



| courage
and
spark

expand the possible

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The rationale

It can make a real difference to leaders and their organisations, if they are able to deepen their emotional and psychological development through exposure to an intensive personal growth experience. Engaging with deeper personal development work can fundamentally alter the course of people's careers and their wider life relationships.

Behaviours change and leaders grow their capability when their awareness and consciousness is raised. Sustainable change comes about through developing the inner leader in order to become a great outer leader.

There are few programmes of sufficient depth and quality available to leaders where they can really get to grips with who they are, what leadership means to them, and what kind of leader and person they really want to be.

This learning experience equips leaders to become more emotionally and socially intelligent and to understand the importance of nurturing and creating resonant team environments.

They fulfill their own potential, help others to do the same, and form a connection with people that energises, motivates and inspires them to achieve great things. They know how to support themselves and others effectively.

*“Very insightful and enables deep reflection.
A great programme, and I only wish I'd
had this opportunity earlier in my life”.*

Beyond conventional leadership development

Courage and Spark® is a unique, leadership development programme. Since 2010 it has been run in some of the world's major companies all around the globe and with a wide range of national and organisational cultures.

Well established with a strong track-record of success, those who have commissioned it, or been a delegate on it, regard it as one of the premier personal development programmes currently available for organisational leaders and younger, emerging leaders.

No name badges or sitting around an oblong arrangement of tables or listening to lengthy slide presentations describing leadership models, Courage and Spark® is a deep-dive personal exploration process in a workshop environment designed to create connection.

This profound learning experience combines powerful concepts and deep-dive structured exercises which enable participants to connect their leadership to their values and purpose, address significant issues and learn more about their presence, impact on others and next steps in their developmental journey.

Two versions

Senior leaders and emerging talent

There are two versions of Courage and Spark® – an executive development programme for current senior leaders and the other, a tailored design for next-generation leaders.

“Totally absorbing, interesting, thought provoking. A real gift”.

“A completely new way of learning, much more looking at yourself rather than a model or toolkit approach of how to be a great leader”.

The programmes

Current, senior leaders

One of the great challenges, and enjoyments, of organisational leadership is that you need to pay attention to so many important yet disparate things; material and financial, personal and human, tangible and intangible, inner and outer. Overarching this, you also hold the larger context of care – what is increasingly known as holding the space. Against that background, leaders can lose sight of a critically important agenda – the need to also pay attention to themselves.

This learning experience provides senior leaders with...

- A space to slow down and connect with yourself in a deeper way.
- Time to reflect on your leadership story, and what you want the new story to be.
- A place to grow and make important personal breakthroughs.
- An opportunity for those bigger questions and conversations.
- An opportunity to connect with others and get a sense of group and community.
- A time to get some of the help that may still be invisible to you.

“I want to tell you that I “renewed” myself on Courage and Spark”.

“Courage and Spark created a seismic shift in how I understand myself and by extension my relationship with others. It was the deepest and most profound experience of self-learning. The connections I made with myself and with others will live with me forever”.

Accelerated personal development for future leaders

From the organisational standpoint this learning experience integrates into company-wide talent development processes and can also play a significant role in supporting succession planning.

The examined life and the leadership step

- Discover your authentic self by exploring who you are and how you show up – we call this the examined life.
- Find out what's yours – what you really own and who you really want to be.
- Identify when you feel most present, vital and alive.
- Grapple with what leadership means to you.
- Understand leadership as beyond role and as much about a decision of how to live life, how to be.
- Connect your values and purpose to your leadership.
- Understand your signature presence and impact – and the importance of being the change you want to see.

“Starting to talk about these issues is something that I have found very difficult previously. But working in a small group was liberating and it demonstrates how many really good people we have in our organisation”.

Horizontal and vertical development

Horizontal development

Recent interest in horizontal and vertical development has brought attention to the proposition that most management development processes, and learning in general, has been based on the premise that if we equip people with knowledge, new skills, abilities and behaviours, then those will later translate into improved competency and performance. This paradigm is a technical one where problems can be broken down, analysed and fixed so long as we have acquired the necessary technical knowledge to deal with them.

