

Diving Into Darkness

**A Journey Exploring the Empowerment Gained from
Embracing Darkness**

**Lynn Cox
March 2014**



**“Photo: Lynn Cox in
Singapore”**

Funded by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust

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Each Dialogue in the Dark franchise kindly gave me the time and expertise which enabled me to learn so much about how they work in the dark and how the emphasis of each place influences the offerings to their clients/audiences. I can't possibly mention everyone that assisted here but I'll highlight some of the key supporters and interviewees who assisted whilst they were still fulfilling busy business schedules:

- Glen Ng, General Manager, Dialogue in the Dark, Singapore
- Antony Pang, General Manager, Dialogue in the Dark, HK
- Shiyin Cai, Founder and CEO of Dialogue in the Dark Social Enterprise, China
- Yuka Uchida, Guide, Dialogue in the Dark, Japan
- Chanida Sirisub (Belle), Science Educator, Dialogue in the Dark, Thailand
- Stevens Chan, Founder, Dialogue in the Dark, Malaysia
- Sudha Krishnan, Co-founder, Dialogue in the Dark, Hyderabad, India

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I must also give a huge thanks to Lynn Lee co-founder of Awfully Chocolate for giving me an insight into business practice in Singapore, understanding on how to follow a dream with committed associates and also providing the best chocolate cake I have ever tasted.

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Finally, I would like to thank my partner David who escorted me on the first research trip. He came to my rescue when I couldn't find someone who wanted to escort me for a month abroad, without his assistance I couldn't have fulfilled such a busy schedule. Also, the insights of my two girls, who came along on the first research trip, was a treat as I saw/listened through the eyes/ears of children which was a rare privilege too.

Lynn Cox, March 2014

Introduction

The Diving into Darkness project is a diverse and many faceted one, with the encompassing theme of darkness and what we can learn from it. The project includes a variety of different research subjects which range from the absurd to the purely academic. Aspects of which are designed to intrigue audiences from widely different backgrounds.

The Research trip made through the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust (WCMT) mainly covers the topics of professional development, artistic practice, nature, culture and even the ridiculous.

Other aspects of the research, which haven't been specifically explored during the research trips include cinematography, psychology, pre-history, science and literature.

Background

When I was 18 and losing my sight at a rapid rate, I told myself that I would rather die than go completely blind. A few decades later and I wonder how this idea ever made sense to me. You are only blind if you let your imagination and visualisation die, and I've never let that happen.

Being visually impaired has been a privilege for me. I've learnt to recognise the size of a room by the echo, learnt not to worry if I've just missed the bus which I couldn't see waiting at the stop, I can still mentally picture any scene and not worry if I have some details wrong, and I can definitely smell out any cuisine of food from 3 metres away.

So why do sighted people hate the idea of blindness - or as they naively believe darkness? The definition of Dark doesn't just mean without light, or much light, but also as the additional meanings of gloomy, concealed or secretive, stemming from evil characteristics or forces (sinister), without knowledge or culture (ignorant), sullen or threatening, and difficult to understand (obscure). None of these additional meanings are positive; all have become synonymous to fear, evil and death.

However, these idioms for darkness have not just miraculously manifested themselves from nowhere. The origins relating to the fear of darkness go right back to prehistory when anything uncertain could be considered as a threat to survival and had to be appeased (one of the original forces creating religion; good and evil). Over the millennia, these notions of good and evil were adopted by all religions, therefore, reinforcing our negative idea of darkness.

Our cultural references have also been filtered through the adverse imagery of darkness. In western culture authors such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Conrad, Tolkien and Golding varyingly dwell on notions of Satan, darkness and evil.

In addition, these emotionally in-built fears of darkness are heightened by our post-enlightenment thrill produced from anything gothic. My personal favourites date from 'The Castle of Otranto' (1764), through to the classics of 'Frankenstein' (1818) and 'Dracula' (1897) through to the more modern cult horror Film series such as 'Halloween', 'Friday 13' and 'Nightmare on Elm Street'.

Therefore, it is no surprise that our natural psychological response to darkness is highly emotional with cerebral fears that scare us on a conscious and unconscious level.

However, I have discovered that darkness can be utilised as a positive element to enable people to get out of their comfort zones and experience events and activities anew. Perhaps, darkness can even acquaint people with an aspect of themselves that they didn't realise existed.

