

“WE TRAINERS HAVE BETRAYED OUR CLIENTS”

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1) Mr. Callahan, you have worked over 13 years in the international training business. What do you feel about the current situation? Is the trainer business in a crisis?

Yes indeed there is a crisis. From *our* trainer perspective the crisis is that our clients are making budget cuts and the first budget they cut is their training budget. We need to start looking at the situation *from the perspective of our clients*. From our clients' perspectives the whole thing looks different. From their perspective we the trainers have not delivered what we promised to deliver. Therefore our clients think that our trainings are expendable.

2) The trainers are then to blame for this misery?

Over the past thirty years corporate decision makers have paid billions for trainers to give them what they need. Top Managers knew that they needed their people trained to adapt to the rapidly changing business conditions of the 21st Century. Corporate leaders knew that in order to meet the demands of markets, finances and technological revolutions their key people needed training and they were counting on us to deliver that training. They were depending on us because training is our industry; it is our profession. We trainers promised to give them what they needed to succeed in their businesses and we have failed to fulfil our promise. Is it any wonder that now they laugh at the idea of putting more money into trainings?

3) What is it exactly that companies need and what is it exactly that trainers have delivered instead?

Companies need trainings to liberate and harness the full intelligence and leadership potential of their people. They need trainers to provide new meeting technologies that unleash the creative and productive power of human intellectual capital that is structurally encoded into their teams. They need their people to come back from trainings behaving differently – empowered with clarity and skills to create a future full of new opportunities. We trainers must give their staff the competence and courage to constantly reinvent what the company is and how it delivers products and services to rapidly evolving markets.

Instead we trainers have been hiding behind a confusion in terminology that lets us get away with not delivering what a true trainer delivers. We ourselves have been blocked by our own fear, seeking security and delivering not so much a training about how to invent new possibilities in the unknown as an education about models and systems that are already known.

4) How does the trainer come out of this disaster? How can they get the trust of the companies back?

As professionals trainers we must increase our level of accountability. What we must face is the fact that there are actually two categories of trainers:

- 1) trainers who provide education – these are educators.
- 2) trainers who provide abilities to create new possibility – these are Trainers (spelled with a capital “T” so as to distinguish the difference).

Educators provide information, explanations of how things work, and how to do things that are already known how to do. Educators teach people about what is already known.

Trainers provide tools and maps for new ways of thinking and perceiving, new ways of using problems and conflicts, and new ways of behaving. Trainers take participants safely into the unknown. In the unknown the participant can then discover or create previously nonexistent opportunities for their organization.

For the most part we trainers have performed in category one, as educators, but we have represented ourselves as category two, as Trainers. Through this deception we have unfortunately and perhaps unintentionally betrayed our clients.

Here is what Trainers must understand: *We are Trainers. The only Trainers.* We have a job to do. There is no one else in the world prepared to deliver what a Trainer is supposed to deliver. Even if you have been functioning as a type one trainer – an educator, the world expects you – no, it is more than that – the world *desperately needs you* to function as a type two Trainer so that professionals have somewhere to acquire new opportunities for action. This need the world has of you is not going to change. It is only going to become more and more intense. As professionals we must ask ourselves a very personal questions: “Are you willing to rise to the occasion? Are you willing to shift from educator to Trainer?”

To change the present disaster we Trainers must start all over from the beginning with our clients. If you can connect with your customers personally now and solve a couple of small problems for them quickly, easily, and for a good price, they may be willing to take the next step with you. Each Trainer must establish themselves as an exception to the view that trainers are a rip-off. You can create a new legend about yourself through irrefutably good deeds and delivering more than is expected. The wound of our betrayal is deep, but with consistency and time the companies will again come to trust us to deliver what we are supposed to deliver: not educations that produce new knowledge but Trainings that produce changed behaviour.

5) In your opinion, how does an educator become a Trainer?

