



The power of positive thought: Bringing your heart and head to work, with your eyes open

So I was getting into my car and this bloke says to me, 'can you give me a lift?' I said, 'Sure, you look great, the world's your oyster, go for it'.

Tim Vine, Comedian

Note: there are choices about where you start this article, what you do in the middle and how you end it – see the bottom of page 3 if you can't wait. If you read it all and do the exercises it will take about an hour. Skim readers are welcome too.

You can start this piece in one of two ways...

A - the professional

We at iDENK are working with part of a major Government Department. We are doing our usual stuff: helping the movement from inspiration to implementation, design to delivery, exploration to execution.

We have recently led a successful event - when many ideas to make a difference to the morale of a large team were considered and a handful of actions chosen to pursue a breakthrough over 90 days. The fear at the start of the event was that it would be 'just another away day' - fun at the time, instantly forgettable and what is promised doesn't even start to happen. But following the event, something remarkable happened. Three of the team members have been ensuring that all individual actions that were promised are being done. They have phoned, emailed, lobbied and arranged.

What is so notable is that these are people each with over 20 years of service. In this organisation, many who have been around that long don't get so fully engaged any more.

B - the personal

I have already sat down three times today to write this article. Firstly I criticised my wife for not being positive about my eldest daughter's romantic relationship. That led to a distraction as she rightly pointed out my hypocrisy! Later, up to seven men were working at the same time fitting us a new bathroom and I was distracted by questions and acceptances of my offers of rounds of tea. Then, I had to get engaged in the tortuous planning for the discharge from hospital to residential care of my father-in-law. Finally, our boiler stopped working and I didn't have time to cook and we didn't eat tea together before my youngest daughter went out for a late lesson. And I still hadn't completed this piece.

This might seem an odd way to start an article on positive thinking: whingeing! But, after a few minutes of panic about the prospect of a night without heating and a morning of cold showers - on the first night of frost this winter - I thought, what a chance to put the Toyota mantra of 'Problems are good' into action.

Those with long experience have been 'done to' many times - for example, thousands have been through three large and dispiriting change programmes in the last few years alone and are now working in a financially tight context.

We asked them why were they stepping up? One of them, heartily endorsed by the others, said "Well, it will make you ill if you are cynical and negative...and I want to make a difference and feel healthy."

This is the spirit of our practice - it is impossible to make a breakthrough with a negative (or 'yes, but') mindset but a 'yes, and' philosophy unlocks the door to action.

Could I treat this as a great opportunity to learn something about me and how to do things? Now, an hour later, I have learnt loads about combination boilers and how to force air locks out using pressure and heat. And I have regained my energy to write.

I wouldn't have done this a few years ago - I would have got stuck in misery, a moroseness that would have rippled out to engulf all those around me.

Read on to find out more about how at iDENK we have changed as people as well as consultants and entrepreneurs. Find out some of the routines we use to help our clients, companies and each other.

"If I pretend to be happy, then maybe I will feel happy."
Gemma, 17, at end of a relationship

Welcome, whether you started with the professional or the personal way into this article (or both). There are some important things happening around us that affect how we approach our lives and work. You can see these in a number of places. For example, the shift from the pathology focused psychology of Freud to the positive thinking of Neuro Linguistic Programming and other popular personal development approaches. There's also growing concern about soundbite-obsessed news that both fuels and trades on increased public anxiety. While within the fields of organisational development and HR, there is a shift from being focused solely on problems and weaknesses, to ways of working with individuals and teams that build on strengths and successes.

In a nutshell, there are two key insights from this contemporary thinking: First, as people whose body and mind are inextricably linked, our heads can rule our hearts. This is the key principles at the centre of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, an approach that many people seeking mental health find helpful. The solutions-focused approach is a contrast to deep psychotherapy. It looks to the future, and builds on what is currently successful whilst using our thinking to eliminate distractions.

Second, there is the view that "we get what we talk about". As Pamela Stephenson, comedian and therapist said recently when interviewed in The Times newspaper: "One of the interesting phenomena about human behaviour is the tendency of ideas to materialise into action...it will happen, if we allow it to. That's why I think it is a mistake to accuse kids of daydreaming, it is actually positive, a moving forward rather than inertia".

The social theory and philosophy of ‘Social Constructionism’ (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_constructionism) is at the heart of the movement for positive psychology and the interest in organisational practice that builds on appreciation, opportunity, potential and strengths. It argues that each of us makes and remakes our own reality and that how we talk and interact is at the heart of how we create and recreate our own personal worlds. It contrasts with the more critical and perfectionist perspective of traditional science and philosophy.

