



Personal Development Techniques, the Belbin Wheel, my Wish book and other stuff from the EUMA Luxembourg Training Days

While EUMA Belgium was organizing its November meeting on Stress Management I was on the 3,5 hours train ride to Luxembourg. No high speed train yet on that track, more's the pity. But it was all in good cause. I was on my way to the EUMA Luxembourg Training Days on Friday, 20 and Saturday, 21 November.

The title "Personal Development Techniques" covered a whole range of topics which I thought were useful to reflect on two weeks before my own performance appraisal. It was great to refresh some skills and take away new ideas. I wanted specifically to learn more about writing a Self Development Plan.

The size of the group was ideal: 13 people – all EUMA members – who enthusiastically shared experiences and advice with each other under the professional guidance of John A. Frank (Tower Training & Consulting) and Anna Dannfelt, a vivacious stress relief and massage therapist.

The Belbin Wheel

A questionnaire we had filled out prior to the training gave us each a spot on the Belbin Wheel which is useful for plotting the distribution of the team members according to their roles in a team. There are some similarities with Insights Profiling, the 4 colours system based on Jung's archetypes which Nicolaas van Tulder also mentioned in his presentation on Stress Management (for a full report on this event read the report Frieda Catteeuw wrote on the November event).

A majority of the group were mainly Implementers with a high mix of Team Worker and Resource Investigator. **Implementers** contribute to a team their discipline, reliability and they are also conservative and efficient. They turn ideas into practical actions. They are organizers, have common sense, work hard. Their weaknesses can be a lack of flexibility and unresponsiveness to unproven ideas. **Resource Investigators** are the Ms Fix-it in the team, good communicators with lots of contacts and they explore and develop opportunities. These extrovert and curious enthusiasts can be liable to lose interest once the work become routine. **Team Workers** promote team spirit, listen and build relationships, avoid friction or have a calming effect when friction occurs. These mild mannered people persons tend to be indecisive in a crisis. There are a total 8 types defined by this Belbin Self-Perception Inventory which tells you which people you need for specific tasks in a team project.

If you want to learn more about the Belbin Wheel, you can google it, or you can hire John Frank for a company training. Seriously, this is not the place to talk in extenso about all the documents we received during the training.

Self Development Plan

John talked us through the various steps of a Self Development Plan. We used the examples of 2 managers John had coached some time ago. Both managers reached their goals in the year following the coaching. One became the General Manger for Spain and Portugal in his company, the other manager was promoted to the US HQ of her company. We defined our individual strengths and wrote down our issues, basically a SWOT analysis but extensively written down and linked to opportunities leading to an Action Plan and an



overview of the resources needed to reach the goal. It takes some time to go through this process of reflection but it can help you define your goals better.

In his role as coach John thought that these managers sometimes over-estimated their strengths, but he didn't tell them so. The SWOT analysis was their perception of themselves. Through asking questions and more questions he helped them to delve deeper and to define their opportunities and goals better. That's the role of a coach: he helps you to come to certain insights by making you question yourself better. A mentor is somebody who's been there and will tell you how to do things.

Emotional Intelligence

"is the ability to use your understanding of emotions in yourself and others, to deal effectively with people and problems in a way which reduces anger and hostility, develops collaborative effort, enhances life-balance and produces creative energy." (quoted from John's handouts)

We have all talked ourselves into negative and pessimistic feelings which caused the wrong reactions when things go wrong. How often have you had to apologize after lashing out and saying hurtful things. Understanding better where these emotions come from helps you to deal more maturely with difficult situations.

There are **8 principles** of Emotional Intelligence and I am sure we will hear all about this at the **EUMA International Training Day in Helsinki on 17 April** (more info on www.euma.org), and if you have read Daniel Coleman's seminal work on Emotional Intelligence you will already know this. For those of you who can't go to Helsinki in April, here they are:

1. We are each of us in control of and responsible for our actions.
2. No one else can control our feelings.
3. People are different – they experience the world differently – they feel different things – they want different things.
4. However you and they are – it's OK.
5. Feelings and behaviour are separate.
6. Feelings are self-justified – to be accepted and important.
7. Change is possible.
8. All people have a natural tendency towards growth and health.

Writing this down tonight after an eventful day at the office, I think I absolutely must remember n° 4 when I react angrily next time I have a run-in with a colleague. Knowing it in theory is still very much removed from behaving with EI. (Even though I think I was right 😊 - yes, I can be childish, sometimes!)

Counterpoint Anna

Throughout the whole 1.5 days of training vivacious Anna served as the ideal counterpoint to the more serious John. She talked about stress relief and shared her personal experiences with overcoming a serious and prolonged burn-out and achieving her own goals.

A fun and creative way of working on your goals is making a **Wish Book**. Make a list of your wishes – even far fetched ones that you think are unobtainable. Write them down in your wish book or on a poster on the wall of your home office. Illustrate or replace the words with images you cut out of magazines. Add pictures of people that are really important to you – do you want to spend more time with them, create lovely memories with them? I know two people who have made such a poster years ago (Anna is one of them) and who discovered after a few years that a lot of these dreams have come true. Anna grew up on farm in an isolated part of Sweden, wanted to travel and buy a house. She moved to Luxembourg, discovered a house that she thought she could never afford or that would never become available on the market. Today, she



lives in that house. When moving house my other friend re-discovered the poster she made during a workshop many years earlier and saw that she had been to all the cities and exotic places in the world that she had mentioned on that poster and that she had kept in touch with a small group of good friends spread over various continents who helped her to rough patches in her life.

I love this idea, I love making list and I collect colourful notebooks. So, I am going to do myself a favour over the coming Christmas holiday and start my own Wish Book. I'll report back in a couple of years to let you know if it all worked out with George Clooney (or his look alike).

The EUMA network works

Two people in the group were close to a burn-out, two others had just come out of a burn-out and all could sympathize with tales of hardship. That's the beauty of these small EUMA workshops: you get so much out of the networking, the friendly advice and the good leads to all sorts of information sources.

Thanks to EUMA Luxembourg for sponsoring these Training Days so that we got Great Value for very little money (only 80 EUR). Many thanks to all the participants for sharing their advice and to John & Anna for guiding us through it all and giving us many gems of wisdom and genuinely good tips. I was so glad I had the opportunity to attend.

Good luck also to Catherine Johannsson, the new National Chairman who takes over from Jenny Oestreicher.

Hope to see you all in Helsinki in April or at the Conference in Brussels in October 2010 !

Greet Puttaert
1 December 2009