



# the human connection

I am a qualified Professional Integral Coach who partners with people to build long-term excellent competence and become more fulfilled in their lives.

Since becoming a full time Integral Coach I have coached leaders of global companies at executive and senior management level in a cross section of functions. Organizations I am, or have done work with are Toyota, British American Tobacco (SA), Microsoft Internationally, Woolworths, @ Home, Standard Bank, and KWV. In addition to coaching individual clients, I also coach teams and facilitate workshops on coaching and leadership practices.

As well as my formal business qualifications, I have completed my training as a Yoga Teacher. I am married and have two young boys. My passions are my work, which I regard as a vocation, spending time with friends and family, reading, ongoing learning, yoga, cooking, and more recently writing.

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## What would it be like if you rediscovered the mystery in life?

I was talking to a friend last week and mentioned that I have been working hard facilitating workshops for 5 days in a row. She asked if that was the reason she hadn't received this fledgling monthly article yet. The answer to that is yes and no. I did do some writing in time to send something out at the beginning of the month, but in my view it wasn't particularly stimulating or thought provoking, and so I resisted the urge to meet what was only a self-imposed deadline. The truth of it is that if I had sent it out it would have been to deliver on a commitment instead of being a piece of writing that was the best of what I could do and the best of who I am.

In the previous article I spoke about doing and being and what it means in life, and this ties in to the question at the top of the page about rediscovering the mystery in life. The reality for most of us is when we are so busy moving through life and coping with day-to-day living,

we tend to be looking right in front of our noses at the obvious and this stops us from looking beyond at the undiscovered and surprising. Take a moment and think about when you are in that busy 'space' and where you place your attention. Are you able to see the people who are important to you - family, friends, and colleagues? What about further than that - the person who attends to you at the petrol station or in a shop, the environment you are in, and any other examples that spring to mind for you. And by seeing, I mean really noticing which means seeing beyond the obvious and perceiving the extra ordinary and, with that, the possibilities that exist within the person, the environment, and the moment.

If you were able to notice in this kind of way, what might happen to and for you? How would you wake up differently every day? What could happen to your relationships? Who would you see that you've never really noticed before? How would you be as a human being? What could you contribute to the world? In essence, what would your legacy become? How would you enjoy living *your* life?

The benefit in answering these questions (and others like them) is it gives us the opportunity to determine how we choose to live our lives in a way that is quite distinct from being passive in the process of living. Also, if we are able to allow more mystery in, we are able to be more flexible and open-ended in our approach to living. The people around us who we thought we knew become a never ending surprise for us to delight in and explore. We start to notice little details that can enrich our lives, like the stranger smiling at us as we walk past, the colour of the leaves on the tree, whether it is summer or spring, and the beauty in each.

So instead of feeling like an actor on a stage going through the lines and the motions, we become participants and observers in life. This, in turn, allows us to perceive people and situations with greater clarity, without overlaying this with too many assumptions or expectations. Even more than this, when faced with life throwing us a curve ball, which can be as trivial as not finding a convenient place to park to as significant as being retrenched at work, we may still lose our sense of equilibrium in the moment but we know it is temporary and we can see a way through.

If this is an appealing path to explore, then knowing how to move forward becomes the next stage that allows us to move beyond awareness, which only takes us so far. Understanding something intellectually and through language is useful as we gain wonderful insights, but it doesn't provide us with sufficient traction to shift in a way that is sustainable over time.

By introducing practices into our lives we can develop new competencies, which bring about change that make us more effective, able and fulfilled. So, if you would like to take the concepts I've offered and work with them beyond awareness the practice below will act as a good starting point.

Until next month – some time....

#### *Over to You*

Before you work with this practice, do you think you have enough time to do what is important to you? I'm hazarding a guess that you've said no, which would definitely be my first response! If so, here is an opportunity to start to understand your real relationship with time and how to use time as your friend and not your enemy. This is the way into the mystery of you, first, and then the world.

Once a day stop what you are doing, move yourself into a comfortable, relaxed position that includes sitting up straight on your chair. Set a timer for three minutes and for that period of time simply be. If you can, close your eyes, and if you can't because of the environment you find yourself in, just soften your gaze and withdraw your attention within. For those three minutes allow yourself to be fully present, compassionate and open to yourself. Notice your thoughts, feelings, and sensations in your body. While going through this experience there is nothing you need to stop or start, and anything that arises in you is to be treated with dignity. At the end of the three minutes, take a few moments to ask yourself the following questions:

*How did I experience time?*

*What did I notice that I haven't noticed before?*

*In what way am I surprising to myself? To others?*

*What can I see or feel now, that I couldn't see or feel before?*

*What new possibilities are open to me?*

Each day, see what is enchanting and new.