At iDENK, we only use theory in so far as it helps those we work with. We like the saying of Karl Marx’s sidekick, Frederick Engels that “an ounce of action is worth a ton of theory” and also the famous quote from psychologist Kurt Lewin: “There is nothing as practical as a good theory”.

Consequently, we take a holistic or balanced approach to the way we support clients. We are interested in exploring problems, mess and chaos - the past, difficulty and challenge. But we realise that this needs to be complemented with other sorts of more positive thinking to enable movement and progress. We often see this as a yin yang - the ancient Chinese concept of balancing halves, which we take as a powerful metaphor for ‘both, and’ thinking.

A couple of things are crucial in nurturing positive thought - the style and tone of thinking we need if we are to be have a breakthrough and be effective. These are the way we talk and communicate, how we choose to see things, and the where we invest our effort. This article explores each of these. These are things that most sports coaches would recognise and that are used to help leading athletes achieve and maintain a positive emotional state. A way of being that turns anger into passion, frustration into enthusiasm and anxiety into motivation.

Note: So you have made it this far. Having found a way to start this article (did you plump for A or B or both; and did you read or skim page 2?) there are now some choices: see A-C below and ending #1 and #2. Of course, you might choose to stop now...your decision, as always.

What is coming next? (Imagine the Pearl and Dean music from the cinema adverts. Go on. Got it?):

- A. *Giving it a go*: 4 experiments in positive thought and action: for those who don’t ‘buy’ the argument of the article so far. Here we show how we can use our head, heart and hands to really make a difference to how we feel, behave and perform. Not sure? Give them a go.
- B. *The ‘But/And’ Switch*: a message and tool we offer that, with a bit of discipline, can be turned into a helpful habit.
- C. *Living with our eyes open*: a recognition of how our call to take a positive and optimistic stance needs to be balanced with a mature understanding of the pain and madness that we sometimes see around us, at our work and in the wider world.

If you are you convinced of the power of the positive, but find it hard to maintain, you can go straight to *The 'But/And' Switch*. If you already have positive thinking as a constant routine in your life, you can do two things: first, jump straight to the section *Living with our eyes open*; second, get in contact and share your wisdom!

To help you decide which route to take, try this triage test:

REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL: Optimism Checklist

- Optimists think that not only is the glass half full but it's a lovely glass and someone will be along in a moment to top it up.
- Optimists don't have bitter experiences. On the contrary, losing that leg/job/lottery ticket was the best possible thing that could have happened to you.
- Optimists know that pessimists will always be miserable, which itself is a cheery thought.



Guy Browning: How to be optimistic, Guardian, 21 Jan, 2006

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If you are still here, let's prepare to get active and do some experiments and trials.

Experiment 1: The words we use really matter

Michael Heppell in his best selling book, *How to be Brilliant*, describes the power of language. What are we telling ourselves? What are we making happen? He offers some new language options for people who want to change. Diagram 1 shares some of the changes he advocates.

Diagram 1

Trying some old and new language

I'm tired	I could do with more energy
I'm bored	this could be more interesting
I'm p****d off	I could be happier
the weather is awful	the weather could be better
I'm scared	I could be more confident
this is rubbish	this could be better
he's a liar	he could be more truthful
I'm freezing	It could be warmer
It's too hot	It could be cooler
I'm broke	I could do with more money

Michael Heppell, How to be Brilliant, Pearson Books

Confidential

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We invite you to look down the red list. Which two do you find yourself saying the most? And what are the new alternatives. One we regularly use is “I could do with more energy”. And it works. Our bodies know how to be energised, if we ask them to. Also, during the summer of 2006, in the July heatwave in England, we tried “I could do with feeling cooler”. It was remarkable. We shared it with our children. They were convinced to.

