explains my particular experience of what works, why it works, and what I do when things don't seem to work. In this way a living theory, quite literally, brings management practice as an improving practice alive. Living theory accounts provide the intuitive real life insights that MBA texts and theories seem to gloss over. Living theory is developed from the inside of my practice; text-book based management theory is proposed by theorists whose theories don't appear to take my experiences into account. This is the crux of the difference. Management

Education is probably better off with both versions being accepted as important and insightful.

- 3) Through this story I show how I come to value and appreciate the management knowledge that I carry in my practice and that I clarify through my research enquiry.
- 4) My journey is one of personal development alongside (and not in any sense in competition with) my continuous professional development (CPD). In this I am making a commitment to managerial improvement as a form of disciplined life-long learning.

Framing

My story of my research journey has a *triangulated framing* and while each angle is teased out in my research text for its significance I would like to give some advance notice of these framings, which for anyone who knows the original 1968 Steve McQueen film, *The Thomas Crown Affair*, could be presented as three juxtaposed films running concurrently on the same screen:

Framing 1 - My research journey is presented from the angle of a personal and professional growth journey (CPD).

Framing 2 – My research journey is presented from the angle of the growth of my management educational knowledge, after Whitehead (1993), as I make explicit my tacit management knowing that guides me, while explaining the new ideas I encounter on the journey and explain their importance. This is an appropriate consolidation of my management knowledge (inner and outer) in terms of the developmental purpose of the Action Masters programme

Framing 3 – My research journey is presented from angles that are relational, communicative and inclusional of both living and loving (Rayner, 2005 see <http://people.bath.ac.uk/bssadmr/inclusionality/>). Text-based management theories do

not tend to emphasise how and what ways management practice is relational, and should be relational if it is to be inclusive and ethical (Billings & Watts, 2006 see http://www.mediationconference.com.au/2006_Papers/Matt%20Billings.doc). My commitment to the relational is sustained despite the pressures of making money within the capitalist paradigm, yielding sufficient Return On Capital Employed (ROCE) and the language of margins. I also show how, in references to my family in the autobiographical sections, I am moving to a more confident and assertive stance toward the radical idea that loving family and relational values should influence management practice and organisation theory. My research text is an attempt to bring this point alive.

While my learning aim is to explain what matters in researching my management practice and knowledge, an important learning outcome is to show through the production of my research text how I have developed through this research journey as a person, as a manager, as a father and partner, as a colleague, and as a deeply relational friend and that each of these elements are co-dependent on the other. Take one element out of the equation and my living theory falls apart: my living management theory requires each of these elements. My living theory is the sum of all these parts and yet my living theory cannot be reduced to any one element.

2) Practising Management with my Team

Introduction

You, my audience, will no doubt have already surmised that if my enquiry is concerned with seeing inspiration in a team environment, the team must be a good team, a winning team. I am going to substantiate that claim, by using positivist, quantifiable measures - in what Pirsig's work of 1974 calls *Classic* mode. Then, once that bedrock has been established, I aim to give the audience a qualitative demonstration, through my narrative account, which includes team members' discourses which are also supported by video clips - in what Pirsig (1974) terms as *Romantic* mode. But before I can do any of that, I want to give my audience an appreciation of what I mean by *team*, its culture, milieu, embodied values (through an appreciative inquiry), and a SWOT analysis of the community of people that I am fortunate to work with.

What is a team?

"If the team's task is such that its members are dependent on each other for achievement, then a powerful dynamic is created". (Lewin, 1946 cited in Smith, 2001, <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-lewin.htm>)

"The Team", my team, is the group of people "thrown together" with the common purpose of fulfilling the corporate functions that are assigned to us. Not a cult, because we do not all agree all of the time, we have disparity in our beliefs and are dialectic in our methods, morals and values. But we are held together in a formal and informal framework – a beehive, with Pentagon shaped cells. The sense of purpose, the common aims hold us together. We must all believe that it is easier to fulfil our corporate tasks (and therefore our own personal agendas) with the participation, collaboration, support and help from each other. There is strength in numbers and in the sense of belonging.

This conformity and corporate *culture* was unnoticed by me until some appreciation of Critical Theory was gained through studying for this masters. I am aware of the formal framework, as are the team members, but I have never had to remind any team member of our positions held in Pentagon's organisational structure. Whilst I hope that this is no great accolade, I am pleased enough to identify it and mention it here.

“Critical Theory draws attention, moreover, to the dominance of a technical rationality obsessed with the ostensibly efficient pursuit of unquestioned objectives, and attempts instead to rekindle societal debate around goals and values.” (Levy, Alvesson and Willmott, *Critical Approaches to Strategic Management*, in Alvesson & Willmott, 2003:5)

I make a concerted effort to maintain that debate with my team members and try to be aware of their stakeholder value, what is *doing* the holding us together, who has the agency..... the power.

The existence of the informal structure means that it can be difficult for an outsider, a new member, to be accepted by the team. There is an initiation period, a time of proving, before one is accepted for one's worth. The team gives solidarity, a feeling of membership and unity. It can also bring the negatives of diffusion of responsibility, performing to the lowest common denominator and the opportunity for political manoeuvrings.

“thrown together”? The team has evolved through changes in the organisation's structure. We benefit from minimal staff turnover. In fact the 9 line managers' line up has only had two replacements and two additions, due to growth, in the last 6 years. The team members work together to get the best from each other and in that way, combined with external training, the team players have evolved. These are the challenges of Team Dynamics and Organisational Development.

Core Values

This is included to give the audience meaningful evidence of the culture of the team and as an example of how the team can function, working together to a collective goal. The Core Values exercise demonstrates how effectively the team can conduct a cooperative inquiry, our practice and an action - reflection cycle.

Most progressive companies strategy's have adopted the Mission Statement and Vision approach to staff team building, common aims and belonging. Pentagon is no different. If we were truly post modern in our approach our vocabulary would be different and these values would not be core, but embodied, as they would come from within before we could make them explicit. For many years we have issued all staff with a small pocket sized version. Its effect was positive, but had become stale to the extent that during a new member of staff's induction programme it was difficult to deliver them convincingly because they were no longer truly reflected our inner, embodied, values. A new and or revised version was needed.

For everyone involved in the company, i.e. all staff, to "buy in" to this concept I chose the methodology of Cooperative Inquiry as detailed by John Heron and Peter Reason in Reason and Bradbury (2001).

My team of managers, and the other co-workers in attendance at the meeting were asked to critique the current "little blue book" (example of which is in Appendix Four). The overwhelming majority proposed that it was out of date, too long winded and had become stale.

It was agreed that we should re-define our Vision statements and agree a set of "Core Values" as replacements. The existing (old) Mission Statement was unanimously agreed to be kept for the foreseeable future.

With marker pen in hand and Nobo board clean, an open forum was loosely held together (you can imagine the scene - bordering on chaos) in which preferred "Core Values" could be called out and written on the board. Many were unsurprising, obvious,

repetitive, non-dynamic, and some plain ordinary. Conversely other suggestions were enlightening, frightening, dynamic, progressive and darn right rude!

I then carried out the same operation again, and fewer suggestions came through, but of higher quality, and some repetition and comments such as “I like quality best” were heard.

By eliminating the off the wall suggestions, and reflecting on the suggestions we then cooperatively reduced the number of core values down to 20. The rejected values were wiped off the board.

I then went through each value and asked for a further yes or no to further reduce the proposed values down to 12.

I was just about to complete the process by stating words to the effect of “right then, lets get this down to 6 core values for us to adopt” and I thought, no. What about peer pressure? How do I make sure that all persons in this cooperative enquiry group participate? So I changed the medium to e-mail, and requested that each person e-mailed me their list of 5 values, from the 12. This was reflection in action as described by Donald Schön, as it was not what I had originally planned. I will never know if this action was right or wrong - should the final eliminations been done there and then, verbally? Or would someone feel uncomfortable stating that there number one core value is, for example, job security?

The e-mails arrived during the following week and there were clear winners, with some closer voting towards the end. I again had to change my process by admitting 6 not 5 core values as the voting for the 4th, 5th and 6th was quite close, with a distinct drop off to core value number 7 (which was in fact, job security). See Appendix Four for a copy.

The final **Core Values** as per the cooperative enquiry were:

Customer focus

Commitment

Profitability

Job satisfaction

Pride

Integrity

And

Mission Statement - “committed to provide the complete solution”. Through my studies, the source of this statement could be from *Customer Intimacy* by Wiersema, (1997). Unfortunately this cannot be validated by D John Sparshatt (see original Research Proposal <http://www.actionresearch.net/beraprsig2/edgertonquest.htm> June 2004).

It is important to point out that these are key words as agreed on to best describe a set of emotions that emerged during our cooperative inquiry meeting. For example **Profitability** - this outwardly capitalist word was agreed on to cover, personal remuneration, investment in better working environment, the long term etc.

I feel that by adhering to the methodology of cooperative inquiry as described by Heron and Reason a consensus emerged from a group of staff (16 off) who were representative of the Pentagon working population.

My claim can be validated by Heron and Reason’s own method:

1. Research Cycling - go through the 4 phases, several times.
2. Divergence and Convergence. Divergence = looking at different ideas.
Convergence = looking several times at the same issue.
3. Authentic Collaboration - all must participate.
4. Challenging Consensus Collusion - Any member can become critical at any time. e.g. not enough rigour used in enquiry method.
5. Managing Distress.
6. Reflection and Action - need a balance between Theorising and activism.

7. Chaos and Order - need balance and level of order.

The new core values exercise is given to the reader as an example of the team's practice. The aim is to show collaboration and cooperation through a collective dialogical inquiry through Cooperative Inquiry methodology.

My claim here is that the high level of consultation has increased the level of buy-in to our new core values and that the team feel emotionally attached to what are, by consensus, their/our nominations, and that this process can withstand the rigours of ethical scrutiny.

A SWOT analysis of *The Team*

What is a group? According to Edgar Schein (1988) a group is any number of people who interact with one another, are physically aware of one another and perceive themselves as a group. A team is similar, but different. A team, by my standards of judgement has the additional factors of belonging, by invitation, selection or organisational structure. <http://www.onepine.info/pschein.htm>

A SWOT analysis of the team is included to give the audience the benefit of my experience and subjective perceptions of the team in an economical and condensed format.

Strengths:

Experiential knowledge. There is a high level of experiential, implicit, tacit knowledge which has potential to be converted to; academic, explicit, cognitive, and added to an increasing epistemology both individually and as a team. These observations draw parallels to Edgar Schein's 3 components to professional knowledge; underlying

discipline, applied science or engineering, skills and attitude (Stacey, 2003). The team has a wealth of knowledge, but this is specifically tacit in that it is not recognisable or of worth (propositional or formal) to anyone or any organisation outside the (DaimlerChrysler) motor trade. (Polanyi, 1967 cited in Smith, 2003) <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/polanyi.htm>

Value – we feel valued, listened to, communicated with (not to).

Synergy – we achieve more collectively, as a team, than as individuals.

Truth. See the power of truth and the truth of power section below.

Trust. See the section entitled leadership.

Motivation

Mutuality

Morality

Empathy

Competitiveness

Humour

Passion

Cohesion

Terroir. This French word encapsulates a state of feeling that I believe radiates from within the team. I take terroir to connote a mix of earth, bedrock, climate, history, folklore (fable), and emotional attachment. It is a significant value to nurture into a team's culture. It is the task orientated, against adversity, *grit* that I witness in the team at most month ends (which is when, habitually, most of the months invoicing is done).

Collaboration

Emotional Capital (Thomson 1998)

Emotional Intelligence – reflexive action. EI or EQ (Goleman 1996).

Inspiration. See Inspiration section below.

Weaknesses:

Cognitive Knowledge

Dialecticians are few and therefore the art of arguing, logical dexterity, and the debating method is wanting.

Cybernetics are poor, in that I believe that we are a living organism and our system of control and communications is an area for continual improvement.

Inspiration. Due to the method of generation of inspiration that I believe occurs within the team (see “Inspiration” section), the inspiration is not evenly distributed amongst the members. In reality, some members are rarely inspired, if at all, and the evolution of the team, through inspiration, can leave some members stranded and outmoded.

Factions. Informal splinter groups within the main body of the team.

Opportunities:

New team members - a bigger team, substitutes, or regeneration.

Training – and education, making the held tacit knowledge explicit and tacit again for new and other team members. This can be called sharing best practice.

Company restructure

Innovation - in a service rather than a product. (Chesborough, 2004 cited in the Financial Times. chesbrou@haas.berkeley.edu, <http://www.haas.berkeley.edu/>) and innovation in bringing together different people and the knowledge they carry. (Bessant, 2004 cited in Financial Times. john.bessant@cranfield.ac.uk, <http://www.cranfield.ac.uk/>) See <http://www.ft.com/masteringinnovation> for these articles.

Inspiration – the more even spreading of inspiration through the team members - to approach the state I term *Inspirational Reformation*.

Threats

Sustainability – the majority of the team are worn out, through work effort.

Staleness - the lack of new blood. No regeneration. (but also beware of *The K Factor*, Thomson, 1998).

Frustrations of not achieving the level of performance that has been obtained in the recent past, and the remuneration package that went with it.

Emotional Contract, the loss of.

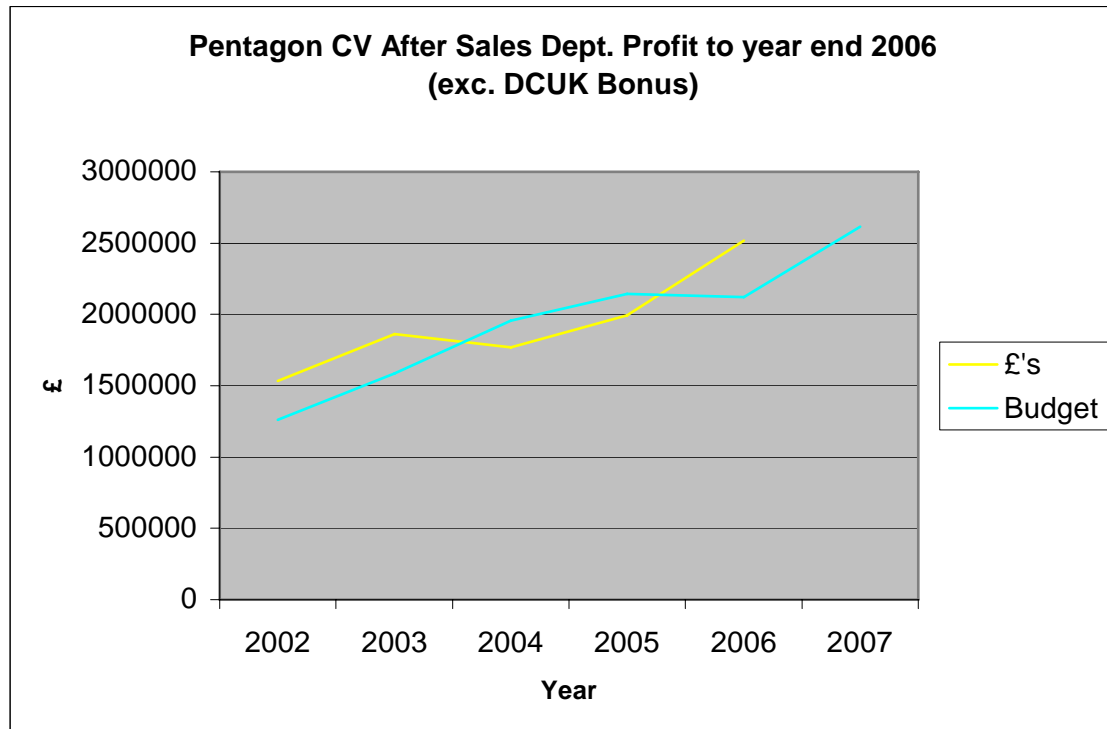
Egotism – a danger to any team's culture is ego. The team is bigger than the sum of it's individual parts, it has synergy. Led Zeppelin was made up of Bonham, Jones, Page and Plant. When Bonham died, Led Zeppelin died with him. The K-factor of 50%, which is what the loss of 25% plus the 25% that a replacement drummer gives us, was too much. The levee broke, the song could not remain the same.

Coercion

Inspiration – the icing on the cake. When no inspiration is felt, generated, then it is an indicator of a breakdown in the system and the ecology that is within the team is no longer in balance. The socio-economic balance that must be sustained in order to achieve continuous development. This state indicates a need for changes in Organisational Development for the team to re-gain momentum and to go forward, this is our team's dynamic.

a) The high performing team





The graph above is one of the working documents I use to track the team's performance in terms of department contributing profit (excluding the dealer standards margin model payment by Daimler Chrysler (UK) Ltd) year on year, since I was given the helm.. It is our actual performance as measured against our budgeted performance. The chart shows that we are high performance when compared to our own, Pentagon, set targets, but are we a winning team when compared to the Mercedes-Benz dealer network?

Mercedes-Benz

Mercedes-Benz Commercial Vehicle
Balanced Scorecard

December 2006

Pentagon Trucks

Criteria	Value	Score	Rank*	Benchmark/ Requirement	Weighting	National Average
Customer Satisfaction (Unavailable)		30.0	n/a			
Sales	n/a	30.0		74.3	20	
Service	n/a					
Financial (November)						
ROS %	1.8%	10.8		1.0%	15	0.8%
ROCE	11.6%	5.2		12%	6	5.7%
DP Sales % Turnover	42.6%	0.0		2.0%	6	0.00%
DP Service % Turnover	27.0%	4.8		35.0%	6	33.2%
DP Parts % Turnover	32.6%	5.8		13.0%	6	12.6%
Overheads % Turnover	3.4%	4.4		2.5%	6	3.4%
Composite Submission Rolling 12 month submission rate	100.0%	5.0		100%	5	97.0%
Total Financial Score		44.0	6			

Mercedes-Benz Van

New Sales (November YTD)						
New Vehicle Sales v Target	91%	11.4	17	100%	12.5	102%
Sales v Target Model Breakdown						
Vito	98%	3.4				
Sprinter	91%	2.7				
Viano (No Target)		14				
Total Registrations 2006 YTD		625				
Year on Year Comparison (November YTD)						
	85%	8.5	56	100.00%	30	108%
Year on Year Comparison Model Breakdown						
Vito	99%					
Sprinter	89%					
Viano	700%					
Total Van Sales Score		19.8	17			

Mercedes-Benz Truck

New Sales (November YTD)						
New Vehicle Sales v Target	170%	15.6	1	100.00%	12.5	104%
Sales v Target Model Breakdown						
Worthing Rigid	176%	25.7				
Worthing Artic	137%	18				
Total Registrations 2006 YTD		295				
Year on Year Comparison (November YTD)						
	120%	12.3	3	100.00%	30	95%
Year on Year Comparison Model Breakdown						
Worthing Rigid	130%					
Worthing Artic	84%					
Total Truck Sales Score		28.1	1			

Mitsubishi Canter

New Sales (November YTD)						
New Vehicle Sales v Target	55%		12			70%
Total Registrations 2006 YTD		29				
Year on Year Comparison (November YTD)						
	907%		30			113%

Total Sales Score

Parts (November)						
Parts Purchase v Target	98.0%	19.8	1	100%	20	93.7%
Parts Purchase: Stock to VDR ratio	10.1:1	18.8		6.0:1	15	4.3:1
Service (November)						
Productivity	97.0%	4.9		100%	5	88.8%
Efficiency	107.2%	4.9		110%	5	97.0%
Utilisation	91.3%	5.1		90%	5	88.2%
After Sales Absorption	154.7%	12.5		120%	30	107.7%
Total After Sales Score		65.9	1			

Total

188

1

Score

Rank

*Scored from a maximum of 250 points

**Scored out of 12 Scores



pentagon balanced score card sept 2006.pdf

The answer is YES. I am delighted to have achieved first place with my team for 2006. The Key Performance Indicators (KPI's), electronically taken from our Kerridge computer system for the composite accounts and measured by DaimlerChrysler, make Pentagon's After Sales department (that is the parts and service departments) the highest performing in the UK. We are number one, for after sales, and for the dealership as a whole.

