

Life's Paradox

uncommon reflections of life matters

Relationship Intelligence: How are you managing change?

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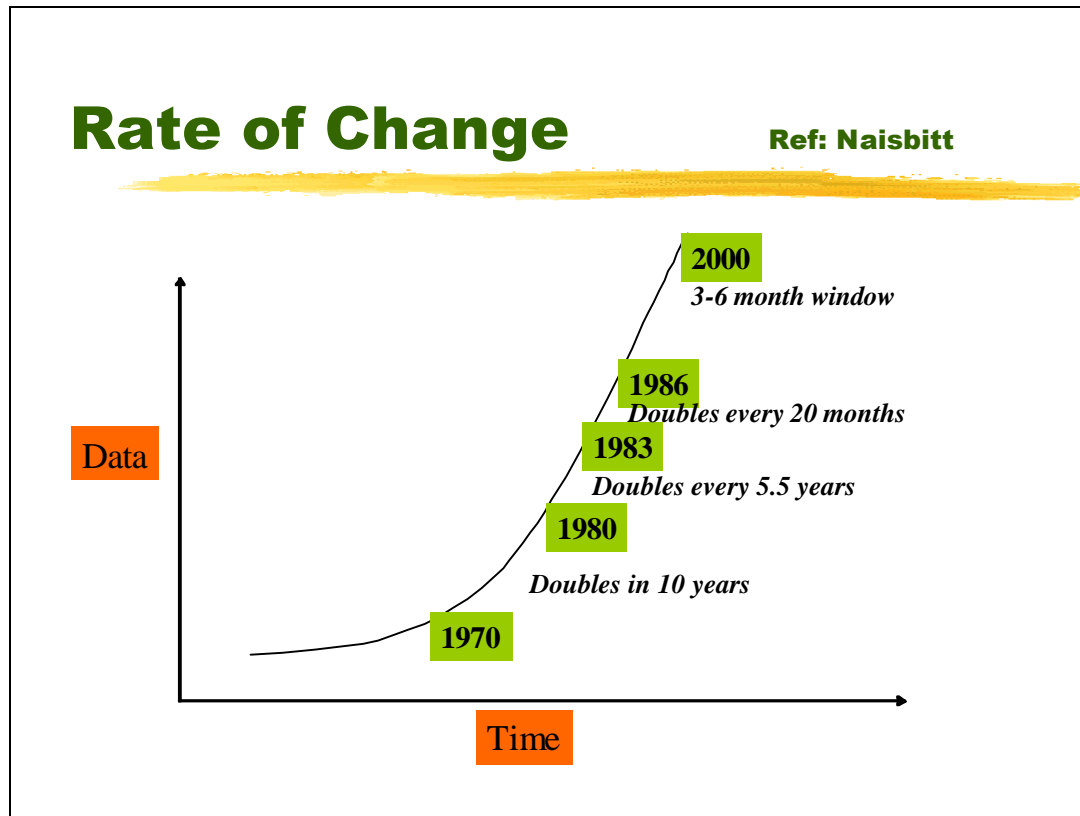
I was reflecting on a comment made by a colleague that it was really stressful keeping up with all the changes in technology, new information, new laws in superannuation/industrial relations/taxation, new staff, new attitudes Not to mention the myriad options in educating our children, personal organizational systems, home security kits, what-else-can-we-insure policies, methods of outsourcing household chores....

We cannot do it alone. Yet it seems “nobody does it better than I can” – that is the usual lament. So how can we battle this situation?

The Rate of Change

Do you remember when surfing the Internet became a routine activity in every home and office? How about when the PC became a household item? Anybody recall the days when television first came onto the scene? Most likely, none of us will remember when books first came into mass production.

Let's take a drive down the memory freeway. When television was becoming part of the household from the 1950s to the 70s, information doubled in twenty years. By 1980, information was doubling every ten years. This exponential growth of the Information Age continued so that by 1983, information was doubling every 5.5 years. In 1986 when the PCs were being introduced into the home, the half-life of technology was 20 months. Speeded up by the advent of the Internet, by 1999 existing data was superseded in 3-6 months by new information. The accessibility of the Internet in the new millennium demonstrates that we demand new information on a daily basis.... and quickly too.