An analogy frequently used to describe horizontal development is the act of pouring water into a glass. As more knowledge, skills and competencies are acquired, the glass fills up. When deficits are identified, the answer is to find new or better ones to put into the glass. People who constantly search for new tools and techniques are effectively on the same mission to fill their glass. From this perspective, excellence in management and leadership, or for that matter, any form of practice, is achieved by filling the glass with the best possible material available.

Given that most education systems and professional development programmes are based on the horizontal paradigm, it is hardly surprising that many people only understand learning and development from this mindset. And it would be absurd to dismiss the importance of knowledge acquisition and proper training to perform proficiently. Business managers need to understand profit and loss accounts, company procedures and good HR practice. Leaders need to understand how to turn around the financial performance of their organisations and enable them to flourish. Core skills, informational content and technical expertise are all required in any professional discipline. Without it people would flounder or worse still, make disastrous mistakes. So, it goes without saying that horizontal learning is necessary. The real question is whether it's always enough – especially in the leadership space.

Common driving forces for vertical development

- 1 Consistently feeling frustrated by situations, dilemmas and challenges.
- 2 Regularly experiencing the limits of your current way of thinking and reacting.
- 3 A strong desire to understand oneself better.
- 4 Wanting to be in touch with one's own emotions and be able to express them with greater ease.
- 5 A sense of not having fulfilled oneself.
- 6 A need to find a deeper sense of purpose.
- 7 A desire to tune into others and be in better contact (connection).
- 8 Feeling stuck.
- 9 In transition with questions that don't go away.
- 10 A feeling of having outgrown a level.

Courage and Spark[®] and vertical development

Intellectual understanding on its own rarely creates the shift. Just as reading about emotional intelligence and understanding the concept doesn't necessarily lead to an Improvement In EQ, reading about developmental theory doesn't transition you to the next level or change your centre of gravity.

To grow a bigger mind usually has to begin with freeing the mind in the first place. Many of us are *captured* in some way or another by a combination of external circumstance, historical experiences which continue to impact in present time, or the story we tell and re-tell about ourselves, our possibilities and the world in general.

Undoubtedly there are times when we have to alter some of those material circumstances of our life to become freed up again. What we may miss, however, is that these exterior changes don't always fundamentally transform our lives. In these circumstances we maybe need to be looking elsewhere – inwards. We come to recognise that the breakthrough we're looking for has to be an interior change.

Courage and Spark[®] has been the vehicle many people have found for addressing that interior change agenda.

Is Courage and Spark[©] vertical or horizontal development, or both?

It's both, though the stronger weighting is towards vertical, experiential learning. Developing the inner leader is a personal journey and requires that. Nonetheless, this learning experience will add to your conceptual understandings with some profound new thinking and expand your relationship network and future support system.

Vertical growth and development programmes of this quality that focus on developing psychological and emotional capital – consciousness, psychological-mindedness, emotional intelligence, self-confidence, hope and optimism, resilience and perspective – are few and far between.

We invite you to consider
stepping into this important,
transformative space.

"It changed the way I think about myself".

Content

the four spaces

1
**Understanding
yourself**
The authenticity space

4
**Your lenses on life –
how you see the world
and make meaning**
The perspective space

2
**Understanding your
impact – behaviours and
emotional connection**
The emotional intelligence space

3
**Healthy
self-regulation**
The personal sustainability space

Transformational learning

Before

"I'm not in the relationship with colleagues that I want to be. I don't share difficult things with them. I process it all on my own and then when I've got it sorted out and feel in control, that's when I reveal what I'm thinking and feeling. This shuts everyone else out and means I don't get any help. People don't think I need any".

"I guess I just see myself as a fixer and I hate to disappoint people. I have a fear of failing and letting people down".

"I fear I'm not as good as the best so I often feel like an imposter."

"I always feel a sense of duty and responsibility – it's up to me to make things happen".

"My work is very important to me but I invest so much in it that I can't detach. I can't switch off. At home they only get what's left of me and I have a habit of retreating and opting out. I guess I see time at home as recovery time from work".

"I believe I'm right too much and close myself off to learning. I need to change this".

After

"You cannot change to someone you're not. I've finally stopped trying to be a person I'm not".