Now that I have established the team as high performing in a numerical, quantitative sense, I wish to take the audience on a journey which explores how I have glimpsed inspiration through reflecting on my management practice with my team. For that I will move away from the established business measures and inquire through the traditions of the qualitative and postpositivist. Stepping over the formalistic boundary (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) into a more spiritual, humanistic and relational area. We have seen the science, now I want to look into the art. But before that, I had to research and study the established management theories that are already *out there*. I was rightly encouraged by my supervisor to "read Bion in Stacey" which inevitably lead to more and more reading and study, to the extent that my second examiner felt that I was hitting my audience with an AK47 of propositional management theory. We must not ignore its existence and the part that it has played in my journey, but I acknowledge that it can now be seen as a distraction when included in my research text. I have therefore included a clip from the AK47's magazine in the appendices (Appendix Two, "The AK 47").

"Every Chautauqua should have a list somewhere of valuable things to remember that can be kept in some safe place for times of future need and inspiration." (Pirsig, 1974: 47)

b) Inspiration glimpsed through the art of team management & maintenance



“Tensions disappear along old roads like this.” (Pirsig, 1974: 13)

“....you go flying across the countryside under a power that would be called magic if it were not so completely rational in every way.” (Pirsig, 1974: 102)

I apologise if my heading and photograph above in any way cheapen the quality of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. (Pirsig, 1974)

Introduction

In this section I have chosen to use Pirsig’s 1974 work, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* and The Dalai Lama’s, *Ancient Wisdom, Modern World, Ethics for a New Millennium*, of 1999, as the main guidebooks for my journey into my study of inspiration within my team.

Inspiration seen as relational to Pirsig's value of Quality

I first read this book as a teenager and it is a realisation of the value of self study that I recall that I was annoyed with the contradictions in the text concerning the motorcycle. I was irritated that the bike was never named and that; it did 95mph at 9000rpm (page 37) it was a twin and Harley-Davidson would explode at those revs, it had done over 27,000 miles, which is barley run in ("it is getting something of a high-miler", page 52), (page 73) "it is my fault for trying to adjust it (the chain adjuster) once without loosening the axle nut" (he is supposed to be an engineer), (page 273) "I press the starter button", (page 359) "I kick the starter" and on page 340 does another oil change with one American quart of oil!

It is whilst re-reading the book and reflecting on it that I have come to see its value.

My AK47 was still relevant. I felt compelled to study the propositional, classical, management theories for several reasons. I had not studied them before. I am inquisitive. And how could I make a claim to having generated new knowledge if I had not bothered to see what is already *out there*? It was clear to me that I had to take the trouble.

"Phaedrus was such a poor scholar it would have been just like him to have duplicated the commonplaces of some famous system of philosophy he hadn't taken the trouble to look into." (Pirsig, 1974: 262).

In *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, Pirsig takes us on a journey with Socrates, Plato (Phaedrus), Einstein, Kant and Hume. I take you on a journey through my Jahari window with; Pirsig, The Dalai Lama, McNiff, Whitehead, Clandinin and Connelly, Dadds and Hart, Prasad, Brunton, Reason and Marshal, Schön, and established management theories of Hersey and Blanchard, Bion, Belbin, Thompson and Goleman, as the idea of inspiration crystallises. (For the full list, please refer to the references section).

My study of Pirsig's 1974 work has lead me to further understanding of what I have come to term inspiration. Pirsig's inquiry is into values, with the dominant value being

Quality. Mine is into inspiration, but as discovered on my journey, the use of the word and my quest to have inspiration established in management theory needed working on.

What I ideally would like is to cement inspiration into management training, not as an idle preposition for leadership, but as management theory that genuinely contributes to a participant's CPD, their management programmes and their organisation's development. I would like to have inspiration as a subject being debated and practised.

The formalistic boundary (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) rose up again in Pirsig's work as *Classical* and *Romantic* understanding and how on the face of it the two shall never meet. The formalistic boundary, the ridge between qualitative and quantitative, positivist and postpositivist, romantic and classic, art and science, is debated.

"Classical understanding sees the world primarily as underlying form itself. A romantic understanding sees it primarily in terms of immediate appearance."

"The romantic mode is primarily inspirational, imaginative, creative, intuitive. Feelings rather than facts predominate. "Art" when it is opposed to "Science" is often romantic."

"The classical style is straightforward, unadorned, unemotional, economical and carefully proportioned. It's purpose is not to inspire emotionally, but to bring order out of chaos and make the unknown known. It is not an esthetically free and natural style. It is esthetically restrained. Everything under control. Its value is measured in terms of the skill with which this control is maintained. To a romantic this classic mode often appears dull, awkward and ugly, like mechanical maintenance itself." (Pirsig, 1974: 75-76)

This is why the positivist data given earlier was originally not considered to be of relevance to a piece of qualitative research. Through recognising this dialogical debate as being widespread, I now see the hard, excel spreadsheet's numerical facts as being critical as a factor in substantiating my value judgement that my team is high performance, and maintained as so. To do this I jumped back over the formalistic boundary (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and include the reports from our management accounts and DaimlerChrysler UK.

So whilst inspiration is an event, not a *thing*, it is reliant on quantifiable hard numerical facts as a condition for it to be seen. Inspiration is the event at which the subject becomes aware of the object – *a glimpse*. Should I feel that my testicles are hanging either side of the ridge?

On Romantic and Classic *traditions* (Prasad, 2005):

“This is the source of the trouble. Persons tend to think and feel exclusively in one mode (classic or romantic) or the other and in doing so tend to misunderstand and underestimate what the other mode is all about. But *no* one is willing to give up the truth as he sees it, and as far as I know, no one now living has any real reconciliation of the truths or modes. There is no point at which these visions of reality are unified.”(Pirsig, 1974: 77)

“Although motorcycle riding is romantic, motorcycle maintenance is purely classic.”

In my mindset, this short quote from Pirsig encapsulates why, in my organisational team context, I need both classical and romantic understanding to be juxtaposed and co-existing. If I want to lead the team (ride the motorcycle) and lead it well, the team (bike) must be in tip top condition and be able to perform at the highest level. That is, an inspiration full team requires a high level of maintenance.

**Reflective/reflexive note resulting from the discourses of our Action Learning set,
February 2007**

Al, in my peer group, suggests that in practice I am able to switch from *romantic* to *classic* mode and back again, and with ease. Opening the glass door as Pirsig would describe it (1974: 333). Al believed that he had seen this in my video clips and experienced it in working with me for a year in conversation. Al did me a great service by taking me with him in his feedback and made us mutually aware of my practice. This mutual awareness and self-reflexivity is what I understand as a *kenning* from Steier's work with *Reflexivity* and *Cybernetics* (Steier, 1992). Al had seen the connection between what I do and my appreciation of Pirsig's ideas. I am inspired by the possibilities for my managerial and organisational practice emerging from Al's insight. This demonstrates my practice as *self-reflexive* (Saukko, 2003), the peer review process has given me *dialogic validity* in that I am an enquiring participant (Reason, 1988) in what it is that I (we) have learnt about myself. My claim is that I now know that I am able to switch between *Classic* and *Romantic* modes and *hold* them as juxtaposed mind sets, in parallel, like two computer programmes running simultaneously in my mind's eye - I don't just do it (management) by numbers, I also use an humanitarian approach. Recognising this is realising it *in the doing*, and I claim that I have *caught a glimpse of inspiration*. What was tacit is now visceral and *on the page*, made explicit so that others (the third person) can better access and appreciate what I mean by *inspirational management theory*.

With this enhancement (this dialogue box) my story is revealing, through my narrative, that I am informing my audience of an expression of my living practice and it is through this point of realisation that I am able to transform my living practice into a living theory account. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000. Whitehead, 1993)

It is my identifying that the team requires a high level of maintenance that is one of the reasons that I use the management tool of team building events. They are largely a reward, but they are insightful and give an opportunity to reflect in new action and a different environment. I have also used the technique of video recording meetings so that the tapes can be viewed and reviewed so that I can *re-connect* (Hartog, 2004) with the data.

“I draw on evidence from the videotapes in the form of edited clips. My purpose in bringing these visual images to the fore in my thesis is to give you a glimpse, an insight into my practice, so that you can step into my shoes for a moment, guided by my narrative account, to see for yourself some examples of my inquiry in action.” (Hartog, 2004: 97)




“Inquiry Team Meetings” is a piece of video footage taken whilst I attempted to facilitate a cooperative inquiry with my team. Again the learning here is multi-framed as it is only on re-visiting the footage and with the added perceptions of my masters peer review group that I was able to see this as an example of my failing to live out my values in the workplace and be the *living contradiction* (Whitehead, 1993). Bob Steele said “How can you have a team event when you are paddling your own canoe”. At the time I took Bob’s comment to be referring to our morning’s canoeing, and how we had all ended up in solo canoes, but in two teams and looking for the same clues on a treasure hunt. I know Bob well, and his mind is quick and perceptive, he was, I fear, really meaning the classic analogy of separatist, non-team, thinking and that at work we are single minded people working to our own personal agendas. He was questioning the solidarity of the team itself whilst I was busy driving home my point that we are the opposite.

“When you see yourself on video you can see and experience your “I” containing content in itself. By this I mean that you see yourself as a living contradiction, holding educational values whilst at the same time negating them.” (Whitehead, 1993)

Steve Hawkins, later in the video clip, says that “The problem is finding more people with our work ethic”. At that moment this statement did not hit me straight between the eyes as it did later. My warm satisfied inner glowing feeling was that the team was in a very high state of health, but this comment, and others, like Kevin Dart’s “There is no backup, it could all cave in. It is fragile.” And “People are stressed to the point of going bang, we need to lead people in by planning in front.” Should have rung alarm bells. I was only seeing and hearing what I wanted to see and hear. I was hearing, but I was not listening. The importance of communication and my hierarchy of building blocks to improved communication (with the hope of catching some inspiration) had not been realised and had escaped me for the time being. I had just had *a glimpse*.

“ And in the fog their appears an intimation of a figure. It disappears when I look at it directly, but then reappears in the corner of my vision when I turn my glance. I am about to say something, to call to it, to recognize it, but then do not, knowing that to recognise it by any gesture or action is to give it a reality which it must not have. But it is a figure I recognize even though I do not let on. It is Phaedrus.” (Pirsig, 1974: 71)

I have had several attempts at presenting the video clips in a non-multi-media, written format for this dissertation. I have always maintained that I wanted the classic written format to be stand alone, so that, for example, it can be read on a train. I produced edited scripts from the video footage which read like a badly directed play and listed them in the main body of the text for the audience to read through. I took this problem to my peer group and the results were inconclusive. What I have tried to produce here are quotations edited from the video clips, which can be viewed in their entirety through use of multi-media, but the difference being that here in the research text I have the opportunity to thread my narrative through the quotations, giving the audience the insights into what I have now learned, about the team and about myself. I believe that this method is similar to the representation of the conversations described by Hartog (2004: 289-299), working with Louise, Margaret and Marcia.  “Peer Review”

c) Inspiration glimpsed through ancient wisdom and ethics for the modern world

Introduction

In this sub-section I have chosen The Dalai Lama's, *Ancient Wisdom, Modern World, Ethics for a New Millennium*, of 1999, as the main guidebook for my journey into my study of inspiration within my team. I also continue with the *Zen* theme as the two books are relational to each other in that they have both helped me to arrive at my theory.

I first read this book for pleasure, with no-preconception that it would later be of relevance to my action research. How could it be? The Dalai Lama is a religious figure. What parallels could I draw between his text and the management of a team in a modern business? I was looking, but I was not seeing. "Assembly of Japanese bicycle require great peace of mind" (Pirsig, 1974: 167). It was my journey with *Zen* that had opened my eyes to the ideas of art having a bearing on my life with logical, scientific, automotive machinery and it is The Dalai Lama that helped me to see that inner peace can be achieved through ethical conduct. I see Pirsig's virtue and caring relational to The Dalai Lama's inner peace, ethics and caring. I draw on both in my theory as my research has found that classical hard numerical performance does not measure the emotional capital (Thompson, 1998) of the team, and it is these human factors identified in my theory; truth, care, trust, empathy, that enable the communication to work and the conditions to exist from which a glimpse of inspiration may emerge.

"The one thing that doesn't fit what he says and what Plato said about the Sophists is their profession of teaching *virtue*. All accounts indicate this was absolutely central to their teaching, but how are you going to teach virtue if you teach the relativity of all ethical ideas? Virtue, if it implies anything at all, implies an ethical absolute. A person whose idea of what is proper varies from day to day can be admired for his broadmindedness, but not for his *virtue*." (Pirsig, 1974: 379)

“I see that, generally, those individuals whose conduct is ethically positive are happier and find more meaning in life than those who neglect ethics.” (The Dalai Lama, 1999: viii)

Establishing good ethics in the garage environment could be seen as a big problem, but it depends on the ethics and at what level you set your stall out. I am not talking about religion. Our team would allow any religion and any belief system that did not counter anyone else's. I am not inquiring into religion to look for any principles that may assist my enquiry into high performance team management. I am inquiring into *team spirit*.

“In the past, the respect people had for religion meant that ethical practice was maintained through a majority following one religion or another. But this is no longer the case. We must therefore find some other way of establishing basic ethical principles.” (The Dalai Lama, 1999: viii)

Religion is concerned with the acceptance of something metaphysical or supernatural, a heaven or nirvana. With this comes religious teachings, rituals, prayer and dogma. Spirituality is concerned with love, compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, contentment, responsibility, harmony – things that bring happiness to both self and others.

“In the past, religion and ethics were closely intertwined. Now many people believe that science has “disproven” religion. They make the further assumption that, because there is no final evidence for any spiritual authority, morality itself must be a matter of individual preference. It seems that in the past scientists and philosophers felt a pressing need to find solid foundations on which to establish immutable laws and absolute truths. Nowadays, this kind of research is held to be futile. As a result we have a complete reversal, heading off towards another extreme in which reality itself is called into question. This can only lead to chaos.” (The Dalai Lama, 1999: 11)

The principles that the team live by are not high-brow or technical. They are *basic* in sentiment and delivery. The team members speak as they find, have little or no-pretence and to outsiders what they say can be taken to be offensive. But, they are consistent, reliable and non-political, which is refreshing, practical and above all effective.



“Inquiry Team Meetings”, section “Telling it like it is”.

Individually, the team members express themselves with more personal feeling. Simon Jeffery said “that he had never felt better in the 15 years that he has been working at Pentagon.....we are working together as a big team with no divides between the departments.” Steve Hawkins said “we are all kept in the communication loop and feel worthy” and Kevin Dart said “we are all here to help one another”. These comments are heart warming and affirmation of the emotional capital held by the team. In my theory they are the empathy, the trust, and the care that give the foundations from which to perform. The bedrock, the *terroir* of the team.

“The *art* of the work is just as dependent upon your own mind and spirit as it is upon the material of the machine. That is why we need the peace of mind” (Pirsig, 1974: 169)



“Inquiry individual meetings”.

“And we are impressed by results. What could be more normal? Unfortunately, this devotion encourages us to suppose that the keys to happiness are material well-being on the one hand and the power conferred by knowledge on the other.” (The Dalai Lama, 1999: 10)

“What produces this involvement is, at the cutting edge of consciousness, an absence of any separateness of subject and object. “Being with it,” “being a natural,” “taking hold”.” (Pirsig, 1974: 300) This is contra to the assumptions of the formal scientific

dualistic outlook. Pirsig even goes so far as to call it common sense. The team are certainly practical.

The Zen mindset is to “When one isn’t dominated by feelings of separateness from what he’s working on, then one can be said to “care” about what he’s doing. This is what caring really is, a feeling of identification with what one’s doing.” I encapsulate this caring in my team management practice as empathy.

“.....cultivate the peace of mind which does not separate one’s self from one’s surroundings.....Peace of mind produces the right values, right values produce right thoughts. Right thoughts produce right actions and right actions produce work which will be a material reflection for others to see of the serenity at the center of it all.....a material reflection of a spiritual reality.”
(Pirsig, 1974: 300)

Summary

In this chapter *Practising management with my team* we have researched into what the team is to itself and to the organisation. We have presented what it can achieve in a quantifiable, numerical account. And we have examined the team in the qualitative perspective of art, with a spiritual gaze through the guidebooks of Pirsig’s *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974) and The Dalai Lama’s *Ancient Wisdom, Modern World, Ethics for a New Millennium* (1999), during which I have given you, the audience, glimpses of the quality that I now go on to research – inspiration.

3) Inspiration

a) My own use of the word *inspiration*

I use *inspiration* qualitatively, as a feeling, spiritually, and as an adjective (inspirational). I glimpse inspiration through an appreciative gaze, celebrating what we (the team) have, rather than through the deficit model of focusing on what we have not. It is used differently to how I choose to use it, particularly by the media, but I do not claim to own the word and the usage of words does change with time.

“For me inspirational stems from (the spirit of) Appreciative Inquiry, with a positive, appreciative attitude, majoring from the key values of truth and trust through communication.” (Edgerton, June 2005, in conversation with my supervisor, Cirencester.).

I believe that the opportunity for learning activity to be inspirational is greater in a team, that is *collectively*, than for an individual and it is with a team of people that I engage with in order to pursue my business life. This cultural context or “habitus” (Bourdieu, 1993) is relevant to me.

I illustrate the high performance of my team when it is in the zone by my description in my Davis Cup account in my “*i*” of *inspiration theory*, where the team are in an inspirational state of reformation, the breath of emotion that irradiates from one team member to another transcending the team into double loop learning (Marshall, 2001). Together the team learns, educates one another and collectively contributes to Organisational Development and (social) change. Some of the value of my study is bringing together, through linkage, different ways of looking at teams within organisations - inspirationally may be just one of them and gives scope for further research.

Reformation, not in the 16th Century religious sense. I mean amendment, improvement, transformation of a system or institution. Removal of political or social abuses.

Inspiration has been in itself inspirational to me as a choice of word in the title of my theorising. It has been an elixir, it is a phenomenon (in the phenomenologists sense as referred to by Ladkin, 2005). I view inspiration as an enigma, a projection, a paragon, an a priori, a panacea, appreciative and (quint) essentially subjective.



“Peer review two”.

Inspiration is often used in the context of singleton leadership, but not linked to a collaborative, collective group of co-workers, a team.

“It is not me who has inspired my team, it is they who inspire me and this is what I have learned through this process of action research enquiry” (Edgerton, June 2005, in discourse of peer review with our course supervisor and Nicola Burnham, Cirencester).



“Peer review two”, supports my claim and illustrates the presence of mutual support and mutual disagreement within the team.

b) Review of literature exploring what inspiration means for others

Researching inspiration took me through libraries, book catalogues and the world wide web. For me, there are surprisingly few references to inspiration, (although many more when combined with the context of leadership). I chose these to demonstrate the diversity of origin.

Shakespeare, William, edited by Hulme, H.M, (1963), *Henry V*, Singapore, Longman.

“But Pardon, gentles all,

The flat unraiséd spirits that have dared

On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth

So great an object.”

(Unraiséd = uninspired). Prologue, Chorus,

The inspirational poem, [according to http://www.businessballs.com/](http://www.businessballs.com/) [23rd December 2005] is **Come To The Edge by Christopher Logue.**

Come to the edge.

We might fall.

Come to the edge.

It's too high!

COME TO THE EDGE!

And they came,

and he pushed,
and they flew.

Rye, David E. (1998), *1,001 Ways To Inspire: Your Organisation Your Team and Yourself*, U.S.A.: Book-mart Press. I consider this text to be a guide to business executives in middle to large organisation who strive to win the political game, set and achieve goals and become the leader. It is not for the team, but for the individual and the word inspire in the title should be replaced by motivate. It is motivation that this book is centred on and how to motivate others so that you achieve your personal goals. Inspire only appears in the title, which in a way is good because by my values this would be a misuse of the word in the context of my research question.

Woodward, Sir Clive, (2004), *Winning!*, London: Hodder. Used a consultant, Humphrey Walters, who carried out an Inspirational Climate Survey on the team:

1. Leadership – perceptions of how leaders are performing their roles.
2. Partnership – how people perceive they were working together as a team.
3. Followership – later Teamship – how effectively people were working with their leaders.