Managing the Information Age

So what does this really mean to us personally, professionally and in business? The information explosion means that we need to keep up with the accelerating change: updating our knowledge through reading our professional literature, attending the never ending series of Continuing Education courses to upgrade our skills, investing in the latest in computers and state-of-the-art gadgetry, continuously re-structuring

our businesses to keep up with business & market trends, not to mention the changes in taxation, superannuation and industrial relations.

How does this speed of change translate to us personally? After career or business issues are dealt with, we have to squeeze what limited time we have to spend with our families, friends and our personal pursuits – be they mental, physical, emotional or spiritual. Since every human being is designed for high performance, this makes it extraordinarily demanding to continually peak perform in all areas of life.

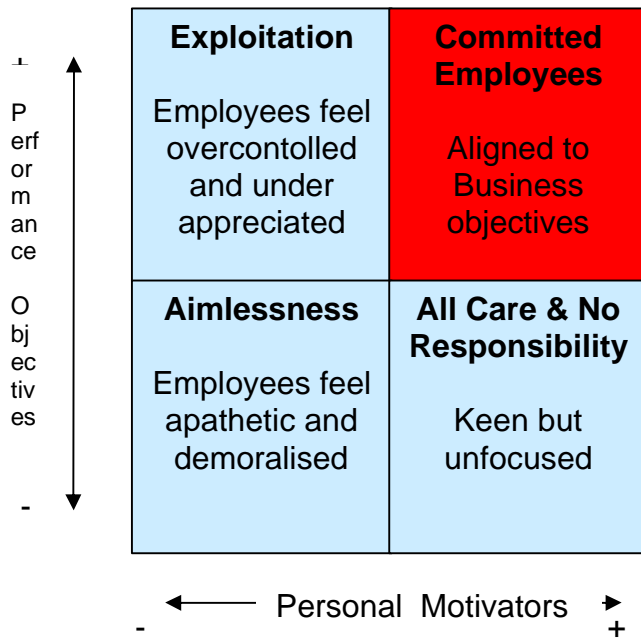
Enter the Relationship Age

We cannot do it alone. This is the dawning of the Relationship Age. Have we not seen how on a global level, there are increasing mergers of large corporations? Are we not aware of the multitude of alliances in the airlines and hotel industry? Do we not experience joint ventures in countless projects even right down to the personal level? Do we not network constantly in any situation, just in case

We cannot do it alone. With the amount of information that is currently being churned out, we have become specialists in our fields. I remember the days when Paediatrics and Public Health were two distinct specialty fields in medicine. I recently met a family medical practitioner who is pursuing a specialty of Public Health Paediatrics! This demonstrates to me that it is getting progressively more difficult to keep up in professional/technical fields. Even retail businesses have to focus on an area of interest – or else it is nigh impossible to keep up with the changes. The world is heading towards “niche” markets.

To win the “hearts and minds” of employees in general, we need a combination of measurable performance objectives and a degree of personal motivation. If we do not get this balance right, we will see little return for our investment of time and effort which will have a significant impact on our culture and achieving our business objectives.

We need to become more aware of our selves and the people we interact with to assist in developing committed employees. To do this we need to develop a complete understanding of our selves, our culture, the strategic direction and the performance measures we have in our business, allowing us to build a relationship that is mutually beneficial, ensuring engaged and committed team members.



Let us look at this model and see how it applies for the family unit as well. As our children of today seem to become more independent and self-reliant, it is paradoxical that now is the time for the family to get closer by communicating even more effectively. Less and less can we rely on stereotypical roles and rules that governed families in the past. The social norm of today: every family unit is unique. Every family has to negotiate their boundaries and culture so that each member is familiar with the values, expectations and goals. Sadly, too often these are not clear in many families. Let us engage our family members to commit to a co-created Family Vision.

We cannot do it alone. We collaborate to pool our resources in business. Why not in our personal lives as well? It is a time when dual-income families who are remote from extended family members have to turn to neighbours, childcare professionals and parent networks to assist them with after-school care.

We cannot do it alone. It is even becoming harder to be objective of one's own strengths and weaknesses. The amazing growth of the coaching industry (Life Coaches, Executive Coaches, Career Coaches, Lifestyle Coaches ...you name it!) in the last 10 years attest to this phenomenon. To work on ourselves, we need others!!