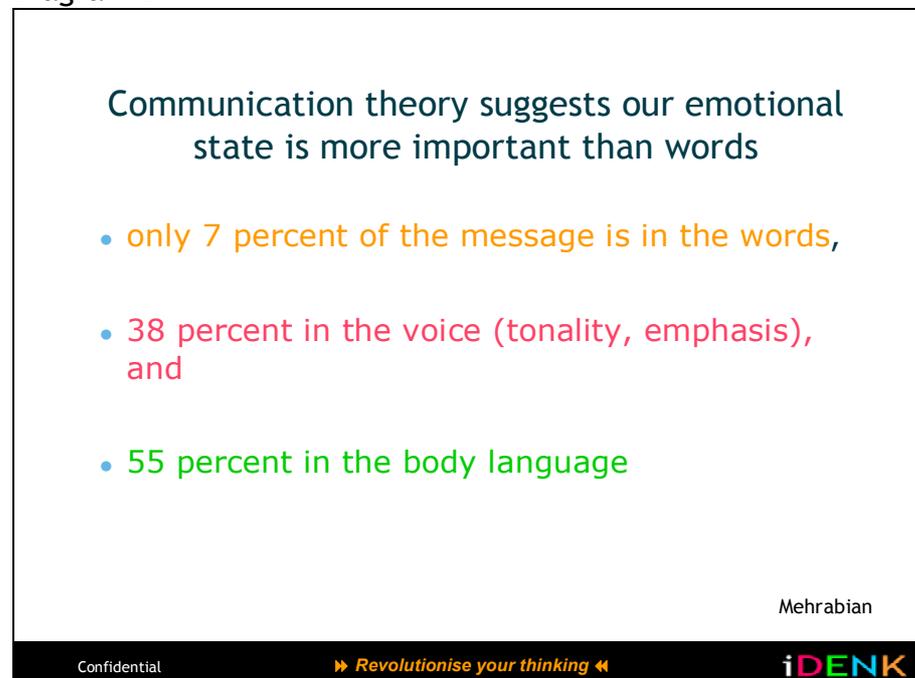
So, are you persuaded? Not sure? Let’s try our first experiment. Pick a red phrase that is nearest to summing up a concern you have today, right now. Try the corresponding green words. Say it. Say it out loud. Really mean it. How does that feel? Give it a go a couple more times today.

Convinced? Ok, ready to move on.

Experiment 2: What we do with our tone of voice and bodies really, really matters

You probably know that the words we use are only part of the way we communicate with others and, we would say, how we correspond with ourselves too. Diagram 2 outlines a well known theory from Albert Mehrabian’s communication research in the 1960s (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Mehrabian). Whilst these ratios cannot be simplistically applied to all situations it offers a cautionary jolt to those of us in families, friendships and organisations where so much effort can be placed on getting the words right.

Diagram 2



Time for experiment two. This is best done with a friend or colleague. Or you can try on your own with a mirror or door or wall - don't worry if you feel a bit stupid. First, identify something you do outside of work that you really love. Something that gets you going - gets you really animated, Now, think about the words you use to describe your hobby or interest. What are the accurate and authentic words (eg I love making model airplanes and have a collection of 3000 and met my boyfriend through an online Airfix club and we go to model makers meetings whenever we can).

Ok, you have the words for *your* hobby or interest. Now, for sixty seconds talk about your hobby with the opposite tone of voice and body language. For example, use a monotone voice, eyes to floor, hunched shoulders or angry scowl and flared nostrils. Give it a go. For a minute, put all you have in to it.

How was that? Time for the second part of this experiment: the reverse. Think of something in your job or work that really frustrates you. Really annoys you. Perhaps something your boss or management does. Got it? Now, for 60 seconds, share the irritated-of-Tunbridge-Wells words you would really use with your friend (or into the mirror). Only, this time, do it with as much positive tone of voice and warm and open body language as you can muster.

How was that? Which left you feeling better: exited, energised, enthused, energised? Bet it was that annoying thing at work. Right?

We hope that you are starting to see that what we say and how we say it matters - it really does. If we want to have a happy and fulfilling life we can make a difference to our emotional state with some simple steps that can be practiced and made into unconscious routines.

Of course, you might like moaning and feeling negative. That's your choice. It's a totally legitimate way to live your life but is it what you really want? Our contention is you won't be anywhere near as successful in your relationships and career that way.

Moving on...