"What I came to see was that my previous strategy of hiding myself could have a worse consequence than taking the risk to show myself. By showing myself I risked losing my job – and I definitely didn't want that. But by not showing myself, I risked losing myself".

"The intensity of the week was huge. I am in such admiration of what you are doing and I want to say that I think you and the whole team are just very special people".

"I'm feeling motivated again with a good energy".

"I feel more freedom of choice, not trapped and captured as I felt before".

"I've realised that I'm not really controlling anything. I thought I was – but it was an illusion".

"In the past I worried too much and was really stressed. I'm a different person now – more accepting of things that have happened in the past".

"I have found that I am much calmer and do still feel a real feeling of having let something pretty big go last week and treasure my feedback which helps me with any moments of self-doubt".

"I will always be indebted to you and what you helped me deal with, it changed my life... Seriously!"

The Alchemy

Transformational learning

The transformative nature of this learning experience lies in the refinement of its design, content and approach, combined with the skill, expertise and experience of the course facilitators. Our unique methodology has been honed over many years of delivering leadership and professional development learning experiences to people all over the world.

The safe, holding space

To begin with, we look to do two things: firstly, to create the space and secondly, invite people to join the space. The space we're talking about is a deeper space – one that can hold people sufficiently for them to open up, dare to be braver and risk vulnerability. It's a space of reflection, self-disclosure, support and challenge. And sometimes it's a silent space.

It's worth keeping in mind that however well briefed people are, many still find it a surprising space – typically because they expect a 'horizontal learning experience' with a succession of inputs and slide presentations from the course 'trainers'. Most corporate training works that way so this is what many people are used to.

The Gestalt underpinnings

Courage and Spark® is based in the Gestalt tradition which is both a theory of growth and a philosophy of life underpinned by a distinctive set of principles, values and assumptions about people and change.

We do not teach Gestalt on the programme – it simply informs the way we work and the way we, as facilitators show up. If you have a particular interest in Gestalt, these are some of the ways in which you will see Gestalt in Action during Courage and Spark®.

A strong emphasis on awareness-raising and deepening of contact

In Gestalt, awareness is seen as the cornerstone of the developmental process. Growth and development occur when people expand what they can see and act on. Awareness is our route into ourselves, others and the relationships between us. It is also the foundation of Emotional Intelligence.

A relational stance

From a Gestalt perspective there are certain relational characteristics that are fundamental: respect, non-judgment, sensitivity, support and courage. Together these help to build connection and provide an environment of safety and authenticity.

The experiential present moment

When you watch a skilled Gestalt practitioner you will see that they are constantly sensing what is latent (present) in the moment that will suggest the next step. You can see this as a focus on the here-and-now and emerging process both at the individual and group levels.

Our facilitation team

Vanessa Rhone

Vanessa is a lead facilitator and a Chartered Organisational Psychologist, Accredited Coach, with a deep background in leadership, team and organisational development.

She has led and managed individuals and teams, as well as consulting extensively to a wide range of organisational clients both in the UK and internationally.

Vanessa's love for life and living it to the fullest translates deeply across her work, and she is committed to help people find and live their purposeful life.

In her own words...

"I've been involved in developing people and organisations for over 25 years and I feel that all I have learnt so far is brought together in delivering this programme.

I have worked on several transformational programmes, but none has gone so directly and deeply to the heart of understanding who you are and none have touched so many people so significantly".

Brigid Garvey

Brigid has a strong corporate background having worked in Talent Management and Organisation Development for the past 25 years. Most recently she worked in Rentokil Initial as their Group Talent Director and over a 10 year period was mainly responsible for the design and delivery of award winning leadership programmes to improve business performance.

Central to her effectiveness is her ability to connect the development agenda with the business agenda so that leaders are better equipped in their broad capabilities to meet the challenges of our time whilst also 'getting a lot done'.

Born in the North East of England, Brigid describes herself as embodying the hallmarks of the culture; 'warm, approachable, down to earth and pragmatic'.

In her own words...

"Courage and Spark embodies the principals and values that shape how I want to work and live: being non-judgemental of others, being sensitive to others needs and contexts, providing support to leaders and facilitating courage and conviction.