Audience for the Research

Due to the Diving into Darkness project being so eclectic, I have a number of different audiences that are interested in different aspects of the research. These include:

- Coaches and Trainers – who can utilise the CPD elements of the coaching or training in the dark to incorporate my sessions into their own service as an enlightenment tool.
- Academic Institutes – who want overall research on darkness (this may be limited to certain fields but I can imagine disability studies, art, psychology and cultural studies could utilise the research).
- Seminars, Symposiums and Conferences – again this could cover a number of fields including all of those audience areas mentioned above.
- Disabled People – who can see that such a trip is feasible with a disability.
- Individuals working with disabled people – helping them to understand potential rather than limitations.

Research Aims

My own Vision for the Power of Darkness is to introduce exhibitions, showcases, coaching, co-coaching and professional development training packages in totally dark rooms to the UK arts and commercial sectors.

I have a number of aims that I've identified that will help me reach my ultimate Vision. Some of these aims dovetail into the WCMT Fellowship particularly well. Below are the overall aims including those undertaken through the WCMT research trips:

- To create a permanent exhibition space/training room in London which is in total darkness. This dark space will have the flexibility to exhibit artworks from other nations/cultures and create full environments with scents, tastes, objects and temperature to match the original country.
- To employ other visually impaired people in the exhibition/training room, as visually impaired people aren't worried about the dark and can show everyone else how to relax and enjoy the experience.
- To write a book about the different aspects of darkness including prehistoric perspectives, cultural influences, gothic literature, cinematography and culinary topics.
- To produce a set of audio artworks promoting darkness from different cultural/national perspectives.

- Promotional materials for the exhibitions in the dark in audio formats which again are from different cultural/national perspectives.
- To have a radio presence (one or two longer half hour programmes on aspects of the project) ideally on Resonance FM (back up is Insight Radio).
- To have paid engagements at seminars, conferences and symposiums on different aspects of darkness (such as coaching in darkness, training, goal setting) and showcases.
- To be running, in temporary venues, training, coaching, exhibitions, events in total darkness by autumn 2014 (prototype).
- To have a series of blogs for myself and Shape, detailing the evolution of the project, including the research trips.



“Photo: Lynn Cox at Dialogue in the Dark HK”

Research Itinerary

The WCMT Fellowship allowed me to travel to Asia to undertake some of the Diving into Darkness research. Over two trips of a month and 10 days respectively I visited seven countries and numerous venues/sights in each. (Please see Appendix III for a detailed list of the itinerary, Appendix III for a list of associates and venues I visited and Appendix V for photographs from the research trips).

Previously, I had travelled under my own finances to Frankfurt to do a test exploration of one of the Dialogue in the Dark (DID) environmental exhibitions (please see appendix II for background information on DID SE). This helped me to structure the interview questions, and develop how to document the environments in the dark.

I savoured a myriad of experiences whilst travelling: from taking a bath in dark ale to having 200,000 bats and other creatures sharing The Dark Cave with me; from International singers performing at the Concert in the Dark to the opulent nightscape of Shanghai with its dazzling moveable building light displays; and from eating the best dark chocolate cake in the world to creeping around a traditional Japanese scary haunted house.

I also ran some Clean Coaching Creative sessions in the Dark (please see Appendix VI). The reasoning behind offering the creative coaching was two-fold. Firstly I wanted to see if different cultures would understand and embrace the creative coaching in the dark. Secondly, I wanted to thank the venues that had kindly hosted me and given me tours, interviews and far more kindness than I had ever anticipated.

Below are two tables that briefly document the dark activities that I undertook whilst on the WCMT financed part of the research:

Research Trip 1

Date	City/Country	Main Dark Activities
03/08/13 07/08/13	Singapore	Night Safari Night exploration of city Awfully Chocolate (interview) Dialogue in the Dark, Singapore
07/08/13 13/08/13	Hong Kong	Dialogue in the Dark, HK (interview) Night exploration of city (including The Peak) Hong Kong Disneyland Resort Sense of Touch Spa (dark ale bath) Concert in the Dark Temple Street Night Market
13/08/13 17/08/13	Shanghai, China	Dialogue in the Dark, China Night exploration of city River Cruise at night
17/08/13 24/08/13	Tokyo & Osaka, Japan	Tokyo Disneyland Resort Hana Yashiki, amusement park Dialogue in the Dark, Japan Night exploration of Osaka
24/08/13 29/08/13	Bangkok, Thailand	Mansion 7 Dialogue in the Dark, Bangkok
29/08/13	Kuala	Dining in the Dark, KL