Experiment 3 : Where we choose to focus our efforts matters too - it really does

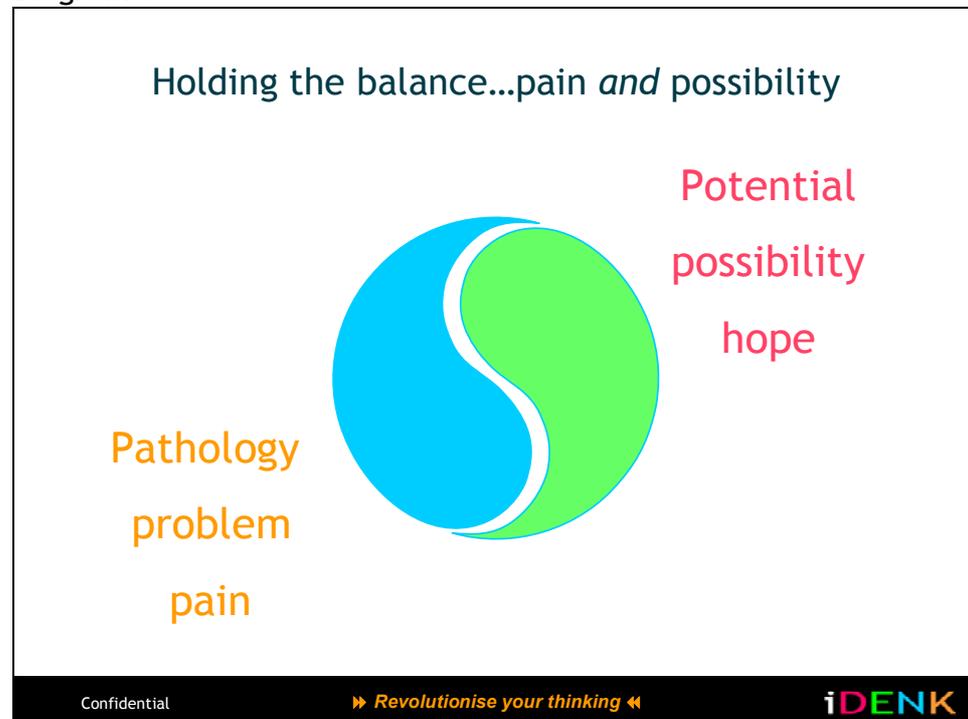
At iDENK our work is helping people as individuals, in teams and in organisations, get inspirational ideas they are proud of. Ideas that, critically, are actually followed up on. We find a positive mindset is essential for people to get the breakthroughs they want, turning fresh thinking into successful action.

To get this, we encourage balanced thinking. Spending time exploring the past and present as well as insights and hopes for the future. The logic and the emotion. The big picture and the detail. The short-term and the longer-term. The operational and the transforming. In both our consulting work and with the ventures we invest in, iDENK is unusual in the way we

seek to work these balances. In particular, we stand out in our attempt to understand pathology or problems whilst also embracing hope and potential.

In this respect, we're influenced by contemporary organisational ideas such as Appreciative Inquiry and Positive Organisational Scholarship. These schools of thought take their cue from social constructionism (a bit more theory - phew!). Put in simple terms: "we get what we talk about".

Diagram 3



Before the start of any iDENK thinking workshop, we often ask participants to complete a variety of exercise cards as they arrive. A number of these cards will always explore the balance that diagram 3 presents. We then use these to ginger up group discussions throughout the event.

Let's try a couple of these questions. Try one that is nearest to a concern you have. Change it to make it totally relevant to you (for example altering the focus on 'your leadership role' to 'your role as carer' or 'follower'):

- a) For an individual concerned about your role as leader: Think of a time when you were really pleased with your leadership. What were you doing? Why was it brilliant? What skills and attitudes were you using? How were others responding to you? How can you repeat it? What first new step can you make?
- b) For a *team* trying to improve: What was the best team you have ever been part of as an individual? In what ways was that team performing fantastically? What was going on? What was the focus for success? How did people relate to each other? What lessons can you draw? How can you apply these to your current team? What can you do next to take this

thinking on?

- c) For an organisation keen to excel: Where in the organisation are there already people and teams doing what you hope for the whole? What are they doing? Why are they proud? What are you celebrating? What new insights are there? What can be repeated? What can you do differently to show you have learnt and are doing this yourself?

Was that helpful? Did that work? Or would you prefer to be trawling over the dirt, the dark, the nasty, the mess? Again, to be clear, we believe there is a time to confront, to name, to challenge. But this can be an overused response. Rather, we prefer a balance with (to use some of the framework of therapist John Heron) interventions that are both catalytic and supportive.

To reinforce this spirit of positive action, we challenge groups to come up with steps or milestones they would like to have achieved within 5, 30 and 90 days. We encourage innovation, experimentation and risk. The thing we are certain of is that some of the actions will not happen as planned, either in part or entirely. Not fulfilling actions or achieving milestones can get some people and teams down. For us, the most important thing is the spirit of learning from our mistakes. We use the After Action Review format developed by the US Army to encourage curiosity and applying lessons learnt. The four questions at the heart of this are so simple and really useful: what was supposed to happen? What actually happened? Why was there a difference? What have we learnt?

These insights about the power of positive and focusing questions are at the heart of sports coaching. The disciplined use of these questions can be totally revolutionary for an athlete. Even more so when combined with exercises to change the physiological state - for example, practicing breathing exercises to shift from anxious stressful states, where someone is fearful of the future, to passionate expectation that is motivating and leads to moving into the future on the 'front foot'. By the way, these same routines can be used to turn around the fear of flying and public speaking - the two most common phobias in the world today, possibly even including spiders!

