

By Sheila Kelly, BA, CPCC

The Wisdom of The Heart

Building a new frontier of leadership

In **psychology**, we often talk about defenses, which as a coach, I define (with apologies to Freud) as walls we build against a truth. The longer we defend against a truth, the thicker the wall becomes and the more weapons we need to justify the wall.

In the corporate world, we need not look far for high-profile examples of such walls – the so-called ‘masculine’ leadership gone awry via lies and deception. One such example is Conrad Black, the Canadian

know that. You hear the tapes yourself. As well, you hear it in the voices of your clients as they struggle against the walls between themselves and their dreams.

Within corporations, workplaces have built a big wall called ‘training and development’ using information as the bricks and mortar. This traditional or ‘masculine’ model of skill development focuses on *doing*, as in “Do these 10 things and you will be an effective leader.” Not that

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business baron whom the American justice system has found guilty of leading a team of executives in stealing money from the shareholders of a public corporation. Black continues to try to convince us that he is, if not innocent, then at least, not guilty.

Black’s hiring of defense lawyers to try to convince us to believe his story is a powerful metaphor for our own inner team of ‘defenders’ – the scripts playing in our heads which tell us lies like, “You’re not good enough, smart enough, talented enough...” for whatever dream you’re dreaming. Other defenders include “you can’t,” “you have to,” and “you should.”

Each of us has the lie machine playing the self-doubt tapes. You

there’s anything wrong with doing. But there is something robotic around the expectation that we simply take in information, process it, and then act in accordance with the training provided.

The traditional training model is recognized as being ineffective. The term ‘drive-by training’ is often used to describe professional development that is random in its efficacy, occasionally hitting the target. Traditional training is a classic reminder of the definition of insanity: “Doing what you’ve always done and expecting a different result.”

Is it any wonder that there is stress and a lack of balance? Heads are exploding with data while hearts, the



keepers of wisdom and knowledge, have been lost in the big, black hole of information. To defend against the truth that we cannot really lose our hearts, we build more walls of information, offer more training and development, or hire another speaker.

As a coach, I implore you, do not fall into the big black hole of being only an information provider, trainer or speaker. Do those things, yes. But don’t *be* just that.

I invite you to say a big YES! to a feminine style of coaching (and leadership) which hears the call of the heart in every client and knows that the heart is the real frontier of leadership, with its own voice, filled with wisdom and clarity, able to cut through the chaos and clutter of information, data, defenses and lies.

Your clients, in and out of corporations, will thank you for helping them listen to their hearts as well as their heads. •

Sheila Kelly, BA, CPCC, is founder of Aegis Coaching and Coaches Canada. She is about to launch “The Big Yes” initiative connecting people with the wisdom and knowledge of the heart. The website, at www.thebigyes.com, is currently under construction.