31/08/13	Lumpur, Malaysia	Dialogue in the Dark, Malaysia Night exploration of city The Dark Caves
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Research Trip 2

Date	City/Country	Main Dark Activities
20/10/13 22/10/13	Hyderabad, India	Dialogue in the dark, Hyderabad
22/10/13 31/10/13	Trivandrum, India	Dialogue in the Dark International Conference Empowerment Programme at Kanthari



“Photo: Lynn Cox at Dialogue in the Dark, Tokyo”

Research Conclusions

I have been able to gain a number of research results and deeper understanding of my Diving into Darkness Project from my WCMT Fellowship. I've also gained lots of information that can be used for developing my goals. These include:

- I have already developed a Creative Coaching in the Dark session, which I have openly distributed.
- The Complexity of developing a dark space in London and the operational skills to run such a venue. Ideally, I would like to develop my offering in association with Dialogue in the Dark, if they get a London franchise, but I'm aware that this arrangement needs to be mutually beneficial.
- A clearer understanding of how to produce complex environments for artistic exhibition spaces in the dark to represent other countries.
- How to use audio recordings of cultural, national, psychological and historic perspectives of darkness – which can be used for artistic exhibition space, blogs, podcasts, the book, etc – they can be used in their own right as artworks or for promotional materials.
- How to create new exciting dark exhibition/training opportunities for children and professionals to discover different perspectives, senses and abilities.
- How to develop employment for visually impaired people in the dark exhibition/space. I'm painfully aware from experience how hard it is to get work as a blind person.

- How to design the Diving into Darkness book about positive darkness, which is intended to be fun with national references and eclectic topics.
- How I can use social media to distribute my messages about darkness, even though most social media options are partially inaccessible.

The research has just confirmed my premise is that by embracing power of darkness, it allows us all to overcome some of our conscious and unconscious, *bête noir*'s and to give them a big cuddle! Releasing us to adapt and adopt change within our lives as the norm, not the exception.

Dissemination

I've been disseminating the Diving into Darkness project and its research from spring last year and I'll be continuing to do this into the future (please see Appendix VIII for a list of past and future dissemination opportunities).

The main dissemination routes are:

- Creative Coaching in the Dark Session, which has been distributed to Dialogue in the Dark venues and other relevant organisations (see Appendix VI).
- I've openly discussed the ramifications of undertaking the WCMT Fellowship with a disability (please see Appendix IX).
- I've produced blogs for Shape, a disability arts organisation. These weren't so successful due to my work commitment during the research trips, illness and inaccessibility of the blogging platform.
- Production of the audio podcasts ready for distribution. Again, I hoped to distribute these as I undertook the research trips but my workload and relative inexperience with editing slowed up the production until summer 2014.
- Appearances on radio stations. I've already broadcast twice on Mushroom FM (an International internet radio station) and I've got contacts with Insight Radio (a UK based internet radio station for visually impaired people) and Resonance FM (an arts based London and internet radio station).

- Creative Coaching in the Dark sessions for Coaches is to be facilitated in early summer 2014 in London.
- An application for funding for a Showcase of visually impaired artistic and musical talent to be held in autumn/winter 2014.
- Production of the Diving into Darkness book to be published in 2015.
- I've already given a few presentations, both live and on DVD, concerning the Diving into Darkness research. I also have further forthcoming presentations booked and I'm actively looking out for other ones too.



“Photo: Lynn Cox at Dialogue in the Dark, Bangkok”

Appendix I

About Lynn Cox

After successfully completing a degree in Mathematics and Computing, I decided that I would endeavour to pursue a career in the arts, where my passion lies. Subsequently I obtained both a BA and MA in Fine Art.

Over the last two decades I have immersed myself within all art disciplines including theatre, music, dance, visual and performing arts. This included serving as Chair of Extant – a visually impaired led physical theatre company - and Vice-Chair of The Audio Description Association.

