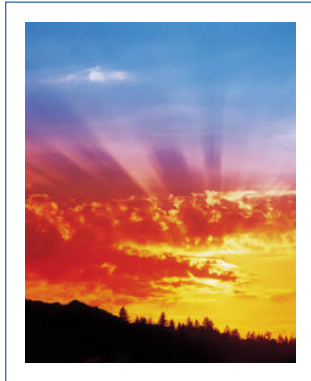




# People, Passion, Performance

April 2009

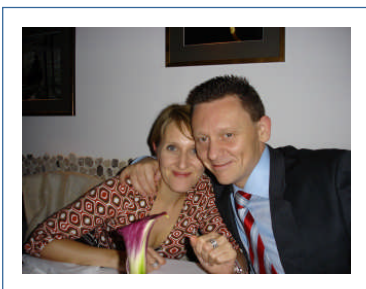
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*Every day brings a fresh chance to recommit to being fully alive, through every shade of the day, whether light or dark.*

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Jennifer and Dirk

## Beginnings

It is often surprising how we begin putting a newsletter together, only to see a theme emerging without our deliberate intention. This month, that theme is beginnings.

The current economic upheaval is undoubtedly bringing much pain, fear and suffering. At the same time, it is worth remembering that every crisis also creates many new beginnings. We have the power - whatever the stresses of our circumstances - to view our present moment, here and now, as a new beginning and to look for positive possibilities.

What quality or value can you bring to your present situation that might transform it? Pause for a moment ... just see what comes to mind. You can experiment with living with this quality or value for just one day, consciously applying it throughout the day, especially at moments of difficulty. At the end of the day, have a two-minute review before you go to sleep. How did evoking your chosen quality change things?

Change is simply a synonym for the cycle of endings and beginnings that weave through our lives. And this month, our theme could not be more apt. There are the obvious new beginnings symbolised in spring and Easter. There is also a wedding! But as Elliot Seymour's story shows, difficult challenges can also present new beginnings.

## Thank You

As you may have heard, I'm leaving Lamont Associates this Easter. It's been a hard decision to reach. My life is changing as I'm getting married on April 19<sup>th</sup> and so a new road is emerging for me.

Working in the area of transformation has truly been the greatest honour, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank every one of you with whom I have shared this journey. It has been both humbling and inspiring to witness so many transformations, so many moments of grace, wisdom, humour, forgiveness, innovation and sheer joy.

With my abiding gratitude, I wish you all the very best in your lives, at work, at home and at play.

— Jennifer

[Click here to send Jennifer a personal message](#)



*Where are you beginning anew?*

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*“If you manage  
your business  
TODAY  
using  
YESTERDAY’S  
business model,  
you will have  
no business  
TOMORROW.”  
(Anon.)*

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## A New Beginning

*Elliot Seymour, Bourne Engineering*

I come across a lot of people that are feeling cut off from their business. As times get tougher, I see people withdraw into themselves for protection, communicating only when they have to, trying not to show that they are affected by life and work.

When talking through the business with a senior manager recently they told me:

*‘I’m fed up.*

*I’m being kept in the dark, I feel as though everything is going on around me and I don’t know what’s happening, like I’m insulated from the outside world. There is this wall and I can’t break through it. What’s the point, I won’t ever get anywhere, I don’t know what to do. I need to find something else, it’s all over.’*

Now, some people can find it hard to look beyond the here and now. It can sometimes be overwhelming with all of the negative news and doom in the media. This senior manager had lost sight of their role, their purpose, what made them special. He was looking to me to confirm his views and tell him that he was right.

I called him a chicken.

It took several seconds for that to register with the individual. The inevitable ‘What?’ then followed.

I repeated it. *‘Chicken! ... Well not really a chicken, more like a chick’.*

The quizzical look that I received showed me that my comment had landed, and more importantly had cleared the other thoughts that we had previously discussed, which meant this comment now had space to sink in and grow.

I explained.

*‘Think about what you’ve just said for a moment. You said that you’re being kept in the dark, cut off from everyone, surrounded by a wall that you just can’t seem to break through. I’m curious ... do you think that’s how a chick feels as they are waiting to burst through that eggshell into life?*

*They’re ready to take on the world, but also full of doubt as to what they’ll find and how they’ll handle it when they do.*

*Stop. Think about it some more, you’ve got the advantage. You’ve done this before and deep down you know you can do it again.’*

After sitting in silence for a moment I could see that he recognised the truth of what I had said and although this conversation couldn’t wave a magic wand over him, it was the start of his new beginning.



*Though it takes many forms, from oceans to ice cubes, water endures – weathering down mountains and sculpting the land*

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*“It is not the magnitude of our actions but the amount of love that is put into them that matters.”*

**Mother Teresa**

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## The Framework for Transformation

### *Principle 4: Enduring Principles*

As fashions change with the speed of waves crashing on a stormy beach, and political perspectives scurry past like gale force winds, it can be seen as though we live in a world where nothing is permanent, solid or reliable.

And yet, to make sense of our lives, flooded with fast-paced changes, we require a strong framework that holds and supports us, through the ups and downs of life.

It is for this reason that humanity, collectively, still returns to those principles that have endured over millennia, such as ‘Change is the only constant’. If this is indeed so, we need to learn to live with change and to embrace new beginnings. The principle ‘Treat others as you want to be treated’ invites leaders to think carefully about how they view those they work with. In living our lives through the lens of these principles, we come to find our inner wisdom, a subtle way of knowing how to react to change, conflict, confusion, loss, joy and success. We can find a consistency in our response, a deeper meaning in apparently meaningless circumstances.