Experiment 4: What we build on makes all the difference

Our final test takes this idea of focus, and makes it very personal. How many times have you been to an interview and been asked that ritual question: 'what are your weaknesses?'. This same negative and defeatist spirit comes into that other building block of HR systems and practice: the annual appraisal and personal development plan. Many of you will recall the *The Office* TV series where David Brent is conducting Keith's appraisal. After probing him on his skills, he notes that on his self assessment form he has very little on his struggles: "Ok, under weaknesses, you have only put eczema". (See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4GvgaAO4DA> for this clip whilst it is still there).

In his book *Now, Discover your Strengths: How to develop your talents and those of the people you manage*, Marcus Buckingham (with Donald Clifton)

outlines the view from his work at the Gallup organisation that the surest route to high achievement and happiness is exercising your strengths - not, seeking to fill the gaps of your weaknesses. Sure, there are some basic skills that need to be in place. For example, for most knowledge workers keyboard skills and managing a simple budget is essential and any deficiency probably needs to be addressed. But an organisational system dedicated to pointing out our failings and then offering remedial actions seems unlikely to lead to success and achievement.

Buckingham describes a strength quite specifically: 'consistent near perfect performance in an activity'. There is the online strengths finder with a 180 questions for self assessment. Here we will ask a few questions as part of the fourth and final experiment in feeling positive:

- a) What one or two things can you do better than almost everyone else that you know?
- b) Do you use this in your paid work - and in what way?
- c) How might you capitalise on these strengths even more?
- d) How can you maximise the way you pursue these? And in a way that gives you success, energy and fun?

Time after time we find that focusing on the strengths - the things that you, your team, your organisation does spectacularly well - is the surest way to build on the skills of the present and seize the possibility of the future.

The 'But/And' Switch

If you started as a sceptic and are still here, it may be that you are convinced by our argument on The Power of Positive Thought, or at least prepared to be!

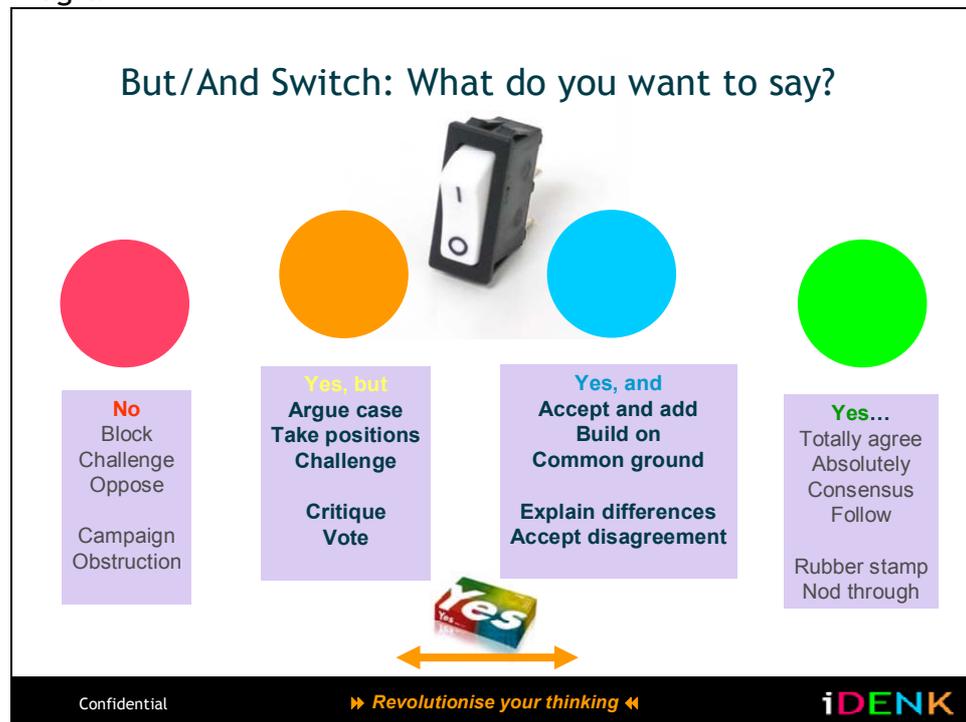
The idea of deciding to build on the positive is at the heart of our message. The choice about how to act, where to focus, what to say and what to do is faced by each of us as individuals, and in groups, each minute, each moment, each hour and each day. Deciding what we want to do is critical.

You will realise that we are not denying the scale of the challenge - we are not saying disagreement is disallowed. In the terms of Edward de Bono, 'black hat' thinking, thinking that allows for doubt and scepticism, is both healthy and helpful. However, critique can overwhelm us. Being out of balance and seeing only the negative and favouring critique can make for noxious work cultures and toxic human relationships. We all know the person who acts a 'mood Hoover' sucking out the positive, the energy, the hope and the fun by the merest amount of their presence when they enter a room.

