

## Being Stretched: are we up for what it takes? Pt. 3

The modern work performance system has one goal; to develop the human skills, knowledge and resources within a company. However, there is little evidence that work performance is actually improved and more tragically, work morale is negatively impacted. Poor attitudes towards performance improvement by both workers and managements via the *Performance Review* process are making the above goal more difficult. The individual who brings their past 'baggage' to the Review is reactive; as illustrated in Part one of this article. Conversely, when we are willing to see our 'baggage' and have the intention to extend ourselves with good will, then personal development happens more easily.

Likewise, where a company lives out fundamental attitudes that support personal growth and development then performance feedback is more effective. Part Two of this article suggested that it was important for companies to actively focus on creating environments where two-way conversations were possible, where listening and speaking openly was the norm.

In many organisations, Managers silently wish employees would take the initiative in performance and personal growth. Alongside this position, the employee may wish things would change, and that Management would 'fix' the problems. Here we have the heart of what needs to change. The elephant in the room is *fear*.

Fear of:

- Being misunderstood
- The reactions of others
- That we will not be able to find the inner resources to meet the relationship challenges that can and do arise
- Taking the first step on the journey: learning new ways of relating (inertia being such a compelling force)
- Being seen as weak

## Distracting silence

Most of us have seen people who have grown and developed as human beings, with the resultant high levels of performance and personal satisfaction. In *As Good as it Gets*, we see the complexities of human relationships and the possibilities for growth. Helen Hunt's character, Carol, demands that Melvin (an obsessive-compulsive played by Jack Nicholson) compliment her. An awkward silence ensues, before he replies "You make me want to be a better man."

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Fear and personal performance are intimately linked. Companies who understand this powerful state of mind at play find ways to prevent the corrosive influence of fear. Moreover, when they provide a compelling vision of the best in human beings, they are in tandem developing people's capabilities and potential.

## Actions from a compelling expectation

**"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them become what they are capable of being."** *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

Part 4 will focus on what systems would assist people in the workplace to fear less and support their own and others potential. ■ ■