Working the Structure of Change

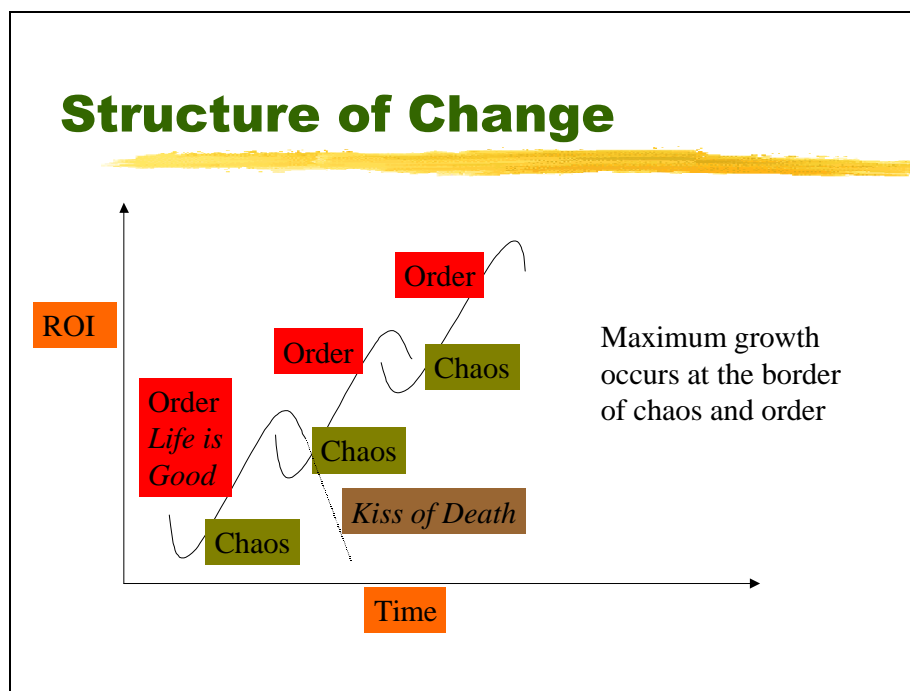
Maximum growth occurs at the border of chaos and order. In order to thrive, we need to live in the paradox of creating the *S-curve of Chaos* just when the *Order* or "*Life is Good*" phase is noticeably settling in. (See *Structure of Change* figure below)



For instance, when we start a new business, it is quite obvious to see the negative Return on Investment (ROI) in the first *S-curve of Chaos* – e.g. not quite making ends meet yet, systems still being installed and modified, team members settling in. As the business grows and stabilizes, we start experiencing a positive ROI which is on the rise – here comes the *Order* or “*Life is Good*” phase. Should we choose to plateau by remaining the same, it is highly likely that we will fall behind. Resting on our laurels is a sure way to invite the “*Kiss of Death*”.

To survive, we thus need to notice that when things are cruising, this is the best time to start instituting some changes – hence, creating the next *S-curve of Chaos*. And, so the cycle continues.

A personal example. When our children our babies, it is quite clear that there is a negative ROI as we struggle to get into the rhythm of having a new person in the family. We settle into “*Life is Good*” phase, enjoying parenthood. Then they start their adventurous toddlerhood, which brings in – yes, *Chaos*- the adjustments again especially of their safety. We enjoy it in some sort of *Order* until school starts. *Chaos!* Smooth sailing when we adapt to the change...Then the teenage years – more *Chaos* - when you can lose them completely (yes, the dreaded “*Kiss of Death*”) unless you make the change and invest time to understand them – Ah! Some semblance of “*Life is Good*” until they meet Mr/Miss Right, or not.... And so it goes!



Relationship Intelligence for the Self

We spend a disproportionate percentage of our time, money and energy on changing technology at the more conscious logical levels of our Environment, Behaviour and Capabilities e.g. the newest business and technical know-how, state-of-the-art whizz-bang equipment and gadgetry, the latest in business systems and operations design, the incredible cutting edge marketing plan complete with a website to die for, the most modern and ergonomic office design and fit out, the best trained technical staff, the latest software, just to name a few.