I am so excited to be involved in this leading edge work".

Nial O'Reilly

Hailing from the west of Ireland Nial is an experienced core member of the Courage and Spark facilitation team.

His work as an executive coach and leadership trainer dates back 10 years following a twenty-five year banking career, the later years at an executive level.

Highly committed to his own learning and development and endlessly curious Nial has completed a wide range of developmental programmes including a Masters in Executive Coaching, the Harthill leadership profile and a number of psychometrics – to name just a few.

A deeply caring man with a humble, compassionate and witty personality Nial has an unusual ability to connect with people, and is a natural coach in both business and wider life.

In his own words...

"I approach my work from a position of unconditional positive regard and believe that each person has the potential to develop given the correct circumstances. You could say that my work is devoted to supporting people to enhance their performance through improved self-awareness, emotional intelligence and personal development".

Brian Woodall

Brian has placed leadership consulting and group facilitation at the centre of his life for over 30 years. Underpinned by humanistic principles and practices that support experiential learning, he maintains a fundamental belief in people's capacity for learning, growth and development.

Brian's professional journey began as a police officer working as a project team member on the implementation of the Scarman report, in the early 1980's. Through this he realised leadership development begins with personal development and the process of confronting his own fears and self-limiting beliefs was every bit as challenging as the 'heat' experiences of front line policing, leadership or consulting.

From leadership roles in not-for-profit organisations or consulting in firms such as McKinsey and Deloitte, Brian brings a deeply wise approach to the vertical learning space.

In his own words...

"I continue to feel my core purpose lies in working with leaders and professionals, sharing in an ongoing quest for learning, change, growth and renewal".

Workshop formats and other practical details

Courage and Spark® is commissioned by organisations for their senior leaders as an executive development programme and for their younger, emerging leaders and key talent as an accelerated development programme.

There are two formats and we discuss with potential clients which will best suit their needs and contexts:

Option 1

A single workshop over 5-days, starting Monday afternoon and closing Friday afternoon with a pre-workshop diagnostic process.

Option 2

Two 3-day workshops with a four months gap in-between.

We also run an Open Enrolment Programme

- The typical group size is between 12 and 18 and the facilitator/delegate ratio is 1:6.
- Detailed preparation of delegates is built into the process as is post-workshop follow-up.
- A 360 feedback exercise is undertaken before the workshop.
- Ongoing coaching is available post-programme to support delegates sustain their learning and development.
- The choice of venue is very important to create the desired environment for deeper, reflective work and it's best run residentially.

“Thank you so much for the energy and wisdom you put into the Courage and Spark. I believe the whole journey had (and will have) a continuing impact for me, and helped me clarify and pursue my (always elusive) purpose”.

Partnering with clients

Relationship and fit

We count ourselves fortunate to be partnering with a number of outstanding corporate clients where, together, we have built a strong relationship based on trust, openness and transparency.

Clearly this different approach doesn't suit everyone, and chemistry always plays an important part. For these reasons we often have several meetings with a range of internal stakeholders in a Company before any decisions are made about contracting to work.

Tailored programmes

Courage and Spark® is the branded name of the programme although various corporate clients have commissioned tailored versions of it between 2010 and present time; some choosing to give it their own titles such as *Leader in Me*, *Authentic Leadership* and *Personal Leadership*.

Internal capacity building

Most clients also want to build internal capability to deliver the programme in the future and we welcome this. Typically this involves internals sitting in as an observer for a number of programmes and gradually taking on aspects of the facilitation over time. We combine this with a structured programme of trainer training sessions to equip our internal colleagues with the programme content and approach.

“Very skilled facilitators, warm, humble and amazing listeners and readers”.

“I feel re-connected with myself and others again which is a great feeling”.

courage and spark

Courage and Spark® sits in the vertical learning space and derives from a lineage of deep-dive programmes Peter Bluckert has designed and delivered with colleagues over a thirty-year period.

The very first of those, dating back to 1985, was also called Courage and Spark®. Since then, the different iterations have been known as *Unbeaten Tracks* (1989) and *The Lever, the Mirror and the Pond* (mid 1990s).

“A powerful and beautiful programme”

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