How we receive and deal with the ideas and suggestion of others in your group or another division or even a family member is crucial. The choice each of us has is simple: which way to flick the 'But/And' switch? Whether to respond to what someone else is saying with one of two words - but or and. If we choose 'And', embracing and building on each others ideas, the multiplying benefit is fantastic. If we choose 'But', hesitating, diverting or diluting, then the scale and pace of change is likely to be diminished.

Diagram 4 shares a simple tool. One that you can print and use. If you find yourself saying ‘yes, but’, make a shift, encourage the other person’s idea, ask them an open question, use their response, work with it.

Diagram 4



This idea of ‘yes, and’ is at the heart of improvised theatre and stand-up comedy. We have all seen comedians where the best laughs are in the way she or he responds to the hecklers. One memorable guy at the Edinburgh Fringe was in a groove with his main heckler when the man in the audience stopped interacting. The banter died and the laughs ran dry. The comedian had a rehearsed response: “OK, I get, I see it; now it’s heckle and hide.”

This concept of ‘yes, and’ is at the centre of the current interest in conversation from leading thinkers like Theodore Zeldin and the fascination about dialogue and ‘flow’ from organisational writers such as William Isaccs. It is impossible to interact well with other people without some sense of rapport, the taking of the other person’s gestures and the giving of something new from yourself. Leading actors and writers like Neil Mullarkey and Roland Allen help those in corporate careers to make full use of these methods.

As I write, there is a lot of media noise about veiled Islamic women. Diagram 5 makes the point that when engaging and interacting with another person, what really matters is the attitude of each party, not any physical barriers. A ‘yes, but’ mindset is far more of a stumbling block than any veil - or hoody or even a disability of some sort.

Diagram 5



We offer the 'But/And' switch as a helpful habit, a useful routine, and powerful discipline. Give this a go. Switch from But to And. Try it out. You will be impressed with the results; probably by the way that other people respond to you. And whilst conversations are much better with two or more 'yes, and' participants, it's still possible to practice this approach when another person is 'yes, but'. Harder, probably a bit frustrating, but still possible.

Living with our eyes open

You are probably buying this argument: that we can be individually and collectively far more successful if we are positive, and that there are practical things we can do to help make this our natural way of living and working. But, you might work in an organisation or live in a family where you fear others will take advantage of your new good nature, where you will be "taken for a ride". You fear you could end up feeling a bit of a fool and wish you hadn't bothered!

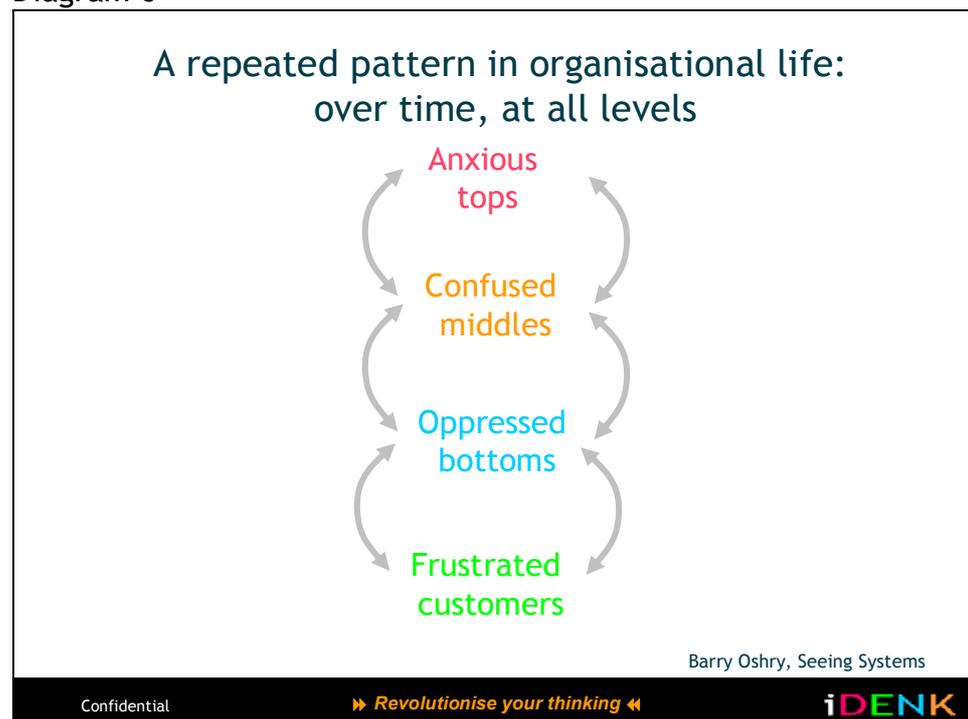
You won't be surprised that, for us, it's all about balance. We know that organisations can be maddening and frightening places to be. Very few are worthy of unswerving commitment. Any organisation has its downsides, its shadows. Learning to deal with these in an adult manner is critical. Each of us should find an organisation worthy of our commitment - a place we can participate and contribute, but with our 'eyes open'

