

# thinking-it-through.com

## IAN'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2006



A Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year to all

## Living in Organizations A guide to having fun at work

**This is a new style monthly newsletter that I am sending to a wider range of people who may be interested in the developing ideas of thinking-it-through.com**

### **New on the website**

New on the website are how to subscribe to this newsletter and some updated details about booking sessions with me.

Take a look.

### **From the November monthly meeting**

Only a few of us at the November meeting but a lively discussion on why it is that we often get irritated when our organisation behaves in a manifestly predictable way. For example, when a company that never pays me on time, and almost certainly never will, doesn't pay me on time yet again, why do I bother getting irritated? What belief do I have that's driving this? Many different beliefs for all of us it turns out. But I can't help feeling that it's a bit like getting irritated with the sun for coming up each day.

Next time this happens to you, think about why you allow yourself to get irritated. What's this telling you? Do you want to change this?

I've been thinking (there's a surprise) about how to develop my ideas about living in organizations. So, I've decided to write a book about it. My intention is that it should be a kind of self help manual.

I'm also asking for support in developing the ideas in it! So, on the second page of this

newsletter you will find the first draft of an introductory chapter. Comments on this are welcome.

One of the things I'm really interested in is identifying the objections to the idea that you can have fun at work.

Examples I'm working

with are Living in Dilbert's World; Having Fun and Making People Redundant are you mad?

Other 'buts' would be appreciated.

For those wanting theory they'll be a chapter at the end.

## December Monthly Meeting: 13 December 2006

The next monthly meeting is on Wednesday 13 December at the Harewood Arms, Nr Leeds. Details are on the web site.

J M Barrie once said, "Nothing is really work unless you'd rather be doing something else."

### **Looking forward to 2007**

I'm working on exercises that will help people to come to see what gives them energy at work. The idea is that we can all use such tools to help us get personal alignment at work. We can try these at the monthly meetings and they'll also be in this newsletter.

I'm also keen to get ideas from you as to things you'd like to see discussed and developed. Let me know.

Therefore, as it's that time of year, the topic for the December meeting will be [What does it mean to have fun at work?](#)

Come along if you can.

## LIVING IN ORGANISATIONS: FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING

*A shocking 95% of managers find life at work stressful, and 28% have taken time off work as a direct result, says a survey by SkillSoft. September 2006*

### A guide to having fun at work

Mark Twain said:

What work I have done I have done because it has been play. If it had been work I shouldn't have done it. Who was it who said, "Blessed is the man who has found his work"? Whoever it was he had the right idea in his mind.

I think we'd all agree that if your work is play then you never do a day's work in your life.

The way that most of us respond to that thought is that it's OK for those who do find their work to be play, that's just not how it is with us!

To make matters more extraordinary, Noel Coward said that, "**Work** is more fun than **fun**."!!!

Were these people just fortunate? Were they on something? Or were they onto something?

Even though work patterns are changing quickly, most people in the developed world and increasing numbers in the developing world spend most of their lives working in what Weber described as hierarchical bureaucratic organisations. And we have been living with such organisations for over 100 years. But we have yet to learn to live in them in ways that most people find satisfactory – let alone fun.

Why is it that our lives in organisations are really no better than they were all those years ago. Yes, physical conditions are better, hours shorter and holidays longer (for some). Yes, productivity and innovation have delivered previously unimaginable benefits. Yes, top managers know they have to pay attention to culture. But somehow stress in managers is now almost universal.

*A shocking 95% of managers find life at work stressful, and 28% have taken time off work as a direct result, says a survey by SkillSoft. September 2006*

And there are plenty of organisations themselves set up to deal with this problem. But either they're not very successful, or the problem is getting worse and they are faced with an overwhelming incoming tide of stress.

Weber thought this inevitable, writing that these goal oriented bureaucracies would end in the "polar night of icy darkness".

So here we have it. In one corner people proposing that work can be fun. Admittedly the two I have quoted are extraordinary and creative people who didn't work in organisations. But they're by no means alone. (Non-literary types just don't get what they say in Dictionaries of Quotations!) In the other corner is the experience of many people that to mention 'fun' and 'work' in the same sentence is to court ridicule. Also in this corner is Weber who described the nature of these organisations in 1922.

It's not my intention in this book to give an account of how it came to be like this.

This book is for those who aren't having fun at work but want to.

Yes, this is another of those books that says it can all be not just different but staggeringly better for us all.

And it's another of those books where if you're happy with how things are now, it's probably not your time to engage with what this book is about.

I make the, to some, staggering claim that we can have fun while at work. And while I agree that companies and public service organisations have huge responsibilities to make work places congenial places to be, that's not the important story.

The important story is that each of us has our own work to do to make sense of our lives at work and that fun can be the outcome.

If you've got this far the chances are you're not having fun at work.

Read on, because here's how...

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