The overlap between 1, 2 and 3 is “in the zone”. And T-CUP = Thinking Correctly Under Pressure. This text is of interest as it is concerns teams and how they function collectively. The inspiration they talk about is produced from within the team, not from an outside, spiritual source. I very much like the identifying of partnership and teamship and the sentiments that they represent.

Grout, Jeff & Perrin, Sarah, (2004), *Mind Games, Inspirational Lessons From The World's Biggest Sports Stars*, Chichester: Capstone.

“First you must start with the head” Sven-Göran Eriksson, England football team manager. page 2.

“Life is a mind game. Every relationship you have is a mind game. Where does anger, tranquillity, happiness come from? They all come from your mind. In the end everything feeds into your mind, and everything starts from your mind.”
Ron Dennis, CEO, McLaren.

Being “In the Zone” and sustaining it. This is described as a “superstate” by Steve Backley (javelin thrower), and “It was a very conscious, controlled performance”. Page 293. Hard work and practising over and over is what enabled Jonny Wilkinson, England fly-half, to succeed. Self belief and positive thinking are identified as critical to high performing sporting people.

This text is clear in its portrayal of inspiration as a metaphor or adjective to describe the kind of greatness that is achieved originating from within that person, and what is more, that person's own mind. It is conscious. I have come to respect this popular use of the word and concept of inspiration, but it is not the spiritual, divine, heartfelt emotion that I have struggled to see and define. To be clear in my now embodied standards for inspirational judgement **I now make the distinction between the two different types of inspiration. Secular inspiration and spiritual Inspiration**, in my text the distinction will be indicated by the “I” of inspiration being either in upper or lower case.

Locke, Edwin A, (2000) *The Blackwell Handbook of Principles of Behaviour*, Oxford: Blackwell. In Chapter 17 Gary Yukl speaks of “Inspirational Appeals” as a plethora of ideals ranging from patriotism to love that I consider to be more motivational than the true breath of Inspiration that I am looking for. However, Yukl does include “to

be a member of the best team” and “the extent to which people are asked to deviate from established, traditional ways of doing things” as part of his inspirational appeal package.

Brunton, Paul, (1988), *Inspiration And The Overself*, Volume 14, The Notebooks of Paul Brunton, New York: Larson.

“some things you will think of for yourself, and others a god will put into your heart” Athena, Greek Goddess, (Brunton, 1988: 39).

This text fills the lacuna for me between secular inspiration and the spiritual Inspiration that I embody, the Inspiration that is not quantitative, modernist and positivist, but qualitative, postmodernist and postpositivist. It is the Inspiration that does not come from repeated practise, but is breathed in from somewhere else, sub-consciously, to the heart that makes me do something like, proposing to my wife, for example. It is not an action that is worked out on an excel spreadsheet, it is *Inspired*.

Modernity – in essence a period of Western culture originating from the Enlightenment of the late 18th Century (the French revolution of 1789), where reason prevailed over ignorance, order over disorder and science over superstition.

Postmodernity - the current period, dating from the late 1970's that questioned the successes of modernity, (a critique of what it had made legitimate), as the force that moved society onward and upward. There are no absolute truths, but multiple truths. This kind of social theory sits better with Action Research and Action Researchers. See Barry Burke's paper <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-postmd.htm> accessed 11/10/2005. For positivism and postpositivism go to <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/positvsm.htm>
<http://www.eng.umu.se/culturec/POS.htm>

Brunton identifies a stepping stone to Inspiration, that is intuition, and that where intuition is sourced from within the person's mind he calls pseudo-intuition. I claim that Paul Brunton's pseudo-intuition is probably a near equal to what I have termed secular inspiration. Paul Brunton's work of 1988 *inspired* me to complete this enquiry because it enabled me to believe that I was on to something different that had not been explored and made explicit in existing propositional management theory.

Brunton describes being able to see the "Glimpse" of inspiration and sustaining the effects of a mystical glimpse as the "glow" which can lead to "permanent illumination". A practical illustration of what I mean here is to stare at a 3-D picture, let your focal point of reference become unfixed and then by being passive and relaxing the true image can be revealed to your subconscious, but be careful not to try and fix the glimpse in your mind too early or it can be lost again.

"It would be absurd to believe that the creative power of inspiration (my emphasis would give a capital I) exhausts itself with the arts alone. It can appear in any and every kind of human activity, in the making of a home or of a decision." (Brunton, 1988: 40).

This text is the most critical to this section of the dissertation and the establishment in my own mind, the affirmation, of what true Inspiration is. **This has enabled me to identify the two types, Inspiration and inspiration, spiritual and secular.**

c) Inspirational Standards of Judgement

“We cannot distinguish a process as educational without making a value-judgement.” (Whitehead, 1993)

Inspiration came about as the result of an educational walk with my course supervisor in November of 2003. We were discussing my research proposal and I was searching for a brand name for my set of embodied values that would allow me to encompass the ideas that I had for researching into working within a team. These embodied values have developed into my stable standards of judgement. Inspiration can be viewed as multi faceted and multi-definitional. Inspiration is exciting, provocative, vibrant, and it gives scope for further research, but for this masters dissertation, entitled *Catching a glimpse of inspiration*, I need to establish my standards of inspirational judgement. These are the conditions that I believe need to be met before we can have any real chance of seeing a “glimpse” (Brunton, 1988), or the “i” of inspiration (Edgerton, 2006).

- 1) Inspiration stems from Appreciative Inquiry, with a positive, appreciative attitude, majoring on **the key values of truth and trust through communication**. It is not a commodity.
- 2) Meeting (exceeding) our private sector business objectives. I can illustrate what I mean by this by referring to Historical Materialism (Marx, 1977, cited in Prasad, 2005: 115). Marx would call these *economic dimensions* that form *the base*. The inspiration is then the flesh and superstructure that can be built up from that *base*.
- 3) To do unto others as you wish others to do unto you. A living practice of morality. Practising morality, day by day. This value can be encapsulated by the African word Ubuntu, which means humanity to others and I am what I am due to who we all are.
- 4) Empathy.

In more detail:

1). Inspiration - the first standard of judgement, establishes the bedrock, the terroir. Philosophers have searched for truths for centuries and management and society can be no exception, it is of paramount importance.

“The easiest thing in the world is to tell the truth. Then you don’t have to remember what you said.” (Evans, Robert, Hollywood producer quoted in *The Sunday Telegraph*, cited in Issue 387, 7th December 2002, of *The Week*).

Trust, I believe, enables the other desirable conditions to proliferate. Trust is identified as critical to successful leadership by Warren Bennis. He describes trust as 'the emotional glue that binds followers and leaders together'.
<http://www.managementskills.co.uk/articles/ap98-bennis.htm>

I do not go with the leaders and followers notion, I claim that trust binds all team members and all team members must be consistent to be trustworthy.

Communication is key, it enables the ebb and flow of information provided that we all remember to listen at least twice as much as we speak. If we do not listen, we do not learn anything (Socrates). Communication is 7% words, 38% method (speed, tone) and 55% body language. According to Mehrabian’s study.

Jürgen Habermas (1979) introduces the concept of crisis. The crisis is that modern society is not meeting individual needs and that institutions in society are manipulating individuals. People interact to respond to this crisis and Habermas calls this interaction “Communicative Action” (Habermas 1984, 1987, cited in Power, Laughlan, & Cooper, 2003, Alvesson & Willmott, 2003: Chapter 7). The theory of Communicative Action is where there is little distinction drawn between language and action, for example a reasonable validity claim of truth (warrant) is implied when you are offered something, you believe they have it to offer. Change can occur not through conflict but through reasoning and communicating.

“Organisations are beginning to recognize that information distributed electronically, by telephone, or by print is no substitute for face-to-face communication.” (Thomson, 1998)

Kevin Thomson’s Emotional Capital presents the model of the Six I’s. He uses building blocks to demonstrate how, through communication, our organisational goals can be met. I believe that these can be directly related to my four standards of judgement for inspiration and to my theorising of how to manage an inspirational team.

The steps are interdependent on each other. They are building blocks and therefore you cannot miss out the key building block at any given stage, or the process falls down – it’s similar to Jenga! and Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.



Where:

Instruction is being clear about responsibilities, role and targets, induction and IIP.

Information is understanding your customer needs, accounts, messages, IT.

Involvement is having all team members contributing and feedback (IIP).

Improvement is increased quality, change implementation, welfare, practice.

Innovation is developing and improving our practice of delivering a service.

Integration is the accessibility of the company structure for all stakeholders.

2). Meeting our private sector business needs, is almost a pre-requisite, quantifiable and detailed in Chapter 2. We have to succeed to be there for tomorrow in order to bring about the changes to our practice.

3). Morality, is far reaching and can be all things to all people. My aim is for betterment, not just in high performance business terms, but social betterment, life enrichment, improved quality for stakeholders in the business and a third person relevance to other peoples' environments.

4). Being empathetic, recognises the other, listens, takes seriously what the other takes seriously and cares for in their lives. Despite the pressures of 2) the aim of an inspirational team is to spend the time to engage with one another to learn from one another, collectively in a team to give the platform for double loop (Argyris & Schön, 1975) inspirational learning through communicative, dialogical interaction (Farren, 2005 see <http://webpages.dcu.ie/~farrenm/>). For me, this dissertation has been a first person pedagogy of inspirational learning.

d) My “i” of inspiration theory

My own theory needs another “I” added to Kevin Thomson’s communication model, the “i” of inspiration. I believe that if it can be achieved it can only be achieved when the conditions of my four standards of judgement are created. It is the last block, the icing on the cake.

Therefore a model to support my tentative, prepositional (Heron & Reason, 2001), “I-theory” on the inspirational management of a high performance team is:



By I-Theory I mean in the context of McNiff's development of Noam Chomsky's (2000) concept of E-Language and I-Language, I-conceptual and I-belief systems, that Jean developed into E - externalised and I – belief (internalised) theory.

“An I-Theory is a dialectical form of theory, a property of an individual's belief system, and it is diachronic (in linguistic terms this is understood as orientated in real time).” (McNiff, 2002: 22).

My “i” theory is located within my own belief system and practice and makes my tacit knowledge, acquired through working with my team, cognitive, and an addition to my epistemology.

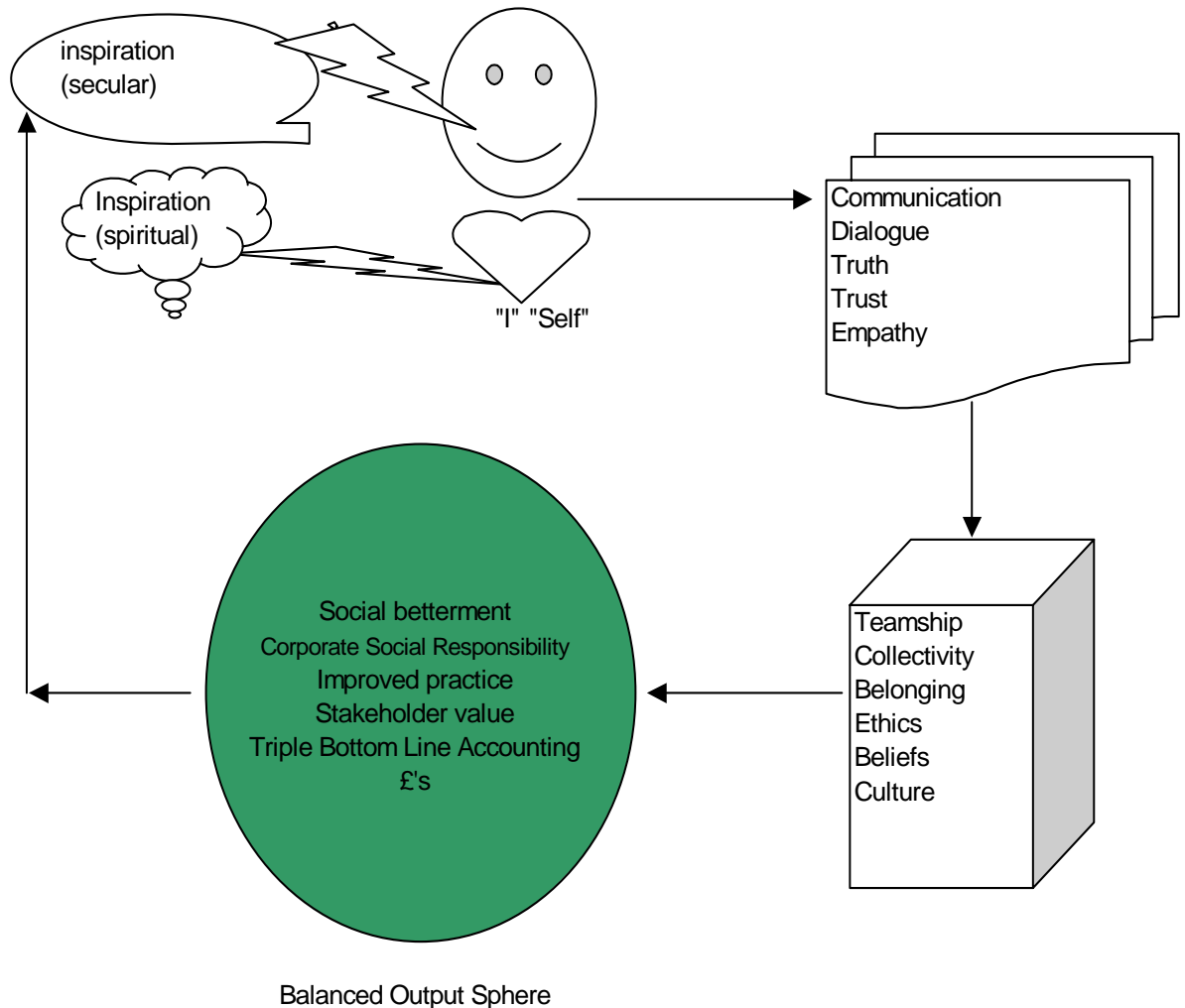
“I am inviting you to consider whether this resonates in any way with your own experiences” (Stacey, 2003).

My “i” Theory is distinct from an Action Science “Model-I” theory-in-use as described by Argyris & Schön (1974, cited in Whyte, 1991). Such theories can be brought into practice and research when participants experiencing feelings of embarrassment or threat. The resultant strategies are of unilateral control, self protection, defensiveness, smoothing over and covering up. They have the hallmarks of abuse of power and lack of empathy and are therefore attempt to negate my embodied values.

“At first the truths Phaedrus began to pursue were lateral truths; no longer the frontal truths of science, those toward which the discipline pointed, but the kind of truth you see laterally, out of the corner of your eye.” (Pirsig, 1974: 124)

Inspirational Management Theory

Inspirational Management Theory (Edgerton, 2005)



The green sphere encompasses the notions of:

- 1) The Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992).
- 2) Jürgen Habermas' spheres or worlds of culture – “lifeworld”, “system” and “steering media” (politics), in his model of balanced social development. (Power, Laughlan, & Cooper, 2003 cited in Alvesson & Willmott 2003: Chapter 7). Habermas' concept of sphere is similar to Paula Saukko's *scape*. My green output sphere could be referred to as an “inspiroscape” (Saukko, 2003).

- 3) “Greening”. The four types of greening organisation are examined by Jermier, & Forbes, (2003), (cited Alvesson & Willmott 2003: Chapter 8). As a Member of the Royal Agricultural College and having worked in the waste disposal industry I lay claim to having more environmental knowledge than most. This has influenced my decision making at work sufficiently for me to position Pentagon between a “Competitive” and “Holistic” greening organisation. Our oil tanks at Andover are not only of double skinned construction, but the building is tanked to quarry regulation standards. I have had Vickers energy management controls fitted to the workshops so that the heating is turned off if a shutter door is left open for more than ten minutes. The special garage wastes are disposed of properly by Malarly Environmental and I have installed cardboard recycling bins at all locations through Biffa. My team embrace these greening policies by my own actions or their own consciences and

“It reminds us that organizations are not systems controlled easily by top-down commands and initiatives or easily described well with only the views of top management.” (Jermier, & Forbes, 2003, cited Alvesson & Willmott 2003: Chapter 8: 171)

A non-theoretical illustration of what I mean by the concept of a balanced output sphere is well described by the mission statement of Levi Strauss & Co. (First cited in Thomson, 1998):

“ Our success will be measured not only by growth in shareholder value, but also by our reputation, the quality of our constituency relationships, and our commitment to social responsibility.” <http://www.levistrauss.com/responsibility/>

I propose my own management theory in the full knowledge that it will inevitably provoke a dialectic reaction from fellow researchers and peer group. A discourse I would like to participate in. As Jack Whitehead highlights:

“new ideas are often met with scepticism, rejection or hostility from those who are working within the dominant paradigm. Researchers who are trying to make original and acknowledged contributions to their subject, education, might expect powerful opposition to their ideas.” (Whitehead, 1993: 73)

Also: “One of the things one learns is that there is no relationship between the way a problem has structured itself and presents and the logic of discipline. One has to “move” (figuratively speaking) from within the field. One of the classical mistakes one can make is to come too quickly with the right interpretation. One has to fight one’s tendency to reduce the Other to the Same, to reduce the situation to one’s theory. To struggle with the notion and the practice that ethics comes before epistemology..... One moves from practice, and perhaps from practice to “theory”. In action research one starts in the middle and ends in the middle.” (Hans van Beinun, 1999 cited Herr & Anderson, 2005)

I will refer to the building blocks as my hierarchical 7 “I” ’s of inspiration theory, on how to manage the performance of an inspirational team, I invite the reader to judge the theory by taking my educational standard of inspiration.

The inspiration that I am talking about and aspiring to can be explained by this metaphorical analogy or pedagogy of playing a team sport. Let me try to explain what I mean:

Suppose you are a member of a tennis team (for example, Davis Cup) and for training the squad play doubles. Your opponents and partner are judged, by you, to be superior players, you will play at your absolute best. The quality of serve is good as is the return, you observe this, quickly reflect and play a good safe shot yourself, the return again is good and so on until the rally is at fever pitch and all participants are playing well above their normal, perceived, level. This is inspired play. My point is, who is the leader? The

server? Not necessarily. You are feeding off each other and the quality is snowballing. You are in a feeding frenzy of inspiration, fired by competition and the desire to win.

If you now play the rally again, in your mind, but with all, some or just one of the building blocks of the 7 “I” ‘s removed I don’t believe it happens.

The inspiration is achieved through the synergy of a reciprocal chain of events. This is an ecological state and one which I term as “inspirational reformation”. It is the boundary region, the flow of communication through this permeable membrane that is important to team dynamics. That is the flow between individuals within the team. Primarily the Communication Flow (Miller cited in Stacey, 2003).

In the work place, the spontaneity may not be present or indeed prudent and therefore care needs to be taken when reflecting on the actions of others (Schön 1983). You can, through an action reflection cycle, go back to the game of tennis and edit the video so that you all play your best shots in the same sequence. At some stage the forced error will result or a line judge/umpire (boss) from outside the team players will intervene and stop play.

This is a working abstract example of inspiration (secular), its transcending into Inspiration (spiritual) could happen if one of the team members sees the “I” of inspiration, the glimpse (Brunton 1988), in the same way as Ayrton Senna spoke of when he drove “the lap”, the first lap of the F1 European Grand Prix, Donington Park, 1993. In this state people can achieve things, but they claim to have an out of body experience, literally as if another, subconscious imported spirit, is doing the “driving”. This Inspiration can feed into the system as portrayed in my diagram “Inspirational Management Theory”. Martin Buber’s (1947) philosophy of dialogue opens up the possibility of one or some of the team members importing Inspiration into the heart through what Buber describes as the I – Thou relation. Buber’s theory is that person to person dialogues are considered to be a reflection of a human meeting God and therefore that dialogue between man and God is possible. This draws many parallels and again identifies the mystical possibilities of a team member breathing in Inspiration from a

spiritual and divine source, which in turn could, from this new secular source of inspiration, inspire another or many other team members. This is how I believe the theory and the model represent the lived reality of my working with my team inspirationally.