The most important thing is for a Trainer to shift his or her relationship to fear. Fear can be transformed from a bad or negative feeling into useful raw energy and information that permits a Trainer to navigate spaces that are nearly bereft of solid known information. Shifting our relationship to fear cannot be done through reading an article like this. Shifting our relationship to fear is a real thing, and it happens the hard way, personally, through expansive learning.

Think about expansive learning. Expansive learning happens when the solid shape of our thinking patterns change form. Imagine a solid of one shape changing into a

solid of another shape. How can this happen? One way is through melting, by going through the liquid-state.

An educator habitually avoids the liquid-state with deft manoeuvres because the liquid-state is perceived as dangerous – you never know what could happen in there. It could be messy! The Trainer navigates straight towards the liquid-state because in the liquid-state there is new possibility!

Look around. Companies are dieing. Big companies. Managers tend to hold back rather than taking intelligent and creative risks – not because they do not have the resources, but because they do not trust their own powers of creatively. They have not been trained how to play the new game of constant reinvention.

Tens of thousands of people are painfully losing their jobs, perhaps needlessly, because we Trainers ourselves have been afraid of being afraid while we provide training for managers. We were afraid of taking our clients where they needed to go to gain really new approaches – into the liquid-state – the source of innovation and invention. We were afraid ourselves to make the leap from linear to nonlinear thinking, so how could we ever make it safe for our clients to make that same leap? Clients can only go as far as their trainers can go!

We Trainers also need to change the idea that someone else is going to save our ass. We created this mess ourselves, so we must be the ones to get ourselves out of it.

Yes, there is a training crisis. But the solution for the crisis is now in our hands. We have clarity: there is a difference between educators and Trainers. We can represent ourselves accordingly. And if we are going to represent ourselves as Trainers instead of educators then it is helpful if we take responsibility for delivering the appropriate results to our clients. There has never been a time when true Trainers were more desperately needed in the world than right now.

Do we already know how to deliver our Trainer profession? Probably not. Such clarity about what the Trainer’s job is new for us too. We do not necessarily already know how to do this. Almost nobody does. That is as it must be and it does not actually matter. What matters is our honest and total commitment to producing the necessary results. Trainers teach the ability to commit to producing results before the way is completely known. We teach this ability through demonstrating it ourselves.

The way of the Trainer *cannot* be known ahead of time because *every* client is unique. Every situation has its own profit catalyst. We do not already know how to produce the needed results and we have to produce them. Training is the profession of insecurity.

When faced with a new task the human mind habitually comes to the question: “How do you do it?” Our clients will ask us. Our associates will ask us. We will even ask ourselves: “Okay, Buster, how will you do it this time?” The educator says, “I do not know,” and stops in the face of his or her fear of the unknown that stares them in the face. The Trainer comes to realize that asking the question, “How do you do it?” is

just a defence against taking appropriate action. For a Trainer the answer to the question, “How do you do it?” is to commit to the results and invent whatever it takes to bring those results into existence.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Clinton Callahan, founder of Possibility Management, is an America-born management-innovation and leadership trainer. After earning a degree in Physics he launched Computer Effects Company for developing and manufacturing cutting-edge biomedical instruments for DNA research. In 1990 he made a sudden career change from computer hardware to human software. Mr. Callahan has lived and worked in America, Australia, Japan, France and Germany. He now directs Callahan Academy from Munich.

Callahan Academy was formed to provide managers and leaders in UK and Europe with extraordinary innovation soft skills trainings. Mr. Callahan is adamant that trainings are different from classes. “Classes provide new information. Trainings provide new behaviour,” says Callahan. “New results only come from new behaviour.”

Mr. Callahan’s first book *Abenteuer Denken – 52 Abenteuerreisen zu größeren Möglichkeiten* was published in 2004 and is now in its second printing in German. His new book *So Much Love – Creating Authentic Joyous Relationship* will be released in summer 2007 in both English and German.

Possibility Management offers remarkable thinking models that unlock hidden profit resources through setting free human productivity that is already paid for but shockingly under-utilised.

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