The Italian Communist Antonio Gramsci had a paradoxical phrase when thinking about changing the position of the working class in Europe, a phrase that was both gloomy about the prospect for change whilst retaining stamina and vision: "I have a pessimism of intellect and an optimism of will." For us this sums it up. It is possible to see what is happening around you in a mature and insightful manner, using some of the helpful lenses

from psychodynamics, for example. However, hanging around complaining about all the difficulties is pretty dissatisfying. It is OK to see the downsides, just not to dwell on them too long or in way that is repetitive or stuck. In the film *Groundhog Day*, the character of Phil Connors, played by American actor Bill Murray, is destined to keep reliving the worst day of his life. And whilst fun for viewers, it is not many laughs for him. Moving on in our lives and work matters.

One of the hundreds of frameworks we use at iDENK is from American writer Barry Oshry. From his simulations and studies he identifies a common pattern in organisations. Diagram 6 shares this. This, and many other frameworks, can add insight and aid action.

Diagram 6



Using such frameworks, it is possible to rehearse insights and options for making positive changes, maybe sharing these first with a friend, mentor or coach. In the words of Otto Scharmer from Massachusetts Institute of Technology: ‘see deeply, sense what needs to emerge, go do’.

Note: There are now two possible endings – take either or both. Which do you like?

In ending #1: For workers...

Work. Work! What response does this word arouse? Theories of work cover the ideas that range from the concept of the modern wage slave trapped in the drudgery of call centres to pay for the stretching mortgage right through to a rejection of the whole idea of aiming for a work/life balance as for some people work is fun and the friends made there are the heart of how leisure activities are spent.

Our relationship with work is personal: somewhere to escape to for some; somewhere to escape from for others. At iDENK we believe that if we are

spending a fifth to a quarter of the rest of our lives at work, it is worth thinking about what we can do to ensure that we have the best possible time of it. And we get energy as well as income for the rest of our lives from it.

Thinking about getting the best outcome is good for two reasons: corporate success and personal satisfaction. We are sure no one wants to work in a mediocre team, yet that is what most people endure at work. When performing well in the stock market, clearly adding value to the customer, delighting the citizen or impressing the stakeholder, organisations get a certain swagger. The pride in being part of a vibrant company or innovative organisation is palpable and prized. We believe that the chances of this feeling can be hugely increased with positive thought. More importantly, there are things we can do to help us have satisfying jobs and careers, even when the tone and the success of an organisation leaves something to desired!

Some organisations are not led in ways worthy of the fullest commitment. They are run as hierarchies where those at the top issue commands (demands actually) and those in the middle and bottom suffer. Nonetheless, we believe the best strategy for personal satisfaction and reward is to bring more of your self to work - in an aware way. Knowing your place in the hierarchy (for the majority at the bottom where you can take orders and then criticise management) is easy. But this is essentially corrosive of our character and hopes. Bringing more of who we are to work - more than our hands, but also our heads and hearts - is likely to transform our experience of the office, shop or factory; transform us ourselves; and also probably help transform the workplace itself.

Each person has a choice - to move on to or to stay. Like in a tricky marriage, sometimes staying and working at it can be the best strategy! The sports coach would emphasise modelling the good things in your own or someone else's excellent performance. From the social constructionist, the idea would be to accept that we get what we focus on and talk about. Both of these traditions offer a challenge to the predominant conversations that go on in hierarchical, political and pathological organisations. They challenge ways of thinking and acting; to be positive, in ways that do not open us up to abuse.

Personal fulfilment can come from making that extra effort at work. Effort that is likely to make the working environment work. And it will increase individual skills and personal saleability when seeking that next job.

In ending #2: For bosses too

Everyone has their own patterns of working. In organizational life, these patterns are formed by the DNA of our own personalities, the culture of the place we work, the style of our leaders and the type of work that we do.

Often, the patterns we get into are not helpful; we focus on what we've failed to achieve and what hasn't gone well. People with black hats or defensive pessimists can find it difficult to stretch themselves into new areas and the yellow hat wearing logical positivists can become

disenchanted when their ideas are challenged or not put into practice or when nothing seems to change. So we can all get stuck.

