



# People, Passion, Performance

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*When we choose to give of our very best self we find our true north*

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## The power of choice

This month we are looking at our ability to choose who we are and how we respond to the world around us. We can choose to be mediocre, or we can choose to bring out the very best aspects of ourselves, like a compass aligning with 'true north'.

And while this may sound simple, it is not always easy, as the Two Wolves story on the next page illustrates. It requires vigilance and a commitment to ourselves, to dig into the very best of who we are encourage our truest essence to come through.

Under pressure, graphite turns into diamonds. With all its pressures, the workplace can be seen as our own personal laboratory, the furnace in which we consistently mould our characters. Here we can consciously strive to bring out our very best rather than settling for the mundane.

Just as a committed athlete will constantly strive to push their boundaries, if we are truly committed to living by our values then the challenges of the workplace provide us with abundant opportunities to hone our characters and discover our own true north.

**STOP PRESS:** To celebrate the arrival of Spring, we are giving away **three FREE places** on the seminar below. This is on a "first-come first-served" basis, so email Jennifer now!

[jennifer.hurley@lamontassociates.com](mailto:jennifer.hurley@lamontassociates.com)



*Tools that harness the waves of change*

## Last in the series: Thriving in Tough Times Breakfast Seminar - Thursday March 26<sup>th</sup>

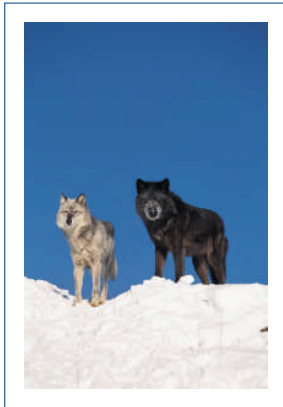
This is the **final chance to experience this seminar**. In just two hours, you will discover **powerful, practical, proven tools** that will help you and your company emerge from these challenging times with greater clarity, commitment and confidence.

**For more information:** [click here](#) or telephone 01344 628329

**Venue:** [Hilton Bracknell RG12 0QL](#)

**Cost:** £65 (inc VAT)

**Time:** 7.30am for 8.00am - 10.00am



*Which wolf will you feed?*

### **Thriving in Tough Times – Quotes from Previous Participants**

*"Fabulous. The best session I've been on."*

*"I learnt new skills that I can apply immediately when I return to the office"*

*"I feel motivated and uplifted."*

*"Lots of useful content, well delivered, plenty of interaction"*

*"I came away more enlightened and better mentally prepared to face the challenges ahead. Highly recommended."*

*"It is not our abilities that truly define us – it is the choices we make."*

**J.K. Rowling**

## **Story - Two Wolves**

A Native American elder was talking to his grandson about an injustice he had suffered. "I feel as if I have two wolves fighting in my heart," he said. "One wolf is vengeful, angry and violent. The other wolf is loving and compassionate."

With a trembling voice the grandson asked him, "Which wolf will win the fight in your heart?"

The grandfather answered: "The one I feed."

## **Ideas to try: 'Have to... Choose to...'**

When we work out of a sense of freedom and choice we draw on a very different energy from when we work from a sense of compulsion. When we choose, it is a recognition of our responsibility for creating our experience; it carries with it passion and power. Compulsion comes when we lose touch with who we are, lose touch with our strength and our freedom.

Try this exercise with a friend or colleague

### **Activity**

1. Choose one person to speak and one to listen.
2. The speaker describes to the listener everything she expects to do before she goes to bed this evening, prefacing each item with 'I have to'.

E.g. I have to go to the team meeting, I have to write that report for X, I have to make a cup of tea, I have to check my emails, I have to leave the office, I have to catch a bus home ... She speaks for 2 minutes.

The listener simply listens without comment.

3. The speaker now repeats the exercise (listing everything she expects to do) but this time she prefaces each item with 'I choose to'. Again, she speaks for 2 minutes.
4. Now, reflect on this exercise together. What did you (both speaker and listener) notice about your experience during the 'Have to' section and the 'Choose to' section? List the feelings generated during each section. What else was different?
5. Which version created feelings of opportunity, creativity, and power? Which version created feelings of burden and powerlessness? What does this mean for the story you tell about your work? About your life?

## The Framework for Transformation

### *Principle No.3: A Human Being*



*Transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary*

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*"You make a choice or set a goal and let people know about it. Then just getting started leads to the discovery of internal resources that help us to go further than we ever thought we could."*

**Christopher Reeves**

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One of the most fundamental questions we can ask is "What is a human being?" The answer we give is pivotal to the success and growth of a business. Of course there are many aspects to this, but in this context we will concentrate on four crucial aspects.

Firstly, a human being has boundless positive potential - for creativity, compassion, courage, inventiveness, trust, tolerance and so forth. It is not just the Nelson Mandelas, Darwins and Mozarts but also the everyday unsung heroes who demonstrate this ability to make outstanding contribution.

Secondly, we have an equally boundless negative potential for messing up - for fear, resentment, mistrust, envy, destructiveness, anger, cowardice, greed and worse. Again, it is not just the Hitlers, but also the daily run-of-the-mill pettiness, self-centeredness and mediocrity that erodes and corrodes the quality of many people's working day and the performance of the business.

Thirdly, as human beings we have choice. Moment by moment, we can live and work out of our higher, creative potential or out of our mediocre, destructive potential.

And lastly, we are values-driven, meaning-making creatures. We want a sense of meaning and purpose, and we want to live in line with our values. Our experience at work needs to address these aspirations whether we work in the warehouse or the boardroom.

The implications of all this for business are far-reaching. The company that understands these aspects of human nature knows that its culture is crucial - to encourage either the worst or the best to emerge. It takes care to deal intelligently and carefully with the negative potential. It encourages people to explore and understand their positive potential and enables them to develop this in themselves and others, individually and collectively. Choicefulness, and acceptance of responsibility are practised throughout the whole organisation.

How we deal with painful times like relocations, cost-cutting, or redundancies will depend on whether we recognise the nature of what it is to be human or whether we see people as just numbers on a spreadsheet.

The cost of ignoring the nature of human beings is enormous, including unresolved resentments, absenteeism, stress and illness, time-consuming and painful grievances and disciplinarys. The impact on the bottom line is high and in a highly competitive economic environment could potentially cripple a company.

The benefits of responding constructively to the nature of what it is to be human are also enormous: increased engagement, fulfilment, empowerment, creativity, innovation, inspiration and performance .

At this time of recession, when we are all faced with the urgent challenge to deliver more with less, can any business afford to continue to ignore the question "What is a human being?"