These principles have survived because they resonate deep within people. These are principles that we recognise because they are a part of ourselves, of the innate human desire to excel, to shake off the shackles of mediocrity, and to stand in the truth of who we are. For it is not so much what we do in life, as how we do it, that matters. It is the quality of our character that we bring to even the most mundane of tasks that uplifts and inspires others, and creates workplaces where people can thrive.

## Which side of the river are you on today?

### *From Debbie van den Brink, Sash Window Workshop*

Many of you will be familiar with the ‘Working Well and Treacle Days’ diagram on the following page, as we often use this on Lamont programmes.

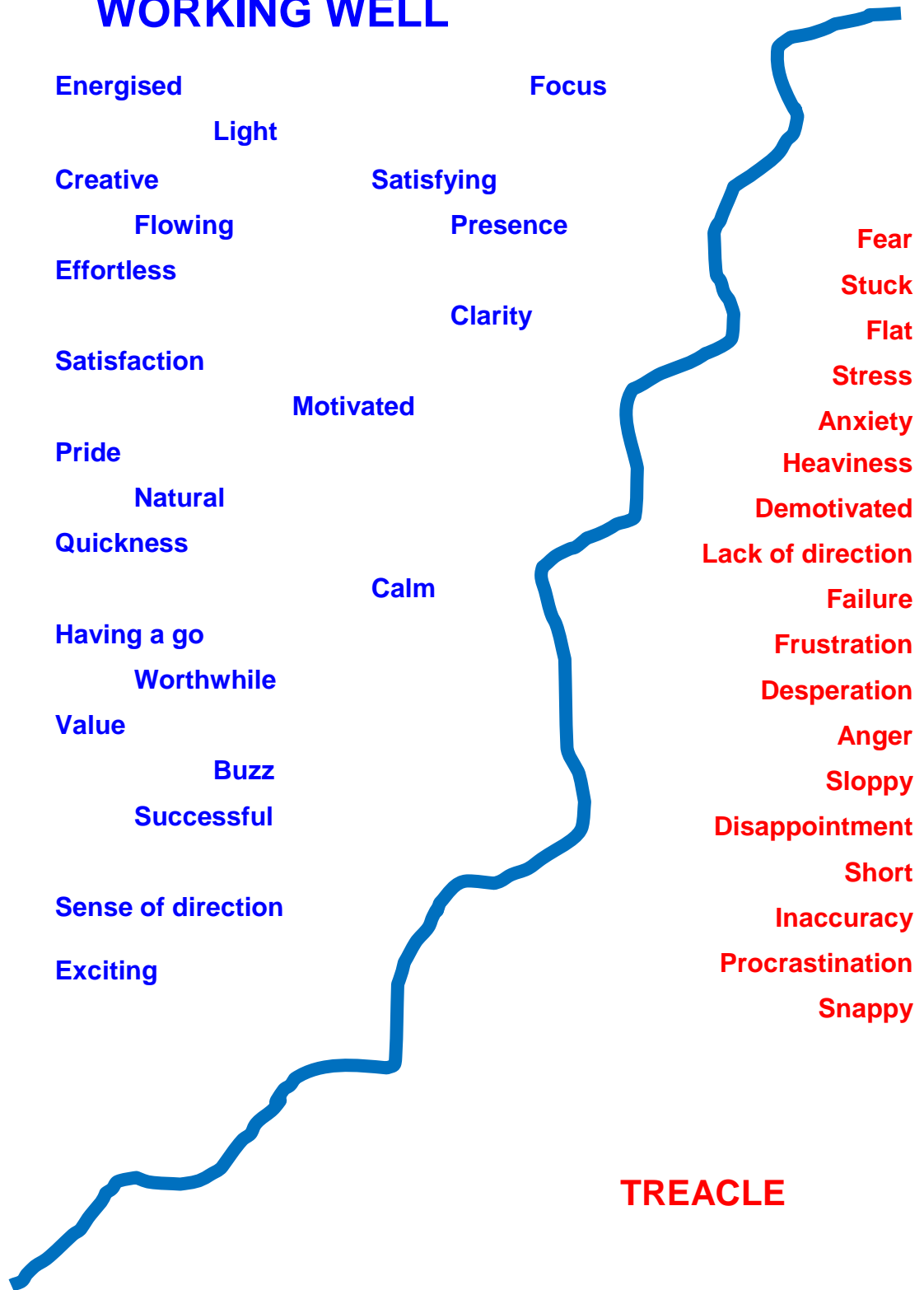
At our most recent “*Thriving in Tough Times*” workshop, Debbie shared that she had taken the poster from the previous workshop and pinned it to her office wall. She explained that she sees the line between *Working Well* and *Treacle* as a river, and each morning she takes a moment to look at the diagram to see which side of the river she is on. If she’s on the *Treacle* side, she makes a conscious decision to shift to the *Working Well* side of the river. When colleagues come in to talk with her, she is aware of which side of the river they are on. If they are caught up in the treacle she encourages them to come over to the side of the river she is on – the side where they can work well together.

Her story illustrated the truth that how we respond to experience is not beyond our control; crossing the river is a choice we can make consciously, each day.



*Conscious choice is a two way bridge. Which way are you going?*

# WORKING WELL



Submitted by Diksha Chakravati ([www.fixme.org.uk](http://www.fixme.org.uk))