Have you considered more impactful change at a more unconscious neurological level (Refer to “*Ladder of Influence*”)? When was the last time you upgraded *your* software of Beliefs, Values or Identity that may be holding you back? Do you run patterns in your life that no longer serve you? For example, you know you should take time out to exercise regularly. However, when you hear the alarm clock radio come on at 6am, you hear yourself say, “I’m still so tired”. So you roll over and push the snooze button until you finally drag your body up at 7 am. You then think to yourself: “Oh well, looks like I haven’t enough time to exercise before work now”. So the pattern runs itself again.

How do you build a relationship with your Self so you are more aware of how you do “You”? How does that then influence your relationships with your fellow human beings?

Upgrading from IQ to EQ and SQ

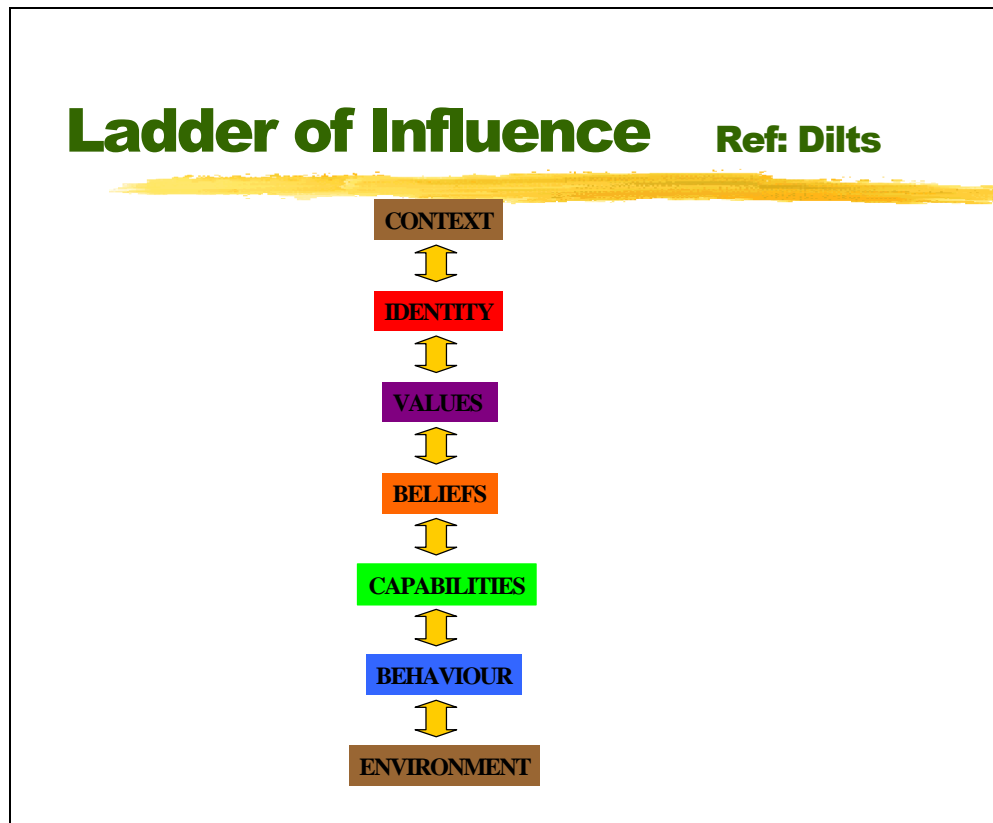
According to NLP trainer and developer, Robert Dilts of the University of NLP, we learn at different neurological levels according to the “Ladder of Influence”.

1. Environment – the context, the surroundings and the people we relate to.
2. Behaviour – specific actions we carry out.
3. Capabilities – skills, what we can do.
4. Beliefs – what we believe, the rules we live by.
5. Values – what matters to us, deeply seated emotional responses.
6. Identity – Our basic sense of self, core values, our purpose in life.
7. Context (spiritual) – most people have something beyond themselves they relate

Change Management tends to concentrate on environmental, behavioural and capabilities change – the content/Intelligence Quotient (IQ) of change. What is often missed are the higher levels of neurological intervention: what beliefs and values empower and amplify the skills – the process/Emotional Quotient (EQ) of change.



