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Thinking as One Key to Organization Health - An Interview with de Bono Master Trainer, Lynda Curtin

Recently Natalie Jenkins, Vice President & Director of Sales for de Bono Consulting--the number one distributor for de Bono Thinking Systems training materials, interviewed Lynda Curtin, one of only 37 de Bono Master Trainers worldwide and the product development manager on the highly acclaimed Focus on Facilitation workshop, regarding her upcoming involvement with the Health Work & Wellness Conference, Thinking Organization's Succeed!

[The Health Work & Wellness Conference](#) was established in 1997 to bring together a community of like-minded individuals interested in creating positive, healthy change in their organizations.

Lynda, your keynote “Power-Up Your Organization’s Thinking” is opening the Health Work & Wellness Conference September 30th in Vancouver, Canada. One does not normally make the connection between Thinking and Health Work & Wellness, what can you tell us about the connection?

Natalie, I was thrilled when Deb Connors, President of Health Work & Wellness contacted me to discuss keynoting this conference. She set the theme of the conference to be "Thinking Organizations SUCCEED!" As de Bono practitioners this is our main focus--equipping people to become excellent lifelong thinkers. Organizations are made of people. People think. What could be more rewarding than to work with a group of people emphasizing

thinking quality as a working concept for organizational health?

I see that you are also conducting a breakout session titled “Strengthen Your Innovation Instinct with Six Thinking Hats®” on October 1st. Why do you feel it is important to learn new tools that promote effective thinking skill development like the Six Thinking Hats for organizational health?

Healthy organizations depend upon the ability of their employees to be effective thinkers. This means employees are able to think broadly, clearly, thoroughly, creatively, and critically about any challenge they are faced with. It means employees are able to suspend their biases and explore each challenge with an open-mind before deciding on a solution or course of action. It means they are not locked into one way of doing things. It means they are willing to listen to and include the thinking of others not just their own thinking.

[de Bono's Six Thinking Hats](#) is one thinking tool that encourages effective thinking. It's been around for 25 years. I suppose this classifies it as a new tool in the area of leadership and management development. As time moves forward we learn what we didn't know and this often leads to the development of new tools and the improvement of old tools. If we aren't learning new tools how do we expect to continue to be successful and satisfied?

What do you say to people that say they already know how to think?

Natalie, it's interesting--no one has ever confessed that to me. But, if they did, I would likely ask them: "How do you know?" "Where did you learn to think?" "What thinking tools do you use?"

Two of your de Bono colleagues are presenting case studies at the conference. Michael Campbell is presenting Optimal Decision Making With Six Value Medals and Stuart Morgan Symmetrical Thinking: Achieving Innovative Collaboration Through Maps, Models and Stories. What do you find most exciting about these particular case studies?

I am particularly excited about Michael Campbell's case study application of the Six Value Medals tool. Searching for value is a huge challenge in most organizations today--and finding new value that no one else is leveraging is one of the key factors in the search for value--competitive edge.

Everyone is asking, "What's the value?" It's such a big question and it's vague. It can be difficult to answer. de Bono's value screen with the Six Value Medals tool is enormously helpful in directing thinking attention to help find value from a variety of angles.

Stuart Morgan is doing great work in industrial design. I am very interested to learn more about how he has integrated Focus on Facilitation and Six Thinking Hats into his overall process. I think this is one of the strengths of [de Bono Thinking System tools](#). They easily compliment and strengthen current processes and approaches. His team won an innovation 2009 award which I am sure was very satisfying for them.

Lynda, you have been involved in teaching and applying thinking skills to business since 1992, which makes you a real pioneer in the innovation skills arena. What are the biggest changes you have seen over the years regarding innovation

in business, and where do you see it heading in the future?

When I started out in 1992 businesses, for the most part, weren't focusing on creativity and innovation as a key driver of business success. There was a huge emphasis on Quality. Well, as de Bono practitioners we knew that Quality was impossible without creativity and innovation. Most businesses have now caught up with this thinking. There is a tremendous focus on innovation today for a wide variety of reasons. The challenge in many companies continues to be the "how." How do we become more innovative? The intention is there. The tools are lacking. So, this is a big change. de Bono Thinking Systems methods certainly help move innovation along.

In the future I think we will see a shift to Robust Thinking which encompasses all aspects of thinking, not just critical and creative thinking. Deb Connors has recognized the need to explore, learn about, and discuss this shift with her conference focus on organization health requiring effective thinkers--Thinking Organizations SUCCEED!

Since 1994: The Opportunity Thinker/de Bono For Business has been a thriving member of de Bono Thinking Systems, an Edward de Bono organization. To learn more about any of de Bono Thinking Systems methods go to www.deBonoForBusiness.com or www.deBonoForSchools.com