Senna may have been referring to a sub-conscious state that Plotinus describes as a *mystical experience*, in that his “i” was a greater “I”, a merging with (a) God. I propose that Senna was a Neoplatonist and believed that when behind the wheel he was at one with (a) God, and was (a) God. Was this divine belief or mechanical failure his undoing? Did he lose sight of his mystical glimpse as he rounded Tamburello, San Marino Grand Prix, Imola, Sunday 1st May 1994, driving from pole and leading the race? (Gaardner, 1997: 124-127).

Examples of the team living out this concept of inspirational teamship can be found in action by examining the practices of the (four) parts departments at each of the garages. In the free market the team do compete against each other. Our garages operational area of influence overlap each other, therefore a parts department is competing for the same customer. This is usually worked out through the superior service level that one parts department can offer due to connectivity (physical or emotional), not price. This does not mean that the parts departments are not part of the same team, work together and share best practice. Competition improves the breed and they are all stakeholders in the team. At stock checks (once or twice per year) the parts managers are working guests at each others’ parts departments. In the last three years it is clear that a competitive edge has developed in the cleanliness and aesthetic of the home manager’s parts store. In short they now look like a retail shop! Three years ago you would get filthy working in a parts department, it was the norm, but now (2005) due to dedication, emancipation and my facilitation (by being the first non-pilot Mercedes-Benz dealership to install RIMS, a computer based inventory management system, and securing the capital expenditure) the departments are now well lit, with numbered, located, regimented plastic bins on clean

(polished at Poole) shelves. Stock checks are now quick, accurate and less arduous. The team are setting the standard and the standards of quality are continually improving. The inspirational team accept the collective responsibility of improving their own workplace praxis (informed, committed actions) for (social) benefit (McNiff, 2002). Parts right off's and the speed that a part can be purveyed have also helped the bottom line.

Robert Pirsig's explanation of the creation of Quality has parallels with my concept of the creation of inspiration. When I read *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, I can easily replace Pirsig's enquiry into *Quality*, with mine for *inspiration*.

“Or if he takes whatever dull job he is stuck with – and they are all, sooner or later, dull – and, just to keep himself amused, starts to look for options of Quality (inspiration), and secretly pursues these options, just for their own sake, thus making an art out of what he is doing, he's likely to discover the he becomes a much more interesting person and much less of an object to people around him because Quality (inspiration) decisions change him too. And not only the job and him, but others too because the Quality (inspiration) tends to fan out like waves. The Quality (inspiration) job he didn't think anyone was going to see *is* seen, and the person who sees it feels a little better because of it, and is likely to pass that feeling on to others, and in a way the Quality (inspiration) keeps going.” The brackets (inspiration) are my addition. (Pirsig, 1974: 362)

4) Questioning my establishment

For first person inquiry I have had to look deeply, reflect and re-reflect on what I have learnt through studying for my masters. I identified two case study areas of *The power of truth and the truth of power* and *Lets get critical! I am a garagiste, I am not*, because they give the audience a view of the other side. It can be argued that being part of this high performing, inspirational, team, climbing the corporate ladder etc. is all plain sailing. Yes, I am not dissatisfied, but I want to tell you two stories about the tensions and struggles whilst being mindful that this dissertation does not give those that I may criticise an opportunity to reply.

In this context, by “my establishment” I mean my existence, my role, my becoming.

A reader’s logical assumption from reading this dissertation could be that I am secure in my role at Pentagon, as a director and shareholder. I am comfortable in what I am doing at Pentagon in the context of providing transport for the movement of goods and people, and I am self satisfied in my contribution to myself, my family, to you and to them. Or am I?

What follows are two first person, self reflective and self-reflexive autoethnographies (Saukko, 2003) or critical appreciations. They are cultural critiques of garaging. An additional benefit to these struggles has been a further example of how the team work inspirationally.

a) The power of truth and the truth of power

This, Foucault (1988) inspired phrase is quoted from Whitehead (1993) and is preceded by “I want you to understand that I have seen what the uncontrolled search for profit can do to support corruption and to act against justice and freedom.” “ I imagine that many of us share a need to live a productive life and the sense of well being which often accompanies secure employment.” “..you might have seen that unjust claims were made which were nevertheless supported in the disciplinary procedures of your organization. In these cases the judgements were dominated by the truth of power rather than the power of truth.” (Whitehead, 1993: 1-3)

These three quotes resonate strongly for me due to the events I describe in this chapter. I believe that they must be taken in juxtaposition with the words of McNiff (2002) concerning company politics: “No one should ever lose sight of the inherent danger of challenging the establishment.” Inspired by the works of Noam Chomsky (2000) and Bourdieu, Pierre (1993). But then again, Action Researchers’ are urged by Richard Winter (1989) to accept risk as an inevitable aspect of creative practice.

“Anyone can become angry – that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way – that is not easy.” Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*.
<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.html>

At an early stage of my action masters studies, I made a note which became particularly relevant later. It concerns my conversations with my boss, and I quote an excerpt that describes them as:

“Dialectic, binary oppositional, a discursive structure in which this is opposed to that. The critic’s voice operates to reify the terms of the binary and thereby silence all other voices. Other realities, values and concerns are removed from view. Critique leads to rhetorical incitement. In Western traditions, to criticise another’s point of view is not a mere linguistic exercise, it is to invalidate

the other. In short, vocabularies of deficit.” (Ludema, Cooperrider and Barrett, 2001 cited in Reason & Bradbury, 2001)

“In show business it is not only sufficient for one to succeed, but all others around you must also fail.” (Dale Winton, 2003, in an interview on, *Steve Wright In The Afternoon*, BBC Radio 2).

I have never embraced the concept or terms “internal politics” and “political wranglings”, but the politics within an organisation cannot be denied. Again “hidden agenda” is a frightening concept, which attempts to negate my own embodied values, makes me reflect, and re-evaluate my living contradictions, “intrapersonally”. By intrapersonally I mean Howard Gardner’s “Intrapersonal Intelligence”:

“...intrapersonal intelligence, the key to self knowledge, he (Gardner) included access to one’s own feelings and the ability to discriminate among them and draw upon them to guide behaviour.” (Goleman, 1996: 39)

In difficult, political circumstances, “the researcher” will find him/herself reflecting in action (Schön, 1983) and trying to know oneself so as to act appropriately and in essence survive to fight another day. This action, without doubt, will force the individual into negating their values, calm the tiger within, with the hope of facilitating change at a later date. This should not embrace the negative response of revenge, which when the opportunity does arrive will be irrepressibly attractive!

I do not view this dissertation as a platform to air my dirty laundry and detail parts department management procedures, but some background is required for the reader to be able to have some standards of judgement for this piece. I hope it suffices to say that a chink in my armour appeared and the “3 year exemplary record of achievement by my team” (Edgerton, November 2004) was tarnished by a sizeable deficit in our stock holding of Mercedes-Benz parts being identified and quantified by the annual stock check.

On a positive, the re-organization (mostly due to movement of staff and the addition of a Group Parts Manager) has shown immediate improvements in the parts section of the team, the service level, sales (and purchases). The company's procedures for stock checking were in need of updating and the interest this activity by senior management and the auditors was limited. Everyone is now very focused on parts.

However, the need for the addition of a Group Parts Manager had already been identified, the movement of staff from garage to garage was primarily instigated by illness and the addition of the facility at Southampton. It is now obvious to me and a lesson I would like to pass on to all, that if you change the computer system, have a physical stock check to verify your closing stock value, and input that value onto the new system. Do not, as we did, take the computer's word for it, carry the value over, and then have a physical stock check after a further 8 months trading. To date there has been no one factor that can be called fully responsible, but one of my Parts Managers and myself received written disciplinary warnings.

Whilst writing this chapter I deliberated over the use of Faction, which would allow me to; change the names and references to protect my source who has not given me rights, keep the relationship and avoid legal action, stay with the facts, but dress them up with fictional names and circumstances – a parable. (Ferguson, *Use of "Fable" in fictional writing*. Dadds & Hart, 2000). However, there is no additional permission required, no classified information will be divulged, and I believe that all parties are big and bad enough to cope! On reflection, through taking this stance I am now aware that my standpoint whilst telling this story of the consumer, retail and employment law paradigm. Very much a business response, not a humanitarian one.

Having investigated by engaging in dialogue with two parts managers from other Mercedes-Benz franchised dealerships, and plying beer to them, I found that Pentagon was not alone. They too had stock holding variances after changing to the new Mercedes-Benz preferred computer system (Kerridge) of the same % relative to their stock value. The problem revolved around the value given to surcharges, it can be

termed as a double entry. The bulk of my loss of parts was not a physical loss of parts, but an accounting value, which is still of course, a monetary value.

I sought advice from a friend of my wife's family, Graham Armitage, Head of Audit at KPMG, who was not overly surprised at my results, imperfect though they were. The bottom line is that whilst I did not have the computer and accountancy skills to drill down into our IT system to prove my (and my Parts Manager's) innocence, "they" (the disciplinarians) were unable to prove my (our) guilt. If it had gone to court I do not believe that the case could have been given against the plaintiff.

"The shortest distance between two people is a smile" (Okri, 1995)

The wound has now healed as I believe that the action taken was sensationalist and primarily done to demonstrate ability (authority) to *The Board* and to divert attention and blame away from themselves. They neatly shirked their vicarious liability. It is not referred to (it has long been off my personal record) and if I do mention it now it is laughed off as if it was a minor incident and of no importance. I would like "them" to play the scenario back to themselves, what I like to term "talk to the man in the mirror" and see how it sits with them. There was a lack of empathy, damage to the emotional contract and I had to dig deep not to adversely affect my performance and reduce my ability to lead the team. It was not realised by the disciplinarians that the performance of the whole team suffered through their empathising with the two team members who had received their disciplinaries. The wound was invaginated from November 2004 to March 2005. The healing process was accelerated when I came to terms with it and learnt just let it go. If you put your energies into the intention of taking revenge, then that person (or people) will hurt you more and for longer. I live by the notion that the correct action for a team leader, and member, is to take the blame and share the fame.

The team working inspirationally

One of the positives as a result of the parts stock check problem was an opportunity for the team to demonstrate how it can work inspirationally. I was at an all time low. My boss did not realise it, I don't think, as he voiced his own frustration that I "did not appear contrite" over the parts debacle. The inner truth was, that I was surprised by the result and more so shocked by the reactions and actions of my superiors. When I reported the "truth" (the parts deficit) to the "power" I had not considered that the red dot of a laser sight would be trained onto my, and my manager's, foreheads. The "power" never realised (I must be a better actor than I thought), or they just did not care. The upshot of it was that my team realised. The resultant empathy that my team showed me was touching, they were very supportive and with me all the way. I tried not to make a big deal of my personal woes, but it was clear to the members of the team that a good financial result for November and December 2004 (to bring us closer to our end of year target) would help my cause. We exceeded the expectations through higher turnover, monthly contributory profit and achieving 100% Mercedes-Benz dealer standard marking. The objective financial results were just what I needed to fight back, but more so for me personally was the spiritual up-lift that the team's actions gave back to me. Their collective actions inspired me to carry on. This is an example of how my theoretical framework has been validated and tested in the field. What has still yet to be realised by the "powers" is that "truth" has not been rewarded and is consequently unlikely to be told again. If there is such a thing, their actions have *inspired* potential "dis-truths". This demonstrates the "living" nature of my management practice with the team, and how it is different to the way that those outside the team can work. Through the development of my management practice with my team I have learned to catch a glimpse of inspiration.

b) Lets get critical! I am a garagiste, I am not

“Critical Theory developed as a systematic approach to offer both an oppositional response to dominating influences and emancipatory hope.” (McNiff with Whitehead, 2002).

At this juncture I am lead into some appreciation of Critical Management Theory. I am not a One-Dimensional Man (ODM). “..the weakening and even disappearance of all genuinely radical critique”. (Kellner cited by Marcuse, 1991, in Jermier & Forbes, 2003, *Greening Organizations: Critical Issues*, Chapter 8 of Alvesson & Willmott 2003). The authors give warnings about not being suitably self-critical. The feelings expressed below can be described as a self-critical James Edgerton having a “rant”. (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/monday/pmIraq.doc> [June 2005]).

I am now able to position myself and my contribution to the macro forces. I am not what I had hoped, and I venture that few of us are if we make ourselves “get critical”. Critical Management challenges my, apparently, outwardly held values and management behavioural patterns. My aim here is to deconstruct my established management practice, to contest and destabilise, as Bill Clinton in his Richard Dimbleby lecture, 2002, suggested, we ought to look outside the box more often.

My ontology, my ontological beliefs and a piece of first person inquiry into the corporate James. The quantitative side of management, the science, the spreadsheet, can be validated in the light of the qualitative dimensions of, art (Schön, 1983. Pirsig, 1974)), sociology (my team as a community), morality and complexity (Shaw, 2002). Through travelling the journey of this Masters I now ask myself critical questions, such as:

How do I perceive the world to be?

Should I be looking at it differently?

“How do I know that I am being suitably and appropriately critical in my approach to my living theory, and by my living theory, we mean in the context of Critical Management Theory?” (in supervision, Wednesday 1st December, 2004).

Taking Jack Whitehead’s theory of “I” as *The Living Contradiction* in my context I am a Garagiste, I am not.

For my livelihood I fully endorse the use of a manufacturer backed, franchised motor dealership. Here is the contradiction, it is because I am from that background that I do NOT use a franchised dealer to service or repair my private cars and motorbikes! This is because I have a full and deep knowledge of “the system”. I would use such a garage for warranty work and where specialist tools/IT and training are required, only. In my organisational life, our marketing is targeted on retaining the custom of the three to seven year old vehicle “Segment Two”, where it is out of warranty, in private ownership and offers the greatest profit potential. The importance of market capitalism is dominant, now that we are in a post socialist global economy. The possible negative effects of this view are highlighted by Jack Whitehead:

“.....the unconstrained influence of the market must be resisted for the good of education and society.” (Whitehead, 1993: 2)

The reification of Marketing as a scientific method/management practice, has reached such a state of development that it has become the dominant symbiotic economic “footprint” of the Western world and democratic culture. By this we mean that we are comfortable with it, we understand it. It is our comfort zone of *modus operandi*. This requirement for a planetary homogeneous economic structure creates markets and demand into which the western world can pump its established brands in and draw cash out. Any country that has a non-compliant (foreign!) economic, social, ethnic and ethical system is in danger of being broken and forced to take the Western democratic system. I ask, do they need it? Is it best for them? Just because it suits “us” in the west, and by suiting us I mean it helps feed our rampant desire for ever increasing levels of

consumption, resulting in waste, obesity and the premature destruction of our planet and non-replenishable resources. I ask myself:

How different is this to the spice trade, cotton trade (or even slave trade)?

Does Globalisation (of Markets) = 21st Century Neo - Colonisation?

Dialectically “global growth accelerated sharply over the last 12 months, thanks chiefly to an unprecedented economic surge of 6.1% among the world's poorest countries. This expansion has produced what the World Bank calls a spectacular decline in poverty in Asia, and smaller declines throughout the developing world (sub Saharan Africa, which remains hobbled by bad governments and Aids, is a notable exception). Never in history have so many people seen such a rapid rise in their standard of living. In 1990, there were roughly 472 million people in the East Asia and Pacific region living on less than \$1 a day: by 2005, at current projections, there will only be 19 million people living in extreme poverty. What explains all this good news? The short answer is globalisation. As trade barriers fall, millions are reaping the benefits. Those nations that have opened their doors widest to the much-maligned multinational corporations have seen the sharpest declines in poverty. Write this on your forehead: free trade reduces world suffering.” (Brooks, 2004)

Clearly the modernistic and positivists view held above is stating that the US\$ is the true yardstick of quality of life. I think they should think again.

The living contradiction, (Whitehead, 1993), resonates strongly for me here in many ways, not just in that I work with motor vehicles, the Mercedes-Benz brand, and have a love of motor racing. For example, F1's colonisation of the East – is making the demand for the motorcar in China progress? Is the fact that the Chinese culture is now being influenced to create a demand for cars and cigarettes, development? Is the economic journey (the imposition of the Marketing Footprint) from a bicycle to a Mercedes-Benz and a packet of Marlboro, legitimate? Should we allow the imposition of the “governable consumer”? (Morgan, Chapter 6, cited in Alvesson & Willmott, 2003).

Whilst we are on the Mercedes-Benz subject, I cannot be the only person to feel a violation of my values at the “Class” system imposed by the model codes of their passenger car product line up. A Class to S Class. The Social pressures of Brands. Does anybody need a Mercedes-Benz in their driveway, or just want one? Has the whole concept been outmoded? The motor car, after all was the twentieth century love affair, so where should it ethically be positioned in the twenty first century?

Marketing has had a key role in developing and perpetuating the product life cycles of these products. It is partly responsible for the socially constructed demand for bigger engines and the resultant increased pollution. In the prevailing tax system, the revenue generated from every litre of fuel that is burnt is budgeted for by the treasury. The Governments are not fully behind the development of alternatives, at least until the oil runs out. This reliance on oil brings about world conflict.

As a piece of first person inquiry I feel it is important to be perpetually mindful of the part we play. My role is that of a pawn in a game of chess (otherwise referred to as the dominant paradigm or the grand narrative) and I therefore do not feel instrumental to a change in the system. For now at any rate. However I do feel that the process of studying for this action masters, my enquiry into how I have come to glimpse that there is something special about my team, has made me better equipped. Before I would not have seen.

5) Methodology – dead or alive?

Introduction


In this section I wish to outline my methodological perspective. Except that it is less of a perspective and more an account of my educational journey and how I became attracted to, and influenced by, different methodological approaches. Having trodden the path of my research journey and looking back on that path to tell the story of it, I am struck by my desire to make my methodology look neat and tidy because of academic convention. In reality, my methodology is more honestly framed as a journey of education (i.e. coming to know what methodology is, and what it does). I do not have a research methodology, but what I do have is a living methodological engagement with my research journey. I recall a sense of starting out my research enquiry believing I was working in a ‘tradition’ (Prasad, 2005) of ‘Action Research’ (Bridges, 2004). To evidence this I ask you to read my original research proposal for my enquiry as linked/posted on Jack Whitehead’s web site, further to a BER meeting in June 2004. (Thank you for your support Jack). <http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/berasig190604.htm>

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/beraprsig2/edgerton.html>.

<http://www.actionresearch.net/beraprsig2/edgertonquest.htm>.

How have I been influenced in my methodological choice?

Initially I believed that I would be conducting a cooperative or human inquiry approach (Reason & Bradbury, 2001) within the broad tradition of Participatory Action Research (Whyte, 1991). I anticipated a form of exploratory conversation with my team colleagues and planned for a formal approach to cooperative enquiry with regular meetings that could be video recorded.

Having declared Cooperative Inquiry as my ‘methodological approach’, or what some might call their ‘methodology’, I filmed three cooperative inquiry group meetings, and some one to one meetings with team colleagues. [view the CD  “Inquiry Team Meetings”].

I shared the video footage in peer review. In respect of the feedback, which perhaps could have been more gently presented, I was left in no doubt that the meetings I had filmed did not seem to be constituting what my peers understood to be collaborative or cooperative enquiry. This experience of feedback challenged what could be called my naively complacent approach to believing that I could facilitate a collaborative space in which cooperative inquiry could take place. The video evidence suggested otherwise. There was little evidence of cooperative inquiry happening and more evidence of me shaping, steering and ‘managing’ the process. I believed that I had facilitated and carried out cooperative inquiry with my team, and that these approaches were appropriate (i.e. warranted) and that the knowledge outcomes would be valid and legitimate. In this pivotal incident of peer review (July 2005) I was able to see my “I” as the living contradiction (Whitehead, 1993) in that by attempting to live my values I was in fact negating them.