Intervening at a neurological level produces change that tends to be quicker, more enduring and usually unconscious. Now, they tell us that if we can see the ‘bigger picture’, and that we are on purpose, we are able to tap into our Spiritual Intelligence – the Spiritual Quotient (SQ) of change!



In the quest of increasing our relationship intelligence, let us consciously work on our selves – build a relationship with our Self first. Then we can forge that bridge with others.

EQ is about adaptability. It is about appreciating each other for the different strengths we bring into the interaction, and the learnings that help us develop. It is about relating to others. It is about enrolling others successfully towards a mutually beneficial outcome – whether it is a Vision for the business or the family unit.

SQ is about knowing about your self, others and how we all fit in the big picture. What is your purpose of being here: in the business, in the family, in your skin?

Let us start with Self Awareness.

In fact, Semler in his latest book has described the following as a formula for achieving success through this relationship:

$$\text{IQ} + \text{EQ} + \text{SQ} - \text{EGO} = \text{Success}$$

The equation summarises what relationship intelligence is all about.

In articles available on my website www.dryvonesum.com, I have introduced different tools by which to lead our businesses, professional and personal lives with communications skills through understanding your self better and to build better relationships.

In order to consistently build relationships successfully, it is worthwhile following a systematic procedure routinely.

1. **Build and maintain rapport** throughout the communications. To establish similarities elegantly and at an unconscious level, use of simple but powerful techniques such as pacing & leading. (Refer *The Magic of Rapport*)
2. **Have a clear outcome** of what you desire that has a measurable quantifiable result over a set timeline, complete with Key Performance Indicators. (Refer *The Magic of Outcome Planning*)
3. Ensure you have **multiple perspectives on any circumstance** - at least three perspectives on any situation in order to get wisdom of that particular scenario: Your awareness of the Self, The Other party's perspective, and an objective neutral Observer's Meta viewpoint. (Refer *The Magic of Wisdom Training, Mediation Intelligence, Creative Intelligence*)
4. **Self awareness and understanding of others** can be achieved through practice of developing one's leadership style, learning styles and an insatiable curiosity of what results in certain behaviours. (Refer *Leadership Intelligence, Motivational Intelligence, The Magic of Personality Filters, The Magic of Values*)
5. Why am I building this relationship? **For what purpose** am I personally doing this. The reason by which I do this will drive me to achieve the outcome. It involves seeing a much bigger picture or mission than myself and yet there must be a personal objective in order to propel it. That is the paradox. In a subsequent article, I will discuss the value of Spiritual Intelligence and the Wisdom Revolution - as it impacts on finding the balance in our work and our lives.

Can one person make a difference?

Well and good that you are the one managing the accelerated changes in this new Relationship Age. What if the rest of the world and the other people in it remain the same? Will it make a difference? Let me propose to you that when you change one element in a system, the change in the interaction with other elements in the system will inevitably produce a different outcome.

Try this. Stand up facing another person. Both of you raise your hands so you are palm to palm. You push against the other person's palms. In order to maintain the equilibrium, the person has to push back equally as hard. Newton's Second Law of Inertia states that "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction". The stronger you push, the stronger they push back. What happens when you stop pushing? The other stops pushing in order not to fall forward and to maintain their balance.

The point is: When you decide to take action to change, you will create change within that system. Go ahead then. Try something new.

1. What's the worst thing that can happen? You learn something!
2. What's the best thing? Know thyself for the truth will set thee free.

Remember that when you change one part of your life, you cannot help effecting change in all other areas of the system. Imagine all that fun you can have in all other areas of your life too.

Enjoy!

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Transformational Leadership Challenge™ (TLC):
Unleashing your children's potential through you

The overall outcome of the TLC (Transformational Leadership Challenge) for actualizing parents is a simple one. This workshop (endearingly dubbed “*The Greatest Challenge on Earth*”) treats parents as leaders not only in their family, but more so as a leader in their own lives. By setting the example as a role model for the rest of the family, they become aware of how they can lead the best lives for themselves and hence be a credible mentor, effective manager, coach and leader of their families. For instance, a parent can sometimes call upon their child(ren) to do their utmost best in life to achieve their highest potential in their chosen contexts – eg. career, family, health, physical, intellectual, emotional, or spiritual. In the process, the parent may place most of their family resources in the endeavour. However, the parent themselves short change themselves on opportunities to personally develop themselves. For instance, the parent may not pursue their own love of a talent or a gift – and hence, do not maximize the potential themselves. They do not walk their talk, so to speak. As we know, children are by far the best role modelers. As is commonly said: “Monkey see monkey do!” So what message are we truly conveying to our children when we do not “go for gold” ourselves – at the expense of letting the children savour all the opportunities? TLC truly brings that home. Live your dreams and values, and your children will follow suit – with unsolicited respect.