Things are even worse in the absence of good leadership. If people don't have a clear idea of where they are meant to be heading, they will revert even more to their personal patterns of behaviour. For some, that means getting their head down and just focusing on the task in hand; for others, it means flitting from task to task with little sense of whether their activity is adding anything to the organisation. Worst of all in getting stuck is the breakdown in communication. People stop talking to each other; the only flows of information are vertically up through line managers and back down to staff. But for some reason, the informal chats don't happen in the corridor or over lunch. The contact between different teams across the organization only occur as part of formal away days.

How to break these patterns? How do you stimulate the fun and interesting conversations that lead to great new ideas and fresh impetus on getting things done? The starting point is to give yourself and other people you work with a vision of where they are meant to be going. Everyone needs to know what the goal is. The second step is to work out the first few steps to take the team towards that goal. These steps should be powerful but simple; they should involve doing a few things differently to what they do now as this helps break the patterns that hold them back. There's no need to change the world overnight, and it's crazy to think we can. But a few successful steps in the right direction can break the patterns that hold us back.

Above all, people need to feel positive about the situation they are in; that while the world may be a complex and difficult place and that even though their organization as a whole may be a difficult beast to change quickly, at least they can influence their own part of the system. They rediscover a sense of control that they can work with their immediate colleagues to make a difference and feel great about what they can achieve. To this extent, getting a breakthrough in how we work is a bit like turning on the light. With the switch off, you can't see where you're going and the language we use is all about what we can't do and what's difficult. With the light on, we can see where we need to get to and the ways we can get there.

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iDENK?

iDENK is devoted to helping people get great results from their own brilliant thinking. There are two main parts to the firm:

1. a venture arm, investing in new businesses
2. a consulting and capacity building practice helping individuals, teams and organisations sort their own problems and seize the opportunities they have.

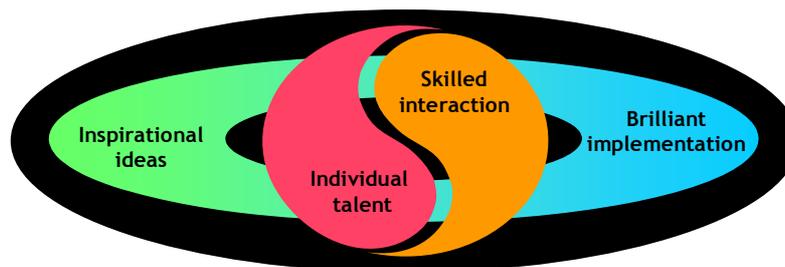
The iDENK method offers support to individuals, teams and organisation. Our 4i model outlines the four critical organisational abilities for getting great things done. These are the thinking skills of thoughtful companies with a passion for action.

There are two core capabilities that when present ensure movement from inspiration to implementation, time after time.

The iDENK 4i framework helps you think about how you deliver today while adapting for tomorrow

The inspiration-implementation cycle

All organisations face the challenge of delivering results today while creating fresh ideas that make them successful in the future



The individual-interaction balance

People need to learn how to unlock their talents through building their own capabilities and improving the quality of how they work together

Think fast, think first

» *Revolutionise your thinking* «

iDENK

The first (and the focus of this series of articles) is individual talent. This is about having knowledgeable people with great attitudes. These colleagues may be found through recruitment of individuals with particular strengths or, more likely, will be developed and encouraged through corporate culture, coaching line leaders and training programmes.

The second capability connects too - for how we interact is crucial. How we talk to each other and what we focus on really matters.

This article gives a flavour of one part of what we do at iDENK to raise awareness and develop skills.

Raising awareness sessions: Memorable interactive talks	Skill and knowledge development: In house and public programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The power of positive thought: bringing our heart and heads to work, with our eyes open” ▪ “Five things to watch our for: insights for the futures” ▪ “Knowledge Management: If we only we knew, what we all know” ▪ “Change management: Getting other people to do things - lessons from dictators, preachers and salesmen (amongst others)” ▪ “Planning: from inspiration to implementation...project and programme management in a chaotic, complex (and virtual) world” ▪ “The first three steps to become your own management consultant” ▪ “From inspiration to implementation: decision making at the speed of sound” ▪ “You are in the thinking business, are you in a Thinking Business?” ▪ “Walking the talk? 5 steps to put consistent values and behaviour at the heart of your business” ▪ “Valuing the difference of diversity: people, perspectives and perfect groups” 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to Structured Thinking: How to outlearn the competition 2. Introduction to Scenario Planning: Learning how to conquer business uncertainty 3. Catalysing the capacity to manage My Beautiful Career: Finding your way in a knowledge world 4. Making Meetings Matter: Fabulous focused facilitation 5. System mapping and understanding 6. How to be a great consultant 7. Powerful presentations: learning the logic and engaging with emotion (emotion and logic in bed together) 8. Thinking Learning Set 9. Marketing and social marketing: maximising profit or public value