



Under the Prairie Sky

Issue #1

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What is Coaching?

The ICF defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.

Getting coached by Prairie Sky Executive Coaching you won't need to leave your office or pay for travel as all your coaching will be done over the telephone.

Would you like some support as you lead your organization through difficult times.

I will listen, listen some more and together we will co-create pathways to solutions and new opportunities.

If you are unsure if Coaching is right for you or your organization, you can contact Gail at gail@prairieskyexecutivecoaching.com



As many of you know I relocated several years ago from Calgary Alberta to rural Montana. I left my busy career as a CEO of a non-profit organization for the country life. After a couple of years of reading, walking and contemplating my future, I am now embarking on a new (and not nearly so busy) career. I have become a certified Life Coach and am coaching women who lead organizations in their executive and personal lives.

As part of my new journey, I am continuing to learn and explore and would like to pass on to you some of the things that I am finding exciting. I have decided to start an e-zine. If you do not wish to receive these musings from time to time please email alison@prairieskyexecutivecoaching.com as I have no desire to fill up your computer with more stuff.

I am going to start with one of my favourite things from the last year and that is Otto Scharmer's new book. Theory U "Leading from the Future as it emerges." "Open Mind Open Heart, Open Will". Theory U sounds very technical, and it is, but for our purposes there are some gems that I believe bring a new and completely different perspective to the idea of leadership.

Over the next few months I will attempt to present to you some of the concepts outlined by Dr. Scharmer who is a senior lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the founding chair of ELIAS (Emerging Leaders Across Sectors). Peter Senge works with Dr. Scharmer and provides the foreword to the book.

Now after all the boring comes what I think is exciting. First of all leading from the future is an exciting concept and then for me is the emphasis put on **intention** and **attention**. **(successful leadership depends on the quality of attention and intention that the leader brings to any situation. Two leaders in the same circumstances doing the same thing can bring about completely different outcomes depending on the inner place from which each operates).**

For me the important words are, attention, intention and "depending on the inner place".

These are not words that I have heard often in all of my education about leadership but they make perfect sense to me. The question becomes how do we use our intention, pay attention and come from the right inner place to be good leaders in our lives and in our organizations?

Dr. Scharmer says it starts by listening differently. We need to slow down to understand the structural habits of attention used in our organizations. Learning to recognize the habits in a particular culture require a particular kind of listening. He outlines 4 types of listening

1. Downloading
2. Factual
3. Empathic
4. Generative

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I find the downloading interesting because it takes me to what we do on our computers everyday and we pay little attention while it is going on. Down loading as described by Scharmer is when you think to yourself I know this already, I have heard this one hundred times, I know what you are going to say so I have my answer ready and can think of something else until you are done. We all know what it feels like when someone is downloading our information instead of listening. We feel devalued and often go away frustrated knowing we will have to try again because (he) or (she) didn't really hear what I had to say. Next time I will say it louder or differently with the hope, but not the expectation of being heard.

The listener is listening by reconfirming habitual judgments. "This presentation is only confirming what I already know."

If the leader (board member, colleague, supervisor, funding partner) is downloading and not really hearing what do you think their intention is when you speak. Do they really intend to hear you? What are they really paying attention to?

How would it be different if the leader of the organization really heard and understood?

If you are that leader how are you listening and what is your intention when you agree to listen?

In my next installment I will outline the other ways of listening and my understanding of the importance of listening as part of being a leader from the future.

Please let me know what you think. This is my first e-zine. Is it too much, too complicated or on track?

I will be really interested in your thoughts and if you have ideas of what I should be reading and listening to just let me know.

You can find information on Otto Scharmer and Theory U at www.ottoscharmer.com or purchase the book at amazon.com

I am only in business to make you a better leader.

Choosing joy for each of you on your path,

Gail