Respect is not automatically deserving just because you are a parent these days. That more traditional Confucian ethic is not alive and well! Respect is earned. You show children respect, and it is more likely to be reciprocated. One way to show respect is to be consistent with word and deed. In the “old days” – the boundaries were clear about what is expected of parent roles, and that of the kids. It tended to be set by social norms. Behaviour considered as “right” was more black and white then. Today, it seems it runs mostly into the grey area. Hence, each family has to clearly define



what their values, goals and boundaries are, and to run their unit accordingly. There is no hard and fast rules.

As leaders of corporate organizations spend time and money planning their goals, vision, values and purpose so everybody within it understands the culture and expectations. Do we as leaders of our family unit do the same? Have we even thought about what it is we are about? What are our individual dreams? Are all members aligned in values? Do we have useful methods to communicate amongst each other about how we envision our family unit striving synergistically towards individual goals whilst respecting each other's values? Can we all contribute towards each other's goals whilst satisfying each other's needs? What are our beliefs about our children – do these hold them back or drive them forward? The TLC program strives to constructively take these issues and put them into realistic Life Plans for individuals whilst being aligned to a greater Family Vision.

Review of NLP, NS as models that drive TLC

Neuro Linguistic Programming (or NLP for short) and Neuro Semantics (or NS for short) describe programs by which we naturally (and mostly unconsciously) run our brains by default – out of habitual use of those patterns. Many of these patterns serve us – and we take them for granted. The awareness will allow the parents participating to utilize these patterns more consciously and consistently. Some of these patterns however may not always be useful. The TLC parenting workshop instils processes that will create awareness of these patterns in ourselves and provide an opportunity for the parents to discover new ways to replace or override these unresourceful patterns whenever we choose to obtain new results. For example, there may be an emotional outburst from the parent every time a teenager comes home later than expected from an evening excursion leading to further shutting down of already poor communications between parent and child. It may be useful to attempt to generate a new response to that trigger. NLP and NS can provide a variety of ways to override the habitual pattern above with a new one that may get a more appropriate result.

Another example: a parent may have a belief that there is a need to shelter their child(ren) from the world for there are too many hazards out there. The more protective they are, the paradox is – they are preventing the child(ren) from learning life skills that continue to hamper their independence and self-sufficiency. NLP and NS can intervene through one of their many belief change patterns to give the concerned parent new choices of how to protect the child from the dangers of our world by giving the children opportunities to learn self-initiated life skills of managing when their parents are not there.

The TLC program offers opportunities for individuals in each family to maximize satisfaction of each other's needs through awareness of the issues that drive each of us. Another outcome of the program is to create a Family Vision that continually develops over time through a mutual understanding of the ever-changing boundaries that affect each family unit. Hence, it is a program by which you can truly unleash your children's potential through you.

About the Author: **Dr Yvonne Sum** is a pioneer in Parent Leadership coaching. She is on a quest to co-create joyful learning partnerships between parents and children to simultaneously bring out each other's authentic best. She inspires parents to learn from our children mirroring to us what we most need to learn about ourselves and vice-versa. Through her series of **Transformational Leadership Challenge™ (TLC)** programs, Dr Sum is committed to transform leaders of tomorrow today by highlighting family values and celebrating parents as role models and heroes in life who proactively unleash our children's potential through self actualization, intentional living and powerful leadership centred on love and high purpose. She expresses this passion to bring out our authentic best through her roles as an international speaker, writer, transformational corporate facilitator, executive and parent Meta-Coach, Neuro Linguistic Programming trainer, business woman, wife and mother. Please visit www.dryvonesum.com for more information.