On reflection, I wonder about this. Was I anxious? Was I inadvertently, but unhelpfully, extending my ‘managerialist’ way of working into my enquiry? Had I bumped up against a boundary that indicated that I needed to know more about the skills of facilitating my own cooperative inquiry with work colleagues? I needed to re-evaluate what I had actually done rather than what I thought or intended to do. My methodology section therefore demonstrates how I have learned, and how the choice of methodology has not only been a practical matter, it has also been a core element in my educational journey. Putting this differently, methodology for me has been idea and an action, a theory and a practice, *theoria* and *praxis*. This dimension of my research journey demonstrates the importance of how I have approached my education and learning; it provides evidence of my living theory because I can evidence the bald claim, “I have learned”. This chapter shows how I have added to my cognitive range while I have

simultaneously struggled to practise the skills of Action Research in this Masters programme. In order to get to this position I had to encounter a crisis. This crisis highlighted the underestimation of the skills I required for facilitation, how I had failed to appreciate the difficulties of cooperative inquiry with my work colleagues, the politics of power and status, and coming to a clearer realisation of what I wanted my research enquiry to explore and reveal. I had not taken into account the nature of 'I' and 'We', a notion that embraces the issues of degrees of trust and commitment, and an understanding of joint and common purpose, that is required for 'us' to engage together in cooperative inquiry. I lost my confidence in being able to facilitate a cooperative inquiry approach. I believe this was an appropriate response because I have come to see how facilitating cooperative inquiry is very much like facilitating a team building session, or even a group therapy session. During this period of depressed reflection I decided that cooperative inquiry was not an appropriate approach: but the relevance of mentioning this experience is to be honest to the "methodological journey". I had intended to work in this way, and made a start. However, I found this experience gave me the reason to go back into the literature to find another way to carry out my enquiry. For a period of about six months I read books on Action Research and Research Methodology (Saukko, Coghlan & Brannick, Herr & Anderson, Shaw) in search of an approach that suited the purpose of my research enquiry, which was to recap, publicly account for my own learning about my management practice.

What I do in this section is to outline the influence of different methodological approaches on my thinking as I searched for them, found them, and made sense of them, as I explain my 'living methodology' as the process of working in this way in order to 'craft' what Dadds and Hart (2000) refer to as an 'innovative methodology'.

Who has influenced my methodological choices? : the evolution of my methodological appreciation

My story of how my methodological choice has been influenced and evolved is itself presented as a 'first person action research inquiry' (Marshall & Reason, 2003). The emphasis therefore, with time and the acquisition of a deeper understanding of the warrant of the methodological perspectives that I was considering, was re-focused to first person living inquiry (Whitehead, 1993) and represented through a narrative inquiry style (Clandinin & Connelly, 2002) and (Prasad, 2005). I dedicate my methodological approach to the way I confronted my 'I' as a living contradiction, a concept that is central to a Living Theory approach (Whitehead, 1993).

The methodological perspectives that I considered

- a) First Person Inquiry
- b) Insider and Outsider Research
- c) Innovative Methodology

a) First Person Inquiry

Essentially a First Person Inquirer is

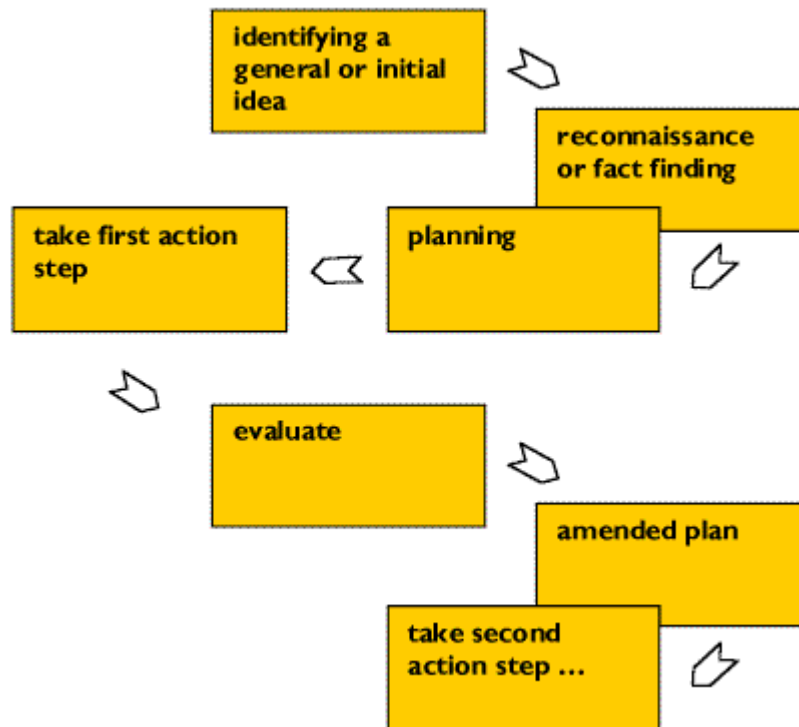
“generating a living form of theory by studying their own practice.”
(McNiff, with Whitehead, 1989). www.actionresearch.net [November 2004].

But in my team context, nothing is done purely for the individual, and has impact on others, therefore

“All good research is *for me, for us, and for them*: it speaks to three audiences...”. And “When I have inquired inwardly, into my own practice I am conducting first person inquiry and in a way, educating myself. But it is limiting to view this phenomenon in isolation because a researcher pulls information from many sources and different scales. An idea can morph as it is rarefied and can fit the macro or micro scale that it is appropriate for it to have relevance to an unknown group (3rd person), your peer group (2nd person) or the individual, as would be the case for first person inquiry.” (Marshall, 2001 cited in Reason & Bradbury, 2001)

For the methodology of self-reflective inquiry practices I turned to Marshall, (2001) from within Reason and Bradbury (2001). For me there are strong parallels between Judi Marshall, Donald Schön and influences of John Dewey (learning through experience) and their drawing on the action reflection spiral of Kurt Lewin without using it as the template for practice (McTaggart, 1996).

Kurt Lewin's spiral of action and reflection: (source: <http://www.infed.org>)



“We are asked to understand ourselves as repeatedly pausing in the present to learn from patterns of the past and thus design patterns to better serve our ends in the future.” (Lewin, 1946)

My principal actions for first person enquiry are to observe – adjust – modify, my approach in an action reflection cycle and narrate my (changing) practice as I thread it through this dissertation, my “ontobiographical account”.

I must be self questioning to carry out a self reflective-inquiry. Marshall identifies the prepositional notion that each person must identify and craft his/her own qualities and practices – a particularly strong personal characteristic/trait will marginalise the validity and legitimacy of your research findings (non-objectivity). I found this in itself a challenge, but I know that through the course of my educational journey that I have learnt to embrace the dialectic, even when it is binary oppositional. I have evidenced this judgement by capturing my voice on video.

“learning from hearing my own voice on the issues as well as from the replies”. (Marshall, 2001 cited in Reason & Bradbury, 2001)



“Peer review” “Peer review two”

What I believe that I have learnt to do and is evidenced in the video clips and my narrative is what Marshall calls “Cycling” – that is switching between action and reflection. By “Scanning” and (self) “Tracking” my “Inner and Outer Arcs of Attention”. I try to be both active and receptive – talk and listen, act/do and observe at the same time.

The process is arduous and takes effort, concentration and self-control. I was therefore pleased to find that Judi Marshall recognises this and is also tempted to give in:

“...sometimes wonder whether I should struggle to resurrect my researcher self or should concede to current forces, let my professional life be what it is, and pay more attention to the quality of my life generally.” (Marshall, 2001: 436 cited in Reason & Bradbury, 2001)

b) Insider and Outsider Research

Insider Research was introduced to me by my supervisor in a paper written by Rosalie Holian and Robert Brooks (2004) *Ethical issues and “insider” research in business*, RMIT Business, Melbourne <http://www.rmit.edu.au/>. This exciting commentary on the methodologies of Cooperative and Appreciative Inquiries encapsulates the struggle and tension that I felt whilst being both a kind of outside consultant looking into the team, and a team member at the same time.

“The claim “nothing about us without us” expresses an ethical and epistemological truth in educational research: a statement about the kind of relationship which should (be) obtain(ed) between researcher and participants.” (Bridges, David, *The ethics of outsider research*) <http://www.dur.ac.uk/r.d.smith/bridges.html>

“The insider researcher will always be something of an outsider in his or her own community by virtue of becoming a researcher..... by virtue of being a researcher, one is rarely a complete insider anywhere.” (Razavi, 1992) <http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BC203/>

This juxtaposition was in itself a conflict. Jack Whitehead’s notion of the Living Contradiction came to the fore, as did the wise words of the Dalai Lama in *Ancient Wisdom, Modern World* (ethics for a new Millennium) where the inability to affect change from the outside, or rather the need to be within the organization that you are trying to change is essential in order to bring about social change. This is even though your own ethics are at war with the ethics of the organization for the time being. So you have to (temporarily) live with the contradiction (grin and bear it) in order to change what you are in conflict with. “The degree of freedom felt to participate, based on either positive or negative aspects of the relationship between parties could impact on not only the ethics of the research, but also the accuracy of data and quality of the findings.” (Holian & Brooks, 1994)

On this excerpt from the paper alone I take comfort as it gives meaning to some of the results that I have been able to achieve with my team to date.

I then used Holian and Brooks as a kind of check list to run through my inquiry method: As recommended by Jean McNiff, Pamela Lomax, and Jack Whitehead, (1996). My Research Proposal was submitted to my organization and given approval and anonymity is not a requirement of Pentagon Mercedes-Benz for my research project.

All participants were given a document of participation which they could agree to, as individuals, or not, and at differing levels (an example is in Appendix Three). David Bridges adds that it is a methodological requirement for participants to have several opportunities to challenge any prejudices that researchers may bring with them. The question of freedom to choose verses potential for the abuse of power does exist as a conflict and cannot be judged objectively by myself. It is an aspect that I have to factor in and a paradox that I have to live with. Perhaps the only pure method is for organizations to swap staff, on secondment, and utilize the research findings of the employee from the other organization participating in the scheme, but I do not know of the existence of such a scheme and it is likely to bring the whole issue of funding into question. Is the value in conducting this research solely for the individual or for the organization that is funding it? My objective has always been to provide both.

David Bridges makes the claim that only insiders can properly represent the experience of a community. This brings us to the, perhaps extreme, case of Michele Foucault's research into the gay community of Paris. *Se dependre de soi* (freeing the self from the self) and his call for a reflective practice and closer attention to how we produce truth.

The problem that I had was how to conduct Cooperative and Appreciative Inquiries with my team whilst acknowledging the potential abuse of power and pseudo-by-in of its my (non) objective members. Through the guidance of my supervisor, and the introduction of the concepts of Internal and External research, I am of the mind that I have reached the position as described in conversation between Peter Reason and Judi Marshall in the 2003, *Approaches to Action Research*, CD, whereby I have created the conditions (taken

the horses to water) for a Cooperative Inquiry and Appreciative Inquiry but “you cannot force them to drink” (Peter Reason in Marshall & Reason, 2003).

On outsider research, Jean McNiff comments:

“The locus of power is in the external researcher who gathers data about the situation. People become data to be manipulated and spoken about. The values base of human living is systematically factored out.” (McNiff with Whitehead, 2002)

I turned to Patricia Shaw for guidance on this paradox that I find myself in:

"The conviction that rational self-conscious reflection undertaken cooperatively can always improve organizational institutions always seems to shy away from dealing with issues of power, control and potential destructiveness." (Shaw, 2002)

Shaw cites Bennis (1979) with his "truth-love model" for the conditions necessary for collaborative enquiry to be effective, based on trust and truth:

"The OD (Organisational Development) consultant strives to use power that is based on rationality, valid knowledge, and collaboration and to discount power based on and channelled by fear, irrationality and coercion. The latter kind of power leads to augmented resistance to change, unstable changes, and dehumanised irrational conflicts."

Warren Bennis is not able to reach an answer to this dilemma and therefore offers some support to the insider researcher paradox.

<http://www.managementskills.co.uk/articles/ap98-bennis.htm>

Insider, Outsider, you will always be judged as one or the other, but perhaps differently by different members of the community being researched. A balance could be achieved by an Outsider doing the same piece of research as the Insider, and comparing results. This is difficult in a qualitative exercise as there can be no scientific/quantitative “control”. A poststructuralist’s view.

The fundamental problem, that has come to light as a result of my enquiry over the last year, as I see it, is that I am not conducting my enquiry **on** my high performance, inspirational team, nor am I conducting my enquiry **with** my high performance, inspirational team. I am conducting my enquiry **through** my high performance, inspirational team.

“Action Research is inquiry that is done by or with insiders to an organisation or community, but never to or on them.” (Herr & Anderson, 2005: 3)

Is this a new or different type of research methodology? A Living (Inspirational) Methodology (with reference to Jack Whitehead, see Appendix Five). Experience tells me, probably not, but I will be continuing to research and will be seeking guidance as to how I can move forward with my research program with what I am now struggling to name as; semi-engaged enquiry, facilitated enquiry, altruistic enquiry, augmented enquiry, innovative enquiry, serendipitous enquiry, interrogative enquiry, insighter enquiry?

Later, having studied Stacey (2003) I learn of Social Constructionism (Gergen, 1985):

“every explanation people put forward of any phenomenon is a socially constructed account, not a straightforward description of reality.”(Stacey, 2003: 8)

Therefore it is impossible to be an independent, objective observer when trying to explain a phenomenon. If you try to you are ignoring your input as a factor/influence. Also, the theory of Reflexivity (Steier, 1991 cited in Stacey, 2003):

“reflexive entities bend back on themselves, their explanations are determined by a distillation of their histories. Therefore, if you accept Reflexivity, you cannot stand outside your own experience and be an objective observer who claims truth, you are in fact an enquiring participant.” (Reason, 1988 cited in Stacey, 2003)

Donna Ladkin (2005) explores subjectivity and objectivity within inquiry.

John Mark Dyke (cited in Herr & Anderson, 2005: 105) confirms Insider Action Research as a methodology “We find, then, that the learning that transpires through multiple pilot studies, conducted in the same site, is both from the analysis of the data as well as from practicing the methodology of insider action research.”

Mine is not a unique phenomenon.

c) Innovative Methodology (Dadds & Hart, 2001)

On October 13th 2005 I e-mailed Jack Whitehead with an idea. The idea being that I wanted to reference him for what I was struggling to clarify as “Living Methodology” - a direct descendent of Jack’s celebrated Living Educational Theory. Jack immediately was able to help by steering me to “Methodological Inventiveness” (Dadds & Hart 2000: 167 – 173). The e-mails are included in Appendix Five, a key comment from which is:

“ I would say that each individual can create their own living theory of their existence as an explanation of their educational influence in their own learning. Each individual will bring together a unique constellation of values, skills and understandings in the creation of their living theory. In the course of forming their living theory they will draw on multiple methods from a range of different disciplines.” (Whitehead, 13th October 2005 from an e-mail to the author).

“One cannot break with tradition unless one knows the tradition.” (Dadds & Hart, 2001)

My problem that preceded the idea was that I had learnt enough through the course of my studies to realise at this juncture that I had not carried out the orthodox Participative Action Research (PAR) methodologies of Cooperative and Appreciative Inquiries. I carried out a review and found my suspicions confirmed. Below are some of the works that endorse my new found view:

Freire – Paulo Freire (1970) *Pedagogy Of The Oppressed* (cited in Herr & Anderson, 2005) assumes power relations to be such that my team were oppressed within the organisation and that participatory research would enable the “generative themes” of participants acquiring literacy and engage in social critique and social action.


Reason – Peter Reason (1988) (cited in Whyte, 1991). PAR states that the degree of involvement on the part of the participant must be open to negotiation and dialogue. Everyone should contribute to the creative thinking that is a part of the research process. The forms of cooperation must aim toward being genuinely cooperatively orientated.

William Foote Whyte defines PAR as:

“ a process in which some of the people in the organization or community being studied actively participate with the professional researcher throughout the research process from the initial design to the final presentation of results and discussion of the action implications.” (Whyte, 1991)

(PAR) “...aims at creating an environment in which participants give and get valid information, make free and informed choices (including the choice to participate), and generate internal commitment to the results of the inquiry.” (Argyris & Schön, *Participatory Action Research and Action Science Compared, A Commentary*, cited within Whyte, 1991)

I did not manage to facilitate my team into “Participating in cogenerative dialogue for mutual learning” nor did we collectively produce “Local theory, new shared framework/explicit group action theory.” (Elden & Levin, 1991, *Model of A Participative Action Research Scandinavia Style: The Cogenerative Way*, cited in Whyte, 1991)

Unfortunately, there are more and I could continue, seemingly ad infinitum. Suffice to say that for PAR I needed to move the passive informants into being active participants in my research question. My team were willing to participate (on company time) and were informative in supplying the data. I am not alone, other researchers have also battled with PAR. As I realised through my video footage, I could witness my “I” as the living contradiction (Whitehead, 1993) as I monopolised the meeting and tried to push through my own agenda. I was attempting to live my values whilst actively negating them. View  “Inquiry Team Meetings” to evidence this.

“Acknowledging mistakes is a fundamental part of developing our ideas.” (Whitehead, 1993)

Methodological Inventiveness

I had now departed from the orthodox and conducted an innovative approach.

“No methodology is, or should be, cast in stone, if we accept that professional intention should be informing research processes, not pre-set ideas about methods or technique.” (Dadds & Hart, 2000: 166)

Methodological innovation on my part came about, not because it is allowable or a fashion to create unorthodox methodologies, but out of necessity to hold true to my research aims – to enquire into the nature of a team and “see” if there are attributes that can be identified, explained, worked with, perpetuated and enhanced. The emotional attributes that I “saw” I term Inspiration.

I did not conduct the research with the team, or on the team, but through the team and my study thereof. My enquiry started in earnest identifying the established methodologies of PAR – Cooperative and Appreciative Inquiry, but to hold true to my research question, given my circumstances within the organisation, I had to depart from these established, orthodox, methodologies and innovate. The actual methodology demonstrates a resourcefulness that I learnt in order to continue with my research as methodological inventiveness was not my intention from the outset.

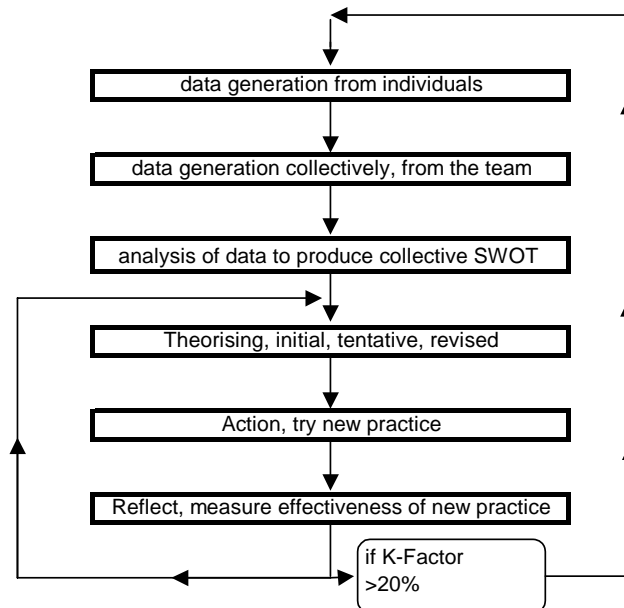
“Quality, the research suggests, may depend in part upon the ways in which the awarding academic institution allows the talents, inspirations and artistry of innovative practitioner researchers to surface and be utilised in pursuit of self-identified professional purposes and drives.” (Dadds & Hart, 2000)

For the purposes of completing my MSc it would be more straight forward and easier not to stray from the established methodologies. I have not departed from them through choice, but through holding true to my enquiry and adapting to my environment. Something had to give, and it was orthodox methodology.

My Living Methodology

The Method:

- 1) Data generation from individual's questionnaire's, dialogue - face to face and e-mail, recorded on video and note pad.
- 2) Data generation from collective team dialogue, recorded on video and note pad.
- 3) Analysis, of the above, to produce a collective team SWOT analysis and an appreciative appraisal of the team.
- 4) From the collective and appreciative analysis, the formulation of a proposed theory as to how/why the team works.
- 5) Action – amend practice in light of new theory of practice.
- 6) Reflect – measure effectiveness of new theory and revise.
- 7) Repeat, from 4) if the team's members stay more than 80% constant (the K-Factor is less than or equal to 20%).



Living Methodology (Edgerton, 2005)

“The K Factor” - according to Pricewaterhouse (Coopers Librand) is the amount of knowledge entering and leaving the business. The K- Factor = % of staff in 1st + last year as % of total.

