



Alternative Medicine

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For many years, Eastern medicine – acupuncture, Vedic medicine – was termed “alternative” by a Western society whose medical traditions could only be described as youthful or adolescent by comparison. As an Ayurvedic surgeon from Cambridge said to me last Autumn, “If I’d studied conventional surgery at somewhere like Stanford or Harvard, I’d be using text books that are fifty years old, at most. In Bangalore, I was using texts that were five thousand years old.” But the “developed world” knows best!

I’ve been talking to a variety of business people – people suffering from the stresses and strains of the current global economic environment – over the last few weeks. It’s a case of “same old, same old” – to quote one of my clients – people immersed in the communal self-pity of a self-destructing economic super-class for whom enough was always “please, Sir, can I have some more!” Surely, if there was ever a crying need for alternative medicine, this is it!

As I write these words, I prepare myself for a breakfast session with a large audience of professionals and business people – seeking some insights into how one might ride out the current economic storm. Being business people, they are used to complex advice – with the associated price tag – to what, are in fact, very simple problems. Whether it be “three-sixty degree feedback”, strategic analysis, corporate cultural audit, “dashboarding” or whatever (there should be a whole dictionary of deliberately overly complex business jargon – maybe there is!) these are the corporate equivalent of modern medicine, when the business world is actually in dire need of alternative approaches – alternative medicine!

If you stop to reflect for a moment, you will discover that everything in life – whether that be relationships, business, family matters – is very, very simple. It’s only us who complicate it. I run a small business – having been doing so successfully for almost fourteen years. Before that, I ran or partly ran larger organisations. The challenges, pitfalls and problems are the same – the only difference is scale. Regardless of the size of organisation – or apparently complex relationship or family issues – you might have, a little reflection is a major help.

Take time out – perhaps even only an hour – to reflect (not think through or problem solve) – to do nothing at all and let yourself be inspired. As I’ve said to many people, the Buddha reputedly became enlightened after searching for decades, whilst simply sitting under a tree. And the penny

finally dropped for Sir Isaac Newton (or was it an apple!) when he was doing much the same thing. We all need to allow ourselves to be inspired – but we all need the mental space in which to allow that happen. This does not require three-sixty degree feedback, dashboarding or God knows what – it requires space, time and an eventual understanding that everything is simple – so don't complicate it.

In giving yourself space, a few key things become blindingly obvious – what are the really important things we need to focus on (a client recently told me that he sort of knew what they were but was paralysed by “gloom and doom” induced panic) – what are the things we're doing that we shouldn't be doing (not always obvious until you take that all important one step back) – why are we in this at all (whether that's a business or a relationship, very often the fact that you've been doing it for a long time blinds you to the fact that maybe you should either be doing something else or doing what you're doing whole-heartedly) – what do we want out of it (you need to ensure that you have your priorities right and know, in as far as that's possible, what you're definition of success is).

Armed with a little clarity of mind, everything becomes simple – and a definitive course of action becomes clear. The problem is that the normal mind is clogged with noise and (according to research 50,000 random pieces of) garbage. The normal mind is incapable of seeing the blindingly obvious, because the same research tells us that the normal mind only sees what it expects to see. Ask the normal person how they are, and they'll invariably tell you that they're “not too bad” – expect “not-too-bad” and you'll never perceive just how effortlessly and exceptionally successful you can be.

So, we need to get back to basics, administer a dose of alternative medicine. We need to see the wood for the trees and smell the roses – all corny old sayings that, if you stop to reflect for a moment, you will find have a deeper meaning. And therein lies the key – put some time aside every single day for reflection, to develop your clarity of mind, to enable you expect what would normally be unexpected and to thereby achieve effortless success and happiness.