

Institute of Coaching: Richard Boyatzis, 03 Masterclass Transcript

- 0:00 Resonant leadership is on the whole more positive and it's more relational; that in fact we used the expression borrowed it from physics in our 2002 book *Primal Leadership* because we wanted to capture something that said the real essence of a great relationship with a leader relationship is an interactive one its' not where there is distance where there's closeness.
- 0:24 As we started to look at it for the 2005 book we really did a conceptual meta-analysis at what are the common experiences. It's based on our own and a lot of others research and we are writing up an *fMRI study on resonant and dissonant leadership experience of 50 year olds with these things to be able to pinpoint what are the neurological processes.
- 0:50 Our contention is that when you are in a resonant relationship with leader or spouse or partner, anybody, you will more likely experience mindfulness, hope, compassion, and at least in western cultures, certain western cultures, playfulness.
- 1:09 To date these are the experiences that we think that link both the two people in a resonant relationship including when one of them may be a in relative leadership position. But these are also four key experiences that the medical researches now starting to show that enable the human body, mind, spirit to rejuvenate itself.
- 1:34 And actually what we are now showing is the only thing that can help ameliorate the ravages of chronic stress, which we are all under especially if you are in responsibility, are these kinds of resonant relationships.
- 1:49 Yet so many things we encounter in life and organizations pull us apart from that. In fact, Annie McKee and I titled the chapter three of the *Resonant Leadership* book, "Dissonance as Default", because we think that basically when a person is trying to do their work and their life in today's conditions the stress gets to you. It's not the acute stress. It's not like "Oh my god, there's a product recall!" It's the annoying stress like the computer doesn't boot up fast; it's the sum total of the every day, day in day out, that drags you down.
- 2:25 And we are now starting to show with some of the research on different approaches to coaching that when you coach somebody toward things they "should" be attending to, so
- 2:39 We gave two thirty-minute coaching sessions – to college sophomores. One to what we call the positive emotional attractor and one to the negative. The positive emotional attractor 30 minutes: Tell me what your life would be like in 10 – 15 years if everything were absolutely perfect and how do your experiences at Case Western Reserve possibly help that.
- 3:00 Negative emotional attractor, which happened the next day or vice versa, was not all that negative, it was very typical. "Tell me about your courses. Are you doing all

- the assignments? Are you able to do the readings? Are you getting enough time from your instructors?"
- 3:15 Not particularly negative things, but in our theory -- they put a person on the defensive they create a sense of obligation.
- 3:24 Five days later fMRI scans, and we have 25 regions of interest in the brain from random effects analysis (which is very conservative analysis) and 114 from a fixed-effects analysis; all but one are showing exactly what we would have expected --that there is stimulation from the positive attractor coaching. Parts of the brain that are associated with cognitive and perceptual openness.
- 3:50 And that in the negative, which wasn't all that negative, it was more like obligation, all associated arousal of parts of the brain that put us in a defensive mode. And when we as an organism are put into a defensive mode, we protect ourselves by closing down. We close down ourselves perceptually, emotionally, and cognitively.
- 4:09 So one thing that we are suggesting is that, for example, in coaching a lot of people feel it's very important to give people data. "*I want to show you the real thing of how you're coming across.*" I was in the consulting field, on and off, since the late '60s and one of the things people did, even in the late '60s, was to give 360 feedback or assessment centers.
- 4:36 And it kind of became known in the field as a "data dump and run." Because very often you'd spend several days getting all this assessment, and then you'd come in for a session. The person slaps the data down in front of you and what do you and the person do? Right away you go to the gaps. And the assumption is that if we work on the gaps we'll be more efficient in helping you proceed.
- 4:52 Well our data is now confirming what we suspect-- that as soon as you focus on the data people are socialized to protect themselves so they look for the gaps. But as soon as they look for the gaps, they start to close down. So you are actually then coaching people into a state of cognitive impairment.
- 5:13 And yet, there are entire multi billion \$ parts of the coaching industry that are focused on this issue of give people the data and help them work on their weaknesses. And our contention is while that is an important part of the process, if you do that first you'll never get to someone considering the possibilities. You'll never get to sustainable effect. I mean, it's very similar and overlaps, to some extent, with what *Barbara Fredrickson has done, with other things that Adeci has done, certainly, Bob Kegan, but we actually think that what we're doing is making it a little more complex, that's something that professor's are supposed to do, make things more complicated (smiles).
- 5:56 In the process we're integrating the psycho-physiological states with the emotional and behavioral.