

Outlined below is a series of de-identified examples that demonstrate some of the outcomes achieved through my work either in one-on-one coaching or my peer group leadership coaching. Some of these examples relate to executives while some relate to more front-line leaders, however all demonstrate a shift in their thinking and practice.

1. I worked with a senior executive at a major Victorian Government agency in his late 50s who had a natural inclination to focus on the technical aspects of the role rather than on leading his people. He did, however, want to become a better leader – his new CEO had clear focus on improving leadership in the organisation and the senior executive himself was also concerned about the quality of the output from his senior staff. I helped him to clarify his underpinning beliefs about when people perform at their best and identify the key behaviours and actions that would develop and improve their performance. In the past he would have typically questioned their competence and motivation, however he began to wonder how he might have been contributing to the problem – not making it clear what high quality looks like; not understanding them as individuals and what ‘makes them tick’; how he assigns tasks; and not disclosing more of himself. As we worked together he found himself excited and energized about playing more of a coaching and mentoring role late in his career – building more personal relationships with his team, giving and receiving feedback on a more regular basis, recognizing staff achievements, showing interest in staff welfare and encouraging new ideas. He observed higher levels of enthusiasm in some of his key staff and is now viewed by those staff as ‘a completely different person, much more relaxed’.
2. I worked with an executive in a major Victorian Government department who was thrust into an Acting Director role at a critical time in negotiating a major intergovernmental agreement with the Federal Government. This was an extremely stressful time for the Executive concerned. My coaching role evolved over the course of 6 months as we worked together where I helped her:
 - Identify and commit to strategies that helped her manage her own wellbeing;
 - Reach a level of acceptance about the situation she had been thrust into so she could focus on personal growth (rather than resentment) during this period; and
 - Work on being true to herself and authentic, rather than trying to be an imitation of the Director she replaced.
3. I worked with an Acting Assistant Director in a central agency to help her think through how she could bring more strategic thinking to her work. Through her exploring her context and my offering of some tools of strategic thinking she was able to identify a handful of practical strategies that she applied to her everyday practice. This enabled her to bring broader thinking and perspective to her own policy work as well as to the work of others for which she was responsible.
4. I worked with a mature woman leading a couple of IT-related teams, including some ‘difficult technicians’ that were remotely located and were often disengaged in team meetings. She made a 180-degree shift over a few months through the coaching and reflection process. She had described herself as a ‘task-focussed fixer’ – the only time she came out of her office was to fix something that was wrong. But she knew something had to change – her confidence was being tested and team performance needed to improve. She realised that she needed to get out of her office and get to know her people better. She made this change quickly – talking to people about what is happening for them, not solely work issues; establishing a wall of gratitude; starting meetings with a discussion of positive achievements. She saw significant changes in the mood of the team and improvements in productivity. One of her key reflections was that “it is interesting to see that through changing ourselves we can also change others”.
5. I worked with a leader of a small team working in a politically sensitive area in local government that was closely monitored and reactive to operational pressures. She was an experienced manager that cared strongly for her staff. For her, caring about people = not overloading them with work and always being available for them. She came to understand, however, this was detrimental to both her (in terms of stress) and the growth and development of her staff. Her moment of insight was re-defining what

caring for her staff meant. She realised that *pushing them* - giving them challenges, growing their skills and experience, holding them accountable – was actually *caring for them*. Or worse, not pushing them = not caring for them. This significant mind-set shift drove her to undertake different behaviours such as setting higher delivery expectations for her staff and allowing herself to not be in the office all the time. She started to see her people rise to the challenge while making her own workload more manageable.

6. I worked with a new, young manager in her 20s responsible for over 50 field staff, including many part-timers and older men - a tough gig for a first-time leader! She reflected that her 'light bulb moment' was when she realised that "my job is actually about supporting the people in my team, not the paperwork or stuff like that. It has been a real mindset shift; a new identity almost." She has now prioritised relationships and people over tasks - for example she now puts her administrative tasks to one side between 4.00 – 5.00pm each day to be 'present and available' when her staff come in from the field and they just want to debrief on their day. Previously she just used to get angry and frustrated about them interrupting her!