My living methodology was initiated in the singular, first person lived experiences. Developed through the *polyvocal* discourses of peer review (with the insights of Jack Whitehead), and the team, second person. And has drawn on references to texts and the wider audience, the third person. I believe that this first, second and third person *triangulation* (Saukko, 2003) gives multiple validities to my methodology. By triangulation, I mean in the traditional classical way of taking a third bearing in order to confirm my position, in a navigational sense, to confirm the diagram and the philosophy behind my innovative methodology as truthful. Whilst I realise that this aim is positivist, the model and the living methodology is for now and works for our team for the time being, it is diachronic and the phenomenon and language will change with time. It is a local methodology, but I hope that some aspects will resonate with second and third parties enough for it to be morphed into something that is usable for you, usable for them.

I find it difficult to position my research question within the three types of alternative validity that Saukko identifies; Dialogic, Deconstructive and Contextual. Critically I have learnt to recognise that my team operate in what can historically be seen as a private sector, white male, non-vocational business which when linked to the brand of Mercedes-Benz has middle class underpinning.

Triangulation is drawn closer in Saukko's dialogic validity and my methodology becomes postpositivist when I reflect that it holds true to the voices recorded in the limited successes of my attempts at cooperative inquiry,. In my Appreciative Inquiry their voices (polyvocality) give validity to my claim of my research being conducted through my team as well as with my study peer group and stakeholders in Pentagon. See



“Inquiry Team Meetings”, “Inquiry Individual Meetings” and “Peer Review”.

Truth is identified as key to all major facets of my research, my day to day conduct, my standards of judgement and my embodied values.

Perhaps the above paragraphs alone can validate my self-reflexivity as evidence of a piece of first person inquiry. I acknowledge my role and contribution to the modern(ity)

machine, the position power, or legitimate power (French & Raven, 1959:1960) of my “rank” that is bestowed on me by the majority shareholder of Pentagon Ltd. Although I stand firm in my belief that my day to day work is carried out as a *standard employee* (and I hope there never is such a thing). It is true to say that I seldom use my job title of Director in any form of communication, but I also acknowledge that there is a part of me, in my deepened interiority, that is comfortable with it and believes that I have earned it! More living contradiction. I struggle with the political aspects of corporate, private and educative life to the extent that I cannot comment on them and instead prefer to leave it to a third party:

“If James had to walk through a political (PC) mine field, he had better learn to fly.” (in supervision, 7TH December 2005, Cirencester)

Conclusion of the Methodology section

My intention is that this story, of my realisation of the truth concerning my methodological approach, demonstrates the learning journey that I believe that I have experienced in this key area of my enquiry, and indeed the writing of this dissertation.

6) Summary

The overarching (meta) intention of this dissertation is best described “By telling you a story which is entertaining with a serious intent” (Whitehead, 1993: 7).

By telling you how and what I practice with my team I believe I have made explicit the knowledge that I have come to realise that I held inside, the knowledge I acquired from “doing it” and added to it the knowledge that I have acquired from recent management studies. The combination of which I have found more powerful and I imagine more useful in my organisational and family lives. “...your educational theorising about your own learning at work offers hope for the future in creating a good and productive society.” (Whitehead, 1993).

This piece of work spanned three academic study years and represents over forty years of transcendental learning. It is an ongoing, generative, transformational, process, as I believe that all people are living a life of learning – it just took me a long time to realise it. By the time you read this, my “ontobiographical” account, my research and theory will already be out of date (it is diachronic), this is a realisation brought about primarily through a deep engagement with the concept of considering myself to be a *Reflective Practitioner* (Schön, 1983). It has been termed “designing the plane while flying it” by Herr, & Anderson, (2005).

The temptation to put my signature to my own theory, my “*i*” of *Inspiration Theory* to successful team management, was too great to resist. Whilst this may be seen as arrogant my theory had to undergo the rigours of peer group validation who’s educational standards of judgement could have claimed naivety, non-originality and blatant plagiarism before it could be legitimised by the regulars of Plato’s garden. With this I acknowledge Richard Winter’s risk element in the criteria for Action Research (McNiff, with Whitehead, 2002: 107).

The problem for the researcher is to deconstruct our particular circumstances (originality) so that the theory can be synthesised and given generalisability. My

intention is for my theory to be accessible and have second person relevance to other researchers' scenarios, which in turn have relevance to their audience, the third person. I hope that you engage with this piece of research long enough for it to resonate within and inspire you to your own, qualitative, theorising.

For generalisability, I take Jack Whitehead's definition of generalisability in the living educational theorists' sense. That 'general' in a living theory still refers to 'all' but instead of being represented in a linguistic concept, 'all' refers to the shared form of life between the individuals constituting the theory. The intersubjective agreement that we have understood the meanings of each others' accounts. "It isn't a matter of testing the validity of anyone else's theory. It is a matter of testing one's own". Taken from an e-mailed response to James Edgerton from Jack Whitehead, (15th January 2005).

And: "All good research is *for me*, *for us*, and *for them*: it speaks to three audiences.....It is *for them* to the extent that it produces some kind of generalizable ideas and outcomes which elicit the response "That's interesting!" from those who are concerned to understand a similar field (Davis, 1971). It is *for us* to the extent that it responds to concerns for our praxis, is relevant and timely, and so produces the response, "That works!" from those who are struggling with the problems in their field of action. It is *for me* to the extent that the process and outcomes respond directly to the individual researcher's being-in-the-world, and so elicit the response, "That's exciting" – taking exciting back to its root meaning, to set in action." original emphasis, (Reason & Marshall, 1987 cited in Herr & Anderson, 2005).

A preferred word could be "relatability". How does my experience, narrative and theory relate to yours and how is your own relatable to others - first, second and third person relatability.

“.....*laterally*. That’s a word he (Phaedrus) later used to describe a growth of knowledge that doesn’t move forward like an arrow in flight, but expands sideways, like an arrow enlarged in flight, or like the archer, discovering that although he has hit the bull’s eye and won the prize, his head is on a pillow and the sun is coming in the window. Lateral knowledge is knowledge that’s from a wholly unexpected direction, from a direction that’s not even understood as a direction until the knowledge forces itself upon one. Lateral truths point to the falseness of axioms and postulates underlying one’s existing system of getting a truth.” (Pirsig, 1974: 124)

The above quotation from Pirsig is like Whitehead’s growth of educational knowledge, what counts as knowledge. That is *living theory*.

7) Further Research

I acknowledge that there are facets to inspiration and inspirational team theory that I have not covered in this private sector business focused enquiry. I am not alone in feeling these sentiments at the concluding stage of my research text:

“Obvious limitations of time, space, and personal expertise have restricted the scope of the book in many ways.” (Prasad, 2005: 283)

I see a continuation of my studies and theorising to be in the following areas:

Inspiration – “The I – Factor”, the value brought to the business, the individuals, the team, the customer.

Carrying out a Participative Action Research inquiry with a team.

Innovation in a service environment.

My management, and the further development thereof, in a team context.

The benefits of these developments for the customer and stakeholder – increased service, lower costs, environmental improvements and social change.

Inspiration – an anthropology of. The evolution of Inspiration and inspiration from Greek Philosophy, through; Divinity – Judaeo-Christianity (were Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles the original Inspirational Team?), The Renaissance, The Enlightenment, and Existential Philosophy. This non private sector business enquiry, which is outside the framing and the research proposal of this Masters of Management Studies, could be used to form the basis of a Masters in Philosophy or indeed a Doctorate. But, I believe in first things first.

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Appendices

Appendix One

Introduction

I returned to the RAC after an absence of twenty years to attempt my masters as part of my Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The Royal Agricultural College Business School's MSc in Management Studies is designed

“To provide managers and professionals with the opportunity to conduct a problem-focused research inquiry into a management, organisational or professional concern using an Action Research approach.” The Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, *Postgraduate Prospectus 2004 & 2005 Entry*, Papers Publishing.

This problem solving whilst personal developing format is attractive to both the individual (student) and the organisation, and is key if the organisation is the sponsor in both time and fees, which fortunately is true in my case.

The purpose of this section is to provide the reader with an introduction to James Edgerton (the author) as background lead up to the starting grid for my enquiry into inspiration and team working. You will be traveling with me, through my narrative, down my own Voie Sacree (sacred road) (Ousby, 2002).

Cirencester revisited

“.....you may find yourself behind the wheel of a large automobile, with a beautiful wife, and a beautiful house, and you may ask yourself, well, how did I get here?” (Byrne, David, (1978) *Once In a Lifetime*, Talking Heads.)

Try as I might, I could not 100% defend my choice of the word “inspirational” in my research proposal.



“Peer review two”.

My peer group validation team had stuck their talons in, hit the brakes, and my research proposal document had not even got passed the first sentence. Paulus Murray’s anxiety about this year’s action masters group subsided, at last. The group was critiquing a fellow researchers work, which is a good thing as it was already late February. As the subversion flowed I habitually looked out the window at the clock tower and reminded myself that I was back at the Royal Agricultural College, after an absence of 20 years. How did I get here (again)?

After my viva I realised that most of my friends had left Cirencester, for good, and the image of that same clock tower, but from a 180 degree different aspect, shrinking in my rear view mirror as I escaped down the front drive as fast as possible, lives on within me.

The farming that followed, sharing a farm cottage with a good friend I made whilst at that same college, was all consuming. The farm was extensive in size, intensive in practice and best of all the machinery was huge and brand new. I was in my early twenties and had no thoughts of planning for the future until David Chown, the owner of the farm, stopped me from ploughing and drew a line across his neck with his forefinger - the signal to kill the engine.

There followed a different kind of conversation to the normal directive, in a way, a Patricia Shaw conversation in that it was a new conversation, but standing by a tractor,

in a field, not by a coffee machine in a manufacturing plant in Italy. The results of which were quite profound. The crux of the matter was that I was not being told to leave, but as my parents were not farmers and the future for agriculture was bleak, I should look at my options and consider my mid and long term.

Having trawled through Farmer's Weekly for agriculture based companies (from memory; seed merchants, machinery suppliers, fertilizer manufacturers, The National Farmers Union) I sent my C.V. off, proudly confirming my new status as a Member of the Royal Agricultural College. I expected immediate responses and to be in high demand! Wrong.

With autumn cultivation nearing completion I decided to write to people who already knew me, or at least of me. I got a phone call and an interview immediately and a job, by return. The prompt had been alternative land usage and land reclamation, with an environmental angle. If you are not there already, waste disposal. I wanted to work on the land bank of the company, but had to cut my teeth in sales, so I bought a suit and trudged round Slough Trading Estate in December, "cold" calling for appointments. I acquired first hand knowledge of David Brent's "The Office" in more ways than one. Valuable knowledge.

I became quite good at my sales role, reaching a position where I had two sales executives working with me, and the occasional trainee. Eventually I was rewarded with a role that supported my initial job application - to put a golf course on a completed land fill site. This role I really enjoyed, throwing myself headlong back into the long hours of farming combined with the budgetary and people management skills I had acquired over the last 5 years. The course was completed on time and on budget, but with any hope of further career progression firmly out of the question a deal was done with the owner of the company and I left, compensated, with the unfulfilled desire of pursuing a career in my then primary love of motor racing.

But first things first. I was 29, unattached, with some money and with a mortgage that could be covered by the rental income obtained from a charming Belgium tenant and her

cat. I bought a round the world ticket, loosely timed to coincide with the wedding of David Andrews, an old school and Royal Agricultural College friend, in Sydney.

On return to Blighty I was financially worse off, but richer in character. The world of motorsport (business that is, not driver, I was looking for a marketing role) was waiting for me. I just had to find an “in”. Sounds simple, until you realise that the only real money is in Formula 1, and at that the front of the grid. In the words of Rod Vickery (then marketing manager for Benetton Formula and later Eddie Irvine’s manager) I was trying to get one of 38 jobs in the world and for which there was no established route or qualification. I networked as best I could for the next three years or so, during which time I went to many European Grand Prix, met many people and had a really good time! I had two interviews at McLaren, one at Williams and best of all, a letter on Ford Motor Company Headed paper stating that I had a job with them, but I would have to bide my time as the start date could not be confirmed for several months (next season?). When sense prevailed and I eventually realised the type of organisations and arena that I was dealing with my emphasis changed to building my C.V. towards a career in the main stream motor industry. I was self employed, with a Thames Valley Business Development Grant, selling engine management electronics, universal joints, and sponsorship funding for would be hopefuls. This lead to working for many different companies and included names such as CSS (a below the line marketing agency in London) for whom I secured the Privilege Insurance British GT Championship sponsorship, The Morgan Motor Company, and Rover Group.

With my C.V. having transformed primarily via serendipity from farmer, through dustman and now car sales man, I replied to an advertisement for a business development manager for Janspeed, a respected automotive engineering company with Rover as their main client. I got the job and busied myself developing and launching a new line of stainless steel after market exhaust systems called S1. These were successful and we won the coveted “Max Power” award for best new product. Things were going well, I even got married!

With marriage a whole raft of different emotions, attitudes and responsibilities arise. Mortgage, rates, bills etc. A learned family friend who has been in the motor industry for all his working life predicted that only six vehicle manufacturers would be profitable (survive) in the 21st Century. Rover was not one of them.

Mercedes-Benz, yes, they were on the list of predicted winners. An employment agency that I had enlisted with put my name forward after I had completed some aptitude tests. I got an interview, at which point I realised that not only had I given up on my dream of working with racing cars, I was giving up the whole car concept - the job was with Mercedes-Benz Commercial Vehicles (Vans and Trucks), not cars at all!

After a nerve racking start I began to deliver the kind of performance that was expected of me as Operations Manager of the Andover depot (garage). My career has further developed within the franchise as indeed the company has gone from strength to strength. It is in this area that my research enquiry is founded.

As part of Mercedes-Benz dealership standards, all managers must pursue a path of continuous personal development. I am fortunate to have a very progressive and generous boss who has taken this directive, perhaps to extreme, and sponsored me through my Action Masters MSc.

I started mid term. By invitation of Paul Murray I attended a lecture from Paul Roberts concerned with connectivity, I was hooked! I then continued to attend as a “cling on”. As a habitual attendee I was unable to avoid submitting a piece of work for the previous year’s MSc group, for validation and critique. See “News from the Pentagon” later in this chapter.

.....refocusing on the conversation in hand I was able to prompt Paulus into the direction of Pat D’Arcy’s theory of engaged and un-engaged responses and readerly and writerly texts. I asked if the group could look again at my research proposal in the light of these theories. The peer group validation continues. And there we were, back to the outer arc of attention, from the inner arc of attention (Judi Marshall:2001). Back in real time.

Me, Myself and I (Ethics and My Embodied Values)

Embodied values:

My one line code for life is, do unto others as you hope others to do unto you.

Love of my daughters, Kate and Ellie, and of course my wife, Anna.

My family (love) – I have a strong and deepening sense of the value of family life. The love help support and companionship of my parents has progressively dawned on me over the last 40+ years.

I value the environment, but there is another contradiction here in that I have a love of motor sport.

Friendship – I am told that I work hard at maintaining friendship, also, that I expect a lot back from my friends. I have many long standing friendships and value them enormously. This has been made more important to me in the last three years by the sad loss of my great friend and race driving partner Vincent O'Mahony, at the age of 42, also friend and wife of my longest standing friend (from the age of 13) Phillipa Lovett at 37. Both from Cancer.

Health – in order to be there to enjoy the above.

Freedom. Most people close to me detect an anti-authoritarian trait. If pushed I like to demonstrate that I can go my own way. The big problem with this is realising that their way is in fact better (increasingly the case since participating in this MSC Management Studies course I enjoy embracing the dialectic), acknowledging it and “stepping down”. If you believe in Astrology, I am a Taurean, stubborn, Bull.

Materials – I must admit to being materialistic to a significant degree and therefore have established the need for funding to sustain this desire. However, with age I feel that I have become more realistic and the value, for example, of a quiet sunny afternoon, after

a good lunch (with wine), spent reading a book, whilst lying in a hammock has become more of a want than the Porsche that I was convinced I needed when I was thirty.

I fully intend that through reading this dissertation, the reader is made aware of my deepening interiority (this would be helped by meeting me, before and after, which may prove impossible). The participation in this MSc Management Studies, the reading, the peer group, the enquiry and the reflection have influenced me in a way that I can only attempt to validate by my wife's observation that the course has had a profound effect on me. This "softening" has brought about an increasing social awareness and how, like an engine, even the smallest component is instrumental and we are all able to positively effect social development as a whole. Thankfully I am not alone in feeling these emotions and there are many touching works that underline them. Here are some of my favourites.

"True development puts first those that society puts last" Mahatma Gandhi.

Sited in *The Week*, (2004) *Wit & Wisdom*, Dennis Publishing

The theory of Logotherapy. The 3 main avenues on which one arrives at meaning in life:

- 1) Creating work, doing a deed.
 - 2) Experiencing something, encountering someone. Love.
 - 3) Suffering. From which someone rises above, changes oneself.
- (Frankl, 1984)

The Dalai Lama believes that ethics fight afflictive emotions. Being happy rubs off on others. For us to be happy, others must not suffer. Negative thoughts and emotions are unethical behaviour. We need confidence and restraint, not doubt and insecurity, these he terms "Afflictive Emotions". When I fail to restrain my response to afflictive emotion my actions become unethical and obstruct the conditions of my happiness. The ethical practice is to check your response, counter negative thoughts and use patience. Health is generated by calm and peaceful mind, anger is our greatest threat to inner peace.

Counter fear with confidence, happiness comes from ethics/virtue. And our greatest joy and satisfaction result from our actions taken out of concern for others.

My embodied values have emerged during the course of my enquiry. They have become a living epistemological standard of judgement and my living educational standards of judgement.

I believe that I am able to live-out my own, embodied, ethical standards day to day (especially on holiday), to a much higher degree than I can in my organisational life.

Ethnicity – Do I need to state this (it negates my values!)? I am told that I appear white, middle class male, British, Church of England, brought up in a dormitory town 20 miles NW of London. Both parents father's had small family businesses.

News from the Pentagon

I have worked for a Mercedes-Benz franchise dealer group since February 1999.

During my, largely, enjoyable time with the company I have had the luxury of being able to pursue my own personal training and development programme. DaimlerChrysler UK (Mercedes-Benz parent company in the UK) run a programme of management training, which I participate in and have taken benefit from. I also underwent a rigorous one day work practice simulation from which my abilities and potential were assessed. The results of which were encouraging and have benefited my career development within Pentagon.

DaimlerChrysler have stringent criteria as to what a franchisee should be doing as part of their dealership network. It is a partnership, for as Pentagon itself could not build and develop a range of world class vehicles, DaimlerChrysler (Mercedes-Benz Passenger Cars and Commercial Vehicles, Mitsubishi Commercial Vehicles, Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, and Smart) are unsuccessful retailers. However, the balance lies with the manufacturer and they have the upper hand. One of their criteria is that the management of the franchised dealer network should continue a programme of personal development. Maarten Seward, to whom I directly report, encouraged me to pursue a challenge by giving me a free hand in choosing a course, whilst he would agree the funding and allow the time off work, providing all was well at the mill (the garages).

My investigations lead me back to the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, and I booked an appointment to meet the Course Director for the MSc Management Studies, Paul(us) Murray.

Appendix Two, “The AK47”

“Every Chautauqua should have a list somewhere of valuable things to remember that can be kept in some safe place for times of future need and inspiration.” (Pirsig, 1974: 47)

“Now, at last, the standard rhetoric texts came into their own. The principles expounded in them were no longer rules to rebel against, not ultimates in themselves, but just techniques, gimmicks, for producing what really counted and stood independently of the techniques – Quality (inspiration). What had started out as heresy from traditional rhetoric turned into a beautiful introduction to it.” (Pirsig, 1974: 211) (brackets are my addition).

Leadership

For effective leadership, I need to become a “dependable authority” – ask questions, give opinions, interrupt, provide information, re-iterate goals, manage large group dialogues – and then back out (be silent) when the group is working.

I take responsibility for holding the space, the boundaries, and facilitate the process of moving through it. I aim to produce *Collective Intelligence* with the team. (Shaw, 2002).

I do not claim any hegemonic right to lead my team. I, for the moment, have Legitimate Power (French and Raven 1959) and Position Power (Yukl and Falbe 1991), over the team and this is an organisational “rank” that I perpetually keep myself aware of. The two most critical characteristics that I aim to major on are integrity and competence.

<http://userwww.sfsu.edu/~entmgmt/powerabove.html>

I refer to Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard’s model of situational leadership. Four years ago my position power gave me Pentagon corporate responsibility for my team and its actions. I identified and consolidated the managers into one After Sales team rather than

4 separate garages sites each with a parts and a service department. In March 2006 we took part in our fourth team-building event, which have been identified by the team members as a key factor in establishing our identity, solidarity and sense of purpose. See

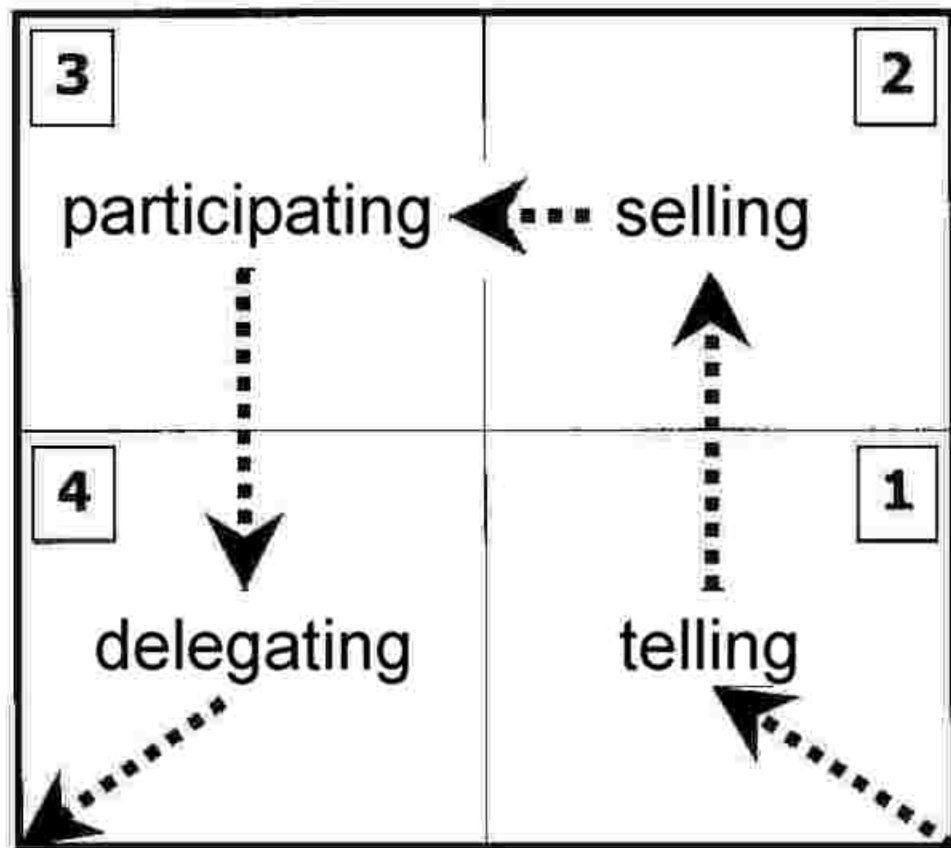


“Inquiry individual meetings”.

Over a period of three years, I have booked all of my department managers onto the DaimlerChrysler training school’s “managing for profit and customer satisfaction course”, as part of their Continual Personal Development (CPD) to assist with their increasing responsibilities, as the turnover, head count and the amount that I delegate to them increases. This is empowerment, but not the type of empowerment that says “you can do that now, and you can keep doing all you were doing as well”. In the team, tasks are cascaded, but not without the line manager/position being in turn empowered to cascade/shed other tasks. In this way every day is a school day in that we can all learn something new every day and if the team look back to last year, they know that their roles have changed. This keeps interest through change, challenge and reduced monotony. Due to expansion into Southampton the team has also been able to diversify by promoting from within (due to merit) our first female manager as head of Warranty. This is rare in the automotive sector. This lived process is similar to Hersey and Blanchard’s Situational Leadership Model:

Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model

<http://www.businessballs.com/slanalysis.htm> (accessed 6th February 2006)



Bruce Tuckman's Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing team-development model and Tannenbaum and Schmidt's Continuum echo much of Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model. I have never aimed to be authoritative, and as the team and its members have developed they have been afforded greater levels of emancipation and freedom to manage in their own styles. At this point I am mindful that in the last eighteen or so months my logical successor has emerged and I can only take some comfort that from 1st January 2006 my boss has now moved on to be Managing Director

of Pentagon's passenger car and commercial vehicle garages, thereby leaving the traditional Dealer Principal position vacant.

Fundamentally, I believe that the basis for my team, what is at the heart of it, its main embodied value, is trust. In this way I find linkage of my theory with the Philosophers' and Action Researchers' search for truth(s) as described by Sabrina C Salam in Chapter 19, *Foster Trust Through Competence and Integrity*, cited in Locke, 2000.

If we live out the value of doing unto others as you wish others to do unto you, in that you reap what you sow, reliably, then we are building trust.

Trust is earned over many working days, and lost in a second. A reliable, consistent approach and behaviour is what helps the team, primarily because this gives the best environment for conversation and communication to proliferate. This endorses many management theories, but the ones that spring to my mind are Kevin Thomson, Patricia Shaw and Daniel Goleman. For the necessary conditions to proliferate I must have highly developed Interpersonal Skills and Intrapersonal Skills. A guiding visionary on this topic is Howard Gardner who advocates that the core of interpersonal intelligence includes "capacities to discern and respond appropriately to the moods, temperaments, motivations and desires of other people." And "Intrapersonal intelligence, the key to self-knowledge is access to one's own feelings and the ability to discriminate among them and draw upon them to guide behaviour." (Goleman 1996:39).

Taking the definition of Sociology as the study of community (Watson 1980), I feel that Sociology is of importance to working with a team of individuals, and to having an adequate appreciation of them, their standpoint, and situation (both inside and outside the organisation). Empathy.

A core to the team is paramount, as quantified by the K- Factor (number of new people X number of people who have left, divided by the total number). If there are too many changes in the line-up, too quickly, the old synergy is lost. Whilst I embrace change, I do not advocate mass, sudden change in a successful team if you want the essence of the

team to remain. I need to judge how much change can be implemented and to judge the timing to allow for cycles of regeneration.

“The way much industrial, social or behavioural science is written and applied gives the impression that it is all based on the ludicrous proposition that you rewrite a play by changing the actors rather than by rewriting the roles. Perhaps you can – but only marginally.” (Watson, 1980).

Intuition

Intuition is a way of knowing. It is a psychological function (sub-conscious) it draws from your own history and life experiences. It is another way of making your experiential knowledge explicit and cognitive. It is sub-inspiration, but close.

Vision

It is probably a dream for all of us to be visionary, but to see another way, look outside the box, be abstract for a moment, is a useful trait. Phraseology such as, “there has to be a better way” and “it doesn’t have to be this way” ring true when one attempts to lead through vision and values. (Hauser & House cited in Locke, 2000: Chapter 18).

Inner Strength

“If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you.” (Kipling, 2002).

The need for “Intraspective Intelligenceas” identified by Howard Gardner, “know thyself” said Socrates. There is a need to always act appropriately and to do this we

must firstly know oneself, your “I”, as well as attempting to know your “Thou” (Buber, 1947).

“A man’s got to know his limitations” (Clint Eastwood as Inspector Callaghan, 1978).

Passion

“People do their most creative work when they are passionate about what they are doing” (Amiable, 2000 cited in Locke, 2000).

An effective leader will attempt to match a person to a task by recognising their attributes. These positive attributes, which facilitate creative productivity will be enhanced by the person having a passion for the task. The ideal is for the team to have a high base level of passion for the work of the organisation. This is a further challenge for the effective leader to sustain.

Empathy

To understand someone you must make a successful attempt to see something as they see it and feel it as they feel it. This is a real challenge because it goes back as far as your genes. How could I have been empathetic to my wife when she was in labour with our first child? My method or test for this is to “talk to the man in the mirror”. Reverse the roles. How would you like it if the tables were turned? Are there any infringements? Your values? Now make that judgement again.

Leaders and Groups

“Leaders affect what groups do, but groups also affect what leaders do through processes of unconscious projection.” And “An effective leader is one who maintains a clear focus on and definition of primary task.” (Bion, 1961)

Bion (1961) identified different leadership types from the Basic Assumption group – The Fight Leader, The Flight Leader, The Dependency Leader, The Oceanic Hope Leader (unrealistic).

Bion says that the leader is sucked into the position by the group and controlled by the group. I would call this notion the team self organising and selecting its leader. In our practice working in a private sector business, I for now at any rate, have positional power and have been selected as the team’s leader as line manager.

Leaders must regulate transactions between team members by balancing immersion and distance (I call this aloofness) from the team. You have to be one of the troops, sometimes, and the General at other times. This could be seen as the role of the snake, the go between, between Adam and Eve and temptation. Trust would be irrevocably destroyed.

Good leaders, functional leaders, control anxiety and assist double loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1974). Problems exist when one or two leadership styles dominate. A leader needs to aim to be effective by having many styles and is balanced and it is the successful interaction of the styles of leaders and followers that makes the organisation learn.

Dysfunctional leaders are neurotic. (Kets de Vries, 1989, cited in Stacey, 2003) and charismatic leaders may well be unhealthy as they are probably neurotic underneath.

From the letters pages of Management Today, June 2005, Cohen, Ray from Jackson Cohen Associates wrote, Leading Edge:

“Professor Michael Osbaldestone rightly talks about the motivational damage to managers who believe they fail to reach the dizzy heights of charismatic leadership. The stereotype of an inspirational leader as extrovert and charismatic is more the exception than the rule – so are we in pursuit of the impossible? Leadership and management are two aspects of what should be one job: the leadership-based manager.....Perhaps then people can be given the training they need to be good leadership-based managers in the belief that they do not have to be an extrovert charismatic to do a great job.”

Key to the process of leading a team is to quickly establish credibility within the team. In my early days at Pentagon I was responsible for Pentagon’s Andover branch I worked to establish myself within the company and I was told in my appraisal after two years of trying that I gave a “raison d’être to Andover” by my the boss, D John Sparshatt. I had, with the help of my, then smaller, team established myself with a good track record.

Credibility can be achieved through the three C’s, according to, *The Epistemological Side of Teaching Management*, cited in Locke (2000).

- 1) Competence
- 2) Character
- 3) Caring

Locke is of the opinion that 3) Caring “is relevant but not a primary concern in a business organisation”. In my experience, caring leads to empathy, which I believe is vital in team management in the 21st Century. If you have the psychology to be uncaring then perhaps the manager will never feel guilt and sleep better at night, but it is not me.

Inspirational Leadership

It seems to me that the (business) world is obsessed with the notion of inspirational leaders. The term is brandished around liberally and I think inappropriately and misguidedly. I believe that it carries the unattractive facet of self-reflected glory. An effective leader can lead his team or his people through change, perhaps without questioning and thinking consciously for themselves. For those who have the attribute, it is therefore open to abuses of authoritarianism. Possibly the best example of this in recent history is Adolf Hitler and his apparent ability to lead a nation to incredible actions, see Roberts, (2003). But my standards of judgement for inspiration, in that Inspiration in its true form is breathed in from a god, spiritual, divine, mystical origin, an inspirational leader has to do good work. I do not think that I have to debate here the case against Hitler’s actions. If Inspiration is to be linked with Leadership, it must be done with accuracy and truth. I am therefore not at ease with the way that it is linked to some politicians, business people and the like.

With my team I view my role of leader as a guide to their collective action. I am tempted to use the metaphor of the shepherd of our collective action, but I do not like the undeniable link between shepherd and sheep. I aim to be a catalyst, a facilitator or the medium through which the teams communication and actions can flow. The strong characters in the team means that things are often in productive tension rather than in harmony. This I term our *competitive edge* and is what I have observed first hand and in the video recorded participant observations as an example of how I aim to inspire and guide, rather than police, as I endeavour to craft the team inspirationally. (Prasad, 2005).

Organisational Development

“we have reached “the end of problem solving” as a mode of inquiry capable of inspiring, mobilizing and sustaining human system change, and the future of OD (Organisational Development) belongs to methods that affirm, compel and accelerate learning involving larger and larger levels of collectivity.” (Cooperrider, 2001) cited in <http://www.appreciative-inquiry.org>. [29.04.2004].

For my enquiry I frame Organisational Development in terms of how the team has developed and how that development has in turn developed the organisation. The team has developed through learning and this collective learning has come about through the learning, or development, of the individuals within the team. The process is therefore: individual's acquire knowledge, the team collectively acquires knowledge, and the organisation acquires knowledge.

Fisher and Torbert highlight my claim of understanding how knowledge is generated, collectively from individual to (learning) organisation with “The parallelism between personal and organizational development”. In their Opportunist stage of development Fisher and Torbert identify inspirational and social network investments for individuals and :

“The organization may appear very successful in terms of financial backing in the short term, but the lack of network resources and inspiration will result in lower commitment by all stakeholders and will stunt its development in the longer term” (Fisher & Torbert, 1995).

Acquiring the knowledge usually leads on to applying that knowledge, resulting in change.

“According to the theory of the learning organisation, change flows from a process of organisational learning. It is when people in an organisation learn effectively together that it changes.” (Stacey, 2003).

Who makes the strategy and organisational change? The CEO (top down) or is it a collaboration constructed from conversations of formal and informal teams within the organisation? My judgement based on our practice is the latter. I claim that organisational change occurs through learning, teams building on knowledge from individuals acquiring knowledge.

I can base this claim on individuals - the team – the organisation, acquiring knowledge and developing the organisation through a recent example, which demonstrates a paradigm shift in the social construction (sociology) of my team. When I started at Pentagon the barriers and hostile behaviour between the different garage locations and the departments was detrimental to the organisation, the departments and the individuals. There was no “team”. I have facilitated the breaking down of these barriers in many ways, one example is the pairing of managers to send on the DaimlerChrysler (UK) Managing for profit and customer satisfaction training course (see Appendix One for e-mailed appreciation of Miles Courtney). I deliberately paired the managers from different camps so that they would spend three days together, six times over 18 months. The effect has been profound. In April 2005 I asked the managers if they wanted their bonuses to remain linked solely to their departments, to their locations, or to the team as a whole. Not one manager chose to keep the status quo. All chose to be paid as a location or as a team. There has been a pronounced shift towards collectivity.

“We cannot understand an organisation without trying to change it” (Lewin, 1946 cited in Smith, 2001) www.infed.org/biblio/b-dialog.htm

Team Dynamics

How do I recognise team dynamics?

You can recognise team dynamics by looking for the forces that influence team behaviour. These forces might include:

Personality styles (eg: including or excluding people). Meredith Belbin (1981) explored how different personality types affect teams, and by that I take that to also mean team performance. Some types work effectively together and others don't – it's like cooking a good recipe, some ingredients may not go although you like them (red wine with chocolate, but this is subjective).

The most able individual's (performance) or the balanced team's (performance)? It is not necessarily true that by putting the best players together with the most individual talent, that you get the synergy required to make the best performing team. As an example, look at the British and Irish Lions tour to New Zealand of Summer 2005. I imagine that any one of the Irish, Welsh, English sides would have performed better (Sorry Scotland, but I could not stretch it that far!).

It is contribution and interdependence that determines performance, according to Belbin (cited in Stacey, 2003) few researchers study group/team composition (Moreland, Hogg and Hains, 1994) however Deborah Ancona and David Caldwell value a team members' "external boundary activity" which emphasises what an individual team member can add – what they bring to the party. (Locke, 2000: Chapter 14).

What I have found through my practice is that most managers are playing with the team members that they are given, they are inherited and the option of starting with a blank sheet of paper is not practical nor may it be desirable. My team benefits from a low staff turnover and can be described as having a low K-factor (Thomson, 1998). A practical and ethical strategy is to change the roles, not the people (Watson, 1980), and use training and personal development that in turn is likely to facilitate organisational development. There are exceptions, like the Ferrari F1 team of 1999 to 2005, where the

key team members all came together as a package – the team was so new that it most closely resembled the Benetton F1 team of 1994.

I am in full agreement with Belbin in that a good team has a mix of personality types. My study is an inquiry into the team as a collaborative, collective, whole. For individual assessments the Belbin model helps you identify the different types, from Chairman to Completer Finisher and Team Worker. Go to <http://www.belbin.info/> for more detail.

Group Process, the group composition may be consistent, but the processes may change, leading to improved performance. A fast pace and intra-team conflict that you can be managed through collaboration and move on without the invagination of the conflict and lead to the building of collective intuition is what is desirable. (Gerardo & Eisenhardt cited in Locke, 2000: Chapter 15 and Weingart and Jehn cited in Locke, 2000: Chapter 16).

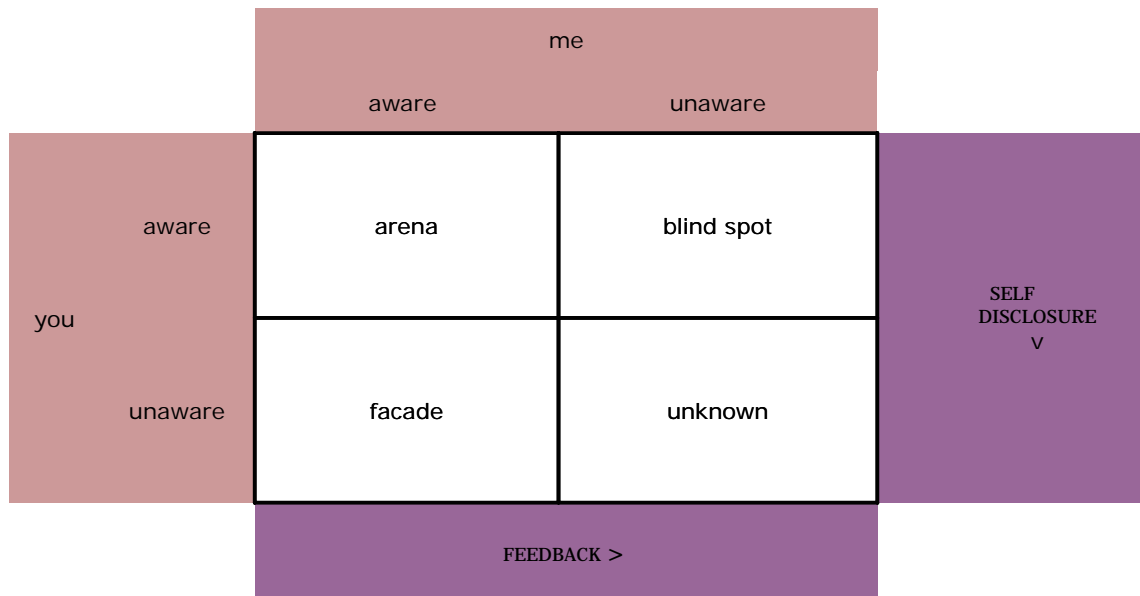
Organisational culture e.g. company cars acting as status symbols to separate groups of employees.

Physical Influences e.g. office layout (upstairs or downstairs!), cupboards dividing teams into two. Windows, light, noise, air conditioning.

Tools and technology e.g. e-mail, a better or smaller mobile phone! The bulletin board, information pool enabling hidden communication.

The team leader's role is to facilitate and nurture the desired environment for the team's task. This environment is physical and psychological, conscious and unconscious. Wilfred Bion was concerned with unconscious group (team) processes. Psychoanalysis. Know your own and your fellow team members' behaviour. It is very Socratic but knowing thyself is more than half the battle and a major benefit of first person inquiry. A recognised aid for this is the model of the Johari Window, through which we can all attempt to place ourselves and our work colleagues.

Johari Window



Knowing your own behaviour and others enables interaction and communication.

Referring to Bion (cited in Stacey, 2003) I confer that in my practice what keeps a team's basic assumptions in check and maintaining the sophisticated functionality of the team to be able to perform primary tasks is leadership. I attempt to do this by balancing (shifting) ambiguity (communication again) and uncertainty with carefully chosen styles of exercising power. This shift is team dynamics.

Anxiety, demonstrated through anger is often vented at a trigger, not the source. This is unconscious behaviour. The resultant infantile mechanisms have a poor aesthetic and sound terrible! I have none of these surviving edit on the CD. (The vocabularies that are judged to be acceptable in the motor trade are in need of review). Infantile Mechanisms result from dependence, idealisation, denial, splitting, projection, fantasising. These are all laid down in the unconscious. I have found that the biggest cause of anxiety in the work place is organisational development and change itself. When my team reverts to

assumptive group behaviour and infantile mechanisms I try to reflect on what I have done wrong in my role of leader that keeps the team off the right track to sophisticated work group behaviour and the primary task. Bion states that teams work in primary mode and basic assumption mode. I therefore have a different standard of judgement as to what my team can demonstrate as assumptive behaviour.

Bion specifically points to teams with his three (later four) assumptions:

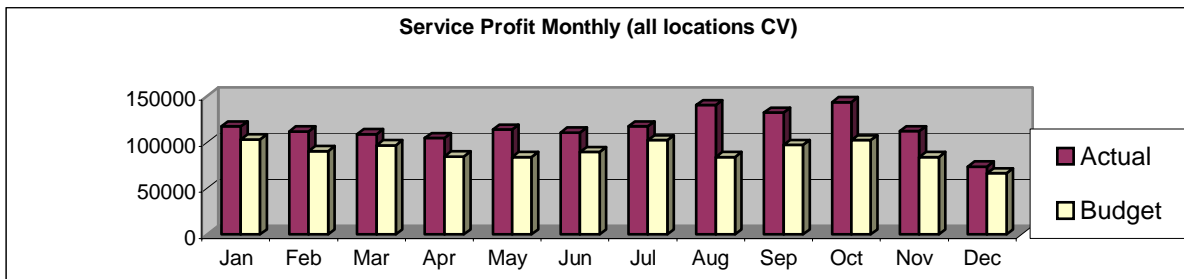
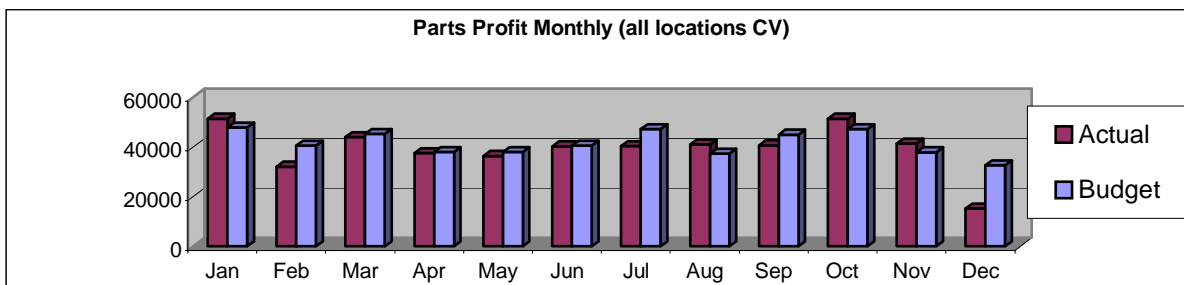
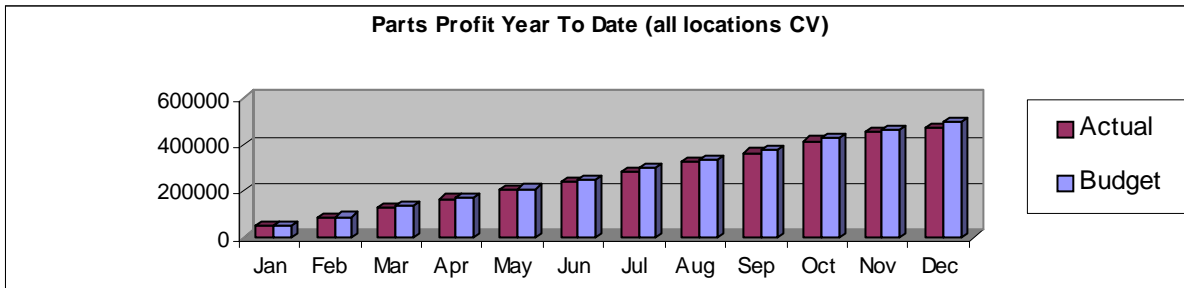
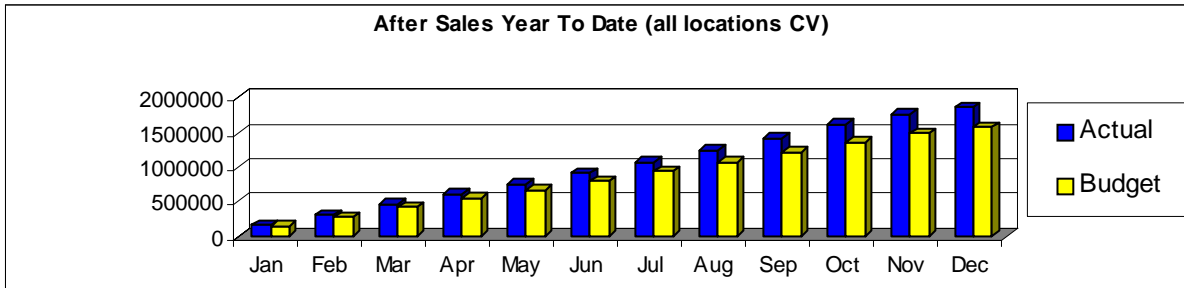
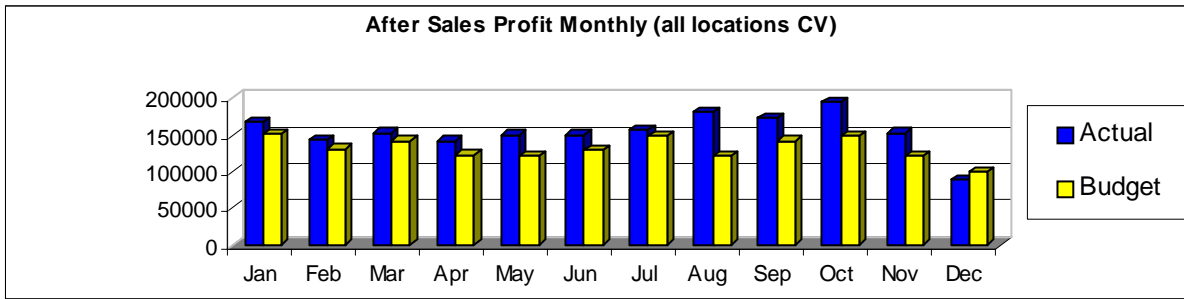
- 1) Dependence – crave a leader to adore and depend on who will tell them what to do. Charisma lies not in the leader but between leader and followers. The followers cannot fail to be disappointed by the leader as they expect unrealistic performance from the leader. This is infantile mechanism and leads to projection of the followers requirements onto the leader (the leader therefore is not actually leading). The followers attack the leader.
- 2) Fight/Flight – win/lose dynamics. The followers project their desire to fight or flight. Leader disappoints.
- 3) Pairing – the followers wish to observe the solution being found by two of the group.
- 4) Oneness (added by Turquet, 1974) – the team comes together in powerful union in safe passivity. Vast sense of unity.

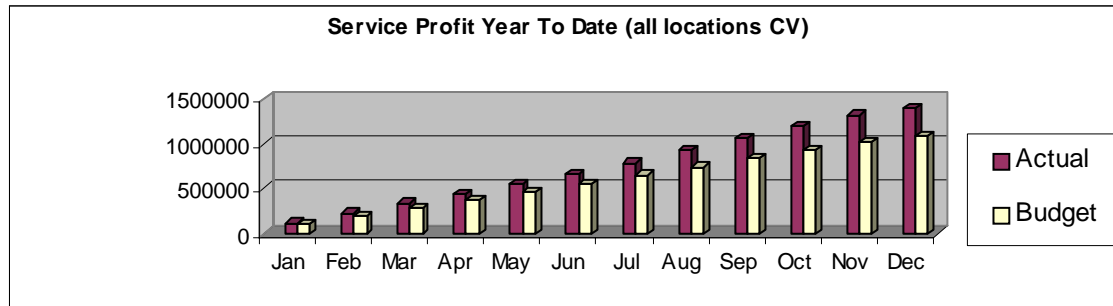
It is the boundary region, the flow of communication through this permeable membrane that is important to team dynamics. That is the flow between individuals within the team. Bion suggests that I see the team as an open system in which individuals interact with each other at two levels.

Level 1 – contribute to teams purpose, the sophisticated team.

Level 2 – develop feelings about individual team members, attitudes to each other, the team, their surroundings, the assumptive team.

The team leader can manage the balance by using clarity of task, defined roles and authority.





Appendix Three

Copy question prompt sheet and signed permission to video and the use thereof:

Questions to prompt conversation, of the type that will assist James in his studies. To capture these, it must be video, for which I ask you to agree to the use of the content, but NOT for broadcast, if you prefer.

What kind of issues will be important to our inquiry into becoming an Inspirational team?

Firstly, these issues will emerge from the conversation, I hope (this is what I understand when Patricia Shaw (2002) refers to as the transformative activity of conversations).

Though I also have some pre-existing questions in my own mind that I can usefully share in this video conversation, I imagine using these kinds of questions to start the process. I want to use these questions as prompts to assist a spirit of inquiry, and a qualitative research conversation, much of which I intend to video with agreement:

How do you feel about this team?

What meaning do you take from working here?

What value do you put on this *space*?

How is it for you in this team?

What do you like? What don't you like? Why?

How is it for us?

How are we as a team? How do we get on as a team? How do we work as a team? Do we want to be a team?

Over the next six months as we work on this inquiry into our quality & performance it will be like a programme running in the back of your mind as we go about our daily work of keeping the business processes ticking over – How do you feel about this?

Where would you like us to be as a team as a result of this inquiry into our quality & performance as a team?

How do we get there? This will lead to organisational change.

How do I come across to you? What do you think is in this inquiry for me?

I want you to report on me against the criteria I want to be held accountable for achieving, and I want you to hold me publicly accountable for my performance - *Therefore, I can learn about my own improvement?*

What do you think about this?

Name MARK DELLICK

Signature

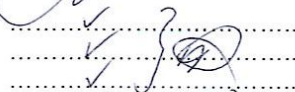


Date 18/5/04

I agree to being recorded on video

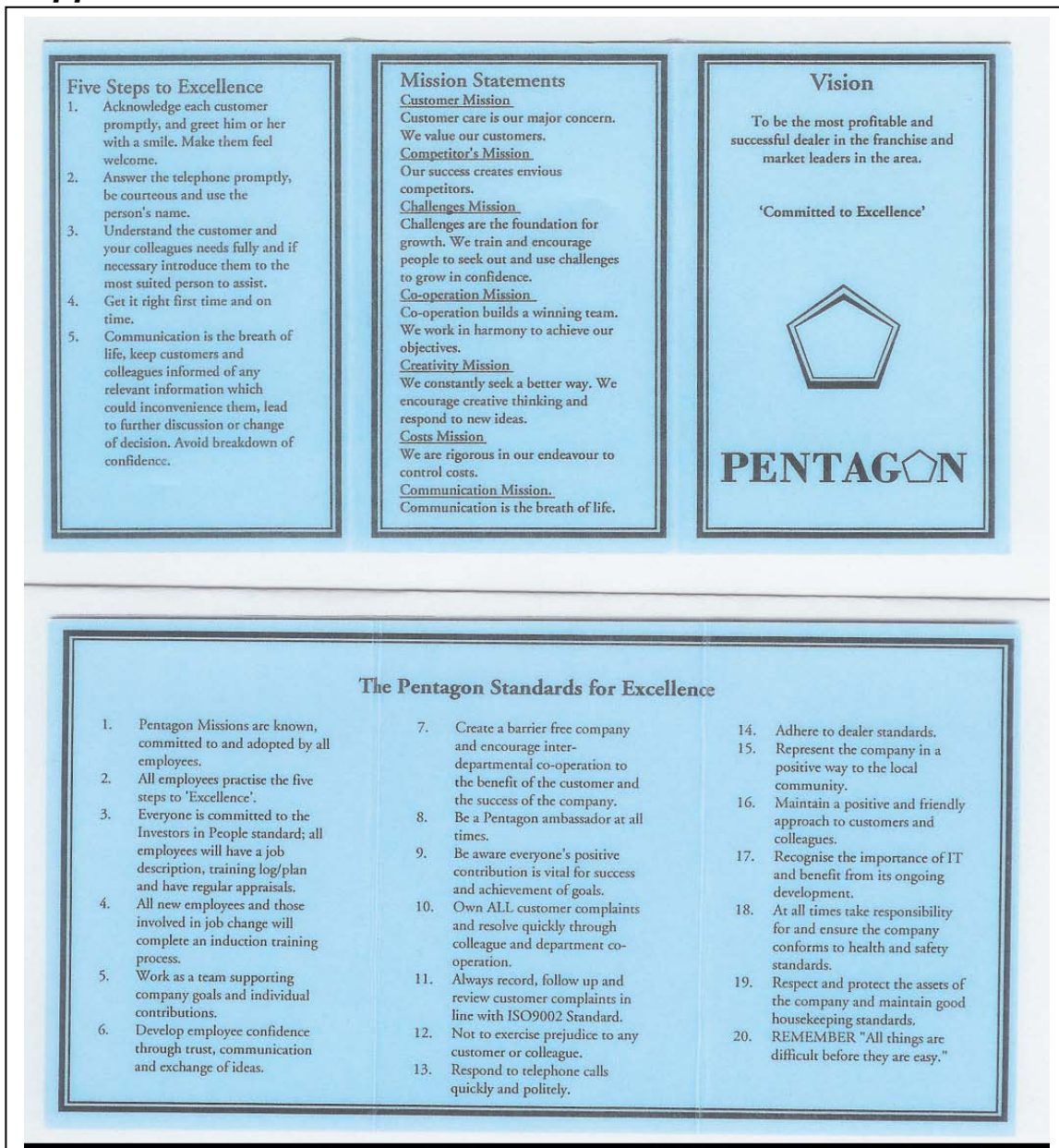
I authorise it's use for private showing

I authorise it's use for public showing



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Appendix Four



PENTAGON COMMERCIALS

**"Committed to provide the
complete solution"**

CORE VALUES

**Customer Focus
Commitment
Profitability
Job Satisfaction
Pride
Integrity**

Appendix Five

e-mail from Jack Whitehead Thursday 13th October 2005:

Hi James - I enjoyed very much our meetings last year and was very impressed with your multi-media work and use of a living theory approach in your dissertation. I'm finding most stimulating your question, 'Can Living Educational Theory be used as a methodology for first person inquiry and to help produce a (living) theory?' I usually make a clear distinction between a methodology and a theory. To me a methodology is centrally focused on how to do the research. It is focused on procedural issues. A theory is an explanation for why something happens the way that it does. Each thesis in the living theory section of <http://www.actionresearch.net> shows the development of an emergent methodology in the course of the enquiry. The genesis of the idea of methodological inventiveness came from the work of Dadds and Hart (2001) "The importance of methodological inventiveness" Perhaps the most important new insight for both of us has been awareness that, for some practitioner researchers, creating their own unique way through their research may be as important as their self-chosen research focus. We had understood for many years that substantive choice was fundamental to the motivation and effectiveness of practitioner research (Dadds 1995); that what practitioners chose to research was important to their sense of engagement and purpose. But we had understood far less well that how practitioners chose to research, and their sense of control over this, could be equally important to their motivation, their sense of identity within the research and their research outcomes." (Dadds & Hart, p. 166, 2001).

If our aim is to create conditions that facilitate methodological inventiveness, we need to ensure as far as possible that our pedagogical approaches match the message that we seek to communicate. More important than adhering to any specific methodological approach, be it that of traditional social science or traditional action research, may be the willingness and courage of practitioners – and those who support them – to create enquiry approaches that enable new, valid understandings to develop; understandings that empower practitioners to improve their work for the beneficiaries in their care. Practitioner research methodologies are with us to serve professional practices. So what genuinely matters are the purposes of practice which the research seeks to serve, and the integrity with which the practitioner researcher makes methodological choices about ways of achieving those purposes. No methodology is, or should, be cast in stone, if we accept that professional intention should be informing research processes, not pre-set ideas about methods or techniques. (Dadds & Hart, p. 169, 2001) Dadds, M. & Hart, S. (2001) *Doing Practitioner Research Differently*, p. 166. London; RoutledgeFalmer. I would say that each individual can create their own living theory of their existence as an explanation of their educational influence in their own learning. Each individual will bring together a unique constellation of values, skills and understandings in the creation of their living theory. In the course of forming their living theory they will draw on multiple methods from a range of different disciplines. For example in Appendix 11 of the draft keynote at: <http://www.jackwhitehead.com/monday/arrkey05dr1.htm> I explain

how the validity and rigour of living theories can be enhanced through the application of the methods of Habermas, Winter and Polanyi. I hope that I am being clear about the distinction between a methodology and a theory? I can confirm that I am the originator of the idea of living educational theory - If you go into the Jack Whitehead's writing section of actionresearch.net you will be able to access my 1985 paper on Analysing an individual's educational development and the 1989 paper on creating a living educational theory from the Cambridge Journal. When I read your dissertation I didn't think you were misusing my work in any way. In fact I felt your originality of mind. I think you will understand the importance I am giving to transforming affirmations of inclusionality into collective~individual standards of judgement in the above keynote. I hope this note is an appropriate response to your question - if it isn't let's keep going.

Love Jack.

On 12 Oct 2005, at 19:50, James Edgerton wrote:

Dear Jack

You were very helpful to me in January when I was working with your concept

of generalisability. I am hoping that I can call on you again for your help.

In brief, Paulus has suggested to me that the dissertation that I am producing is a Living Theory, narrative account.

I include an attachment that I wrote today. The intention of which is to be clear to the reader, the examiner, and assist the author, on the methodology and Living Educational Theory. Can Living Educational Theory be used as a methodology for first person inquiry and to help produce a (living)theory? - does it work? Can you please comment?

The second question is "Rant". I have used it and wish to reference it. I think it came from your group. Can you confirm?

I thank you in anticipation and hope that I am not misusing your work. If so, I am confident that you will correct me and this is what I want. It is better for me to find out now rather than later.

With best regards

James Edgerton

Appendix Six

e-mail from Miles Courtney, Parts Manager at Pentagon Poole. Tuesday 14th June 2005.

James

I have found the Managing for Profit course very inspirational. The two Tutors Ian Rumble and Paul Morris are very knowledgeable, Paul has a no nonsense approach to business and has taken away any mystery that there ever was. Paul concentrates on figures, profit etc It is very difficult to quantify what specifically I have taken away with me, but I have been introduced to composites, smart objectives, SWAT analysis's, presentation skills both body, language and numeral. The course has reinforced what I believed in communication skills, and it has made me more determined to keep up with staff one to ones and monthly meetings.

My relationship with Kevin Dart has blossomed into a solid trusting working relationship that I once thought was impossible. I have also developed some good relationships with other dealership staff that are on our course. This has helped more than once with inside information.

The course has inspired the following action points:-

Let the team know what we are trying to achieve and where we are going.

Gain access to the composites.

Investigate the idea of having a parts person who services the Workshops and is supported jointly by both budgets. Some dealers have such a person who books parts to WIPS and takes the parts to the mechanics, saving them waiting on back counters. Vehicle handovers are an important opportunity for the Service/ Parts

managers to meet customers and cement a future relationships. I feel that we have a good team that have bonded together through the passage of time and the various team building events that we have done. I hear people talking on our course that come from other dealerships, in particular Gerard Mann who never see fellow colleagues and they have very strong inter department barriers. I personally would find that type of environment unpleasant as I did in the early days of my Pentagon career. I personally give that extra mile because I like the people I work with both branch and company, and feel happy at work due to the overall atmosphere cultured by yourself and Maarten. And yes..... I feel that I have a part to play and have / do contribute to the overall atmosphere and attitude of the company.

As a department we pull together to get the job done. I very rarely have to "crack the whip" and often use perceived value as a motivator eg let someone go home early when they have worked over. I could rattle on about all sorts of other experiences and ideas but I feel that should do it.

Regards, Miles.