I am also an established freelance Disability/Visual Equality Trainer, who has been working since 2003 with public and third sector organisations. I have worked with major disability and arts organisations including Tate Modern, The Ikon Gallery, Shape, the Serpentine Gallery and the Ambassador Theatre Group. During this time I have created a number of fun interactive training courses including Describing & Touching objects with visually impaired visitors.

Since 2006 I have been working as a mentor and Creative Life Coach for a number of organisations including Shape, Drake Music, It's All Art Related and DADA South. During this period I have specialised in assisting leaders (CEO's and Directors), managers and artists working in all disciplines to fulfil their potential.

I'm a Member of the Association of Coaches (MAC). I have also obtained a coaching accreditation through the Cultural Leadership Programme. I'm also an Action Learning Set Facilitator for both Face to Face and Virtual sessions.

Ever since 1994 I've been playing about with the positive effects of darkness; trying to dispel the myth of darkness being a negative and evil force that is to be avoided. I'm very interested in delving into the notions that a lack of a sense can generate emotional and physical reactions, which enable others to discover their senses and perceptions anew, or it opens their psyche to new possibilities.

This recurring theme of 'The Power of Darkness' is becoming more and more the basis for my future artistic and coaching/training explorations, as I'm creating total emersion in dark spaces as the basis for the multi-sensory artworks and happenings and CPD opportunities.

Appendix II

Dialogue in the Dark Social Enterprise

About

Dialogue in the Dark is a brand of Dialogue Social Enterprise. They support organisations worldwide with the implementation of Dialogue in the Dark exhibitions based on a social franchising system.

Additionally, they offer business workshops in total darkness. Guided through a set of innovative and powerful activities, teams experience a reinforcing of their collaborative mind-set and emotional intelligence.

Both concepts, exhibitions and business workshops, aim at provoking a change of perspective for the participants. Both concepts provide work for blind and differently-abled people on a worldwide scale.

Founder

While working for a radio station, Andreas Heinecke, the founder of Dialogue in the Dark was assigned to organize a job for a 28 years old journalist, who had lost his eyesight in a car accident. Initially confronted with awkward feelings, Andreas started to realize that his pity was misplaced. Being blind is another form of life and contains lots of capabilities. To his surprise it was the blind colleague who showed him how to cope with fundamental changes in life, forcing him to question what makes a truly valuable life. The way was paved to a concept of overcoming barriers and promoting exchange between blind and seeing people.

Some Statistics

Dialogue in the Dark was founded in 1988 and celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2013. During that time Dialogue in the Dark exhibits, workshops, and special events have been:

- Held in over 170 cities
- In 38 countries around the world
- With more than 7.5 million people who have participated
- And over 7000 blind trainers employed

NB: Notes for this section have been taken from www.dialogue-in-the-dark.com & www.dialogue-in-the-dark.org.cn

Appendix III

Detailed Itinerary

Research Trip 1

Date	City/ Country	Dark Activities
Friday 02/08/13	London, UK	Travelling
Saturday 03/08/13	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Singapore	Travelling
Sunday 04/08/13	Singapore	Night Safari
Monday 05/08/13	Singapore	Writing notes Night exploration of city
Tuesday 06/08/13	Singapore	Interview with Lynn Lee, Co-Founder, Awfully Chocolate Exhibition Tour, coaching in the dark workshop & interviews with staff of Dialogue in the Dark, Singapore Night exploration of city
Wednesday 07/08/13	Hong Kong	Travelling Writing notes
Thursday 08/08/13	Hong Kong	Interview with Antony Pang, General Manager, Dialogue in the Dark, HK Night exploration of the city (including The Peak)
Friday 09/08/13	Hong Kong	HK Disneyland Resort (dark rides/entertainment)
Saturday 10/08/13	Hong Kong	Sense of Touch Spa (dark ale bath) Exploration of Hong Kong at night
Sunday 11/08/13	Hong Kong	Concert in the Dark Temple Street Night Market

Date	City/Country	Dark Activities
Monday 12/08/13	Hong Kong	HK Disneyland Resort (dark rides/entertainment)
Tuesday 13/08/13	Shanghai, China	Travelling Writing notes
Wednesday 14/08/13	Shanghai, China	Writing notes Night exploration of Shanghai
Thursday 15/08/13	Shanghai, China	Writing notes River Cruise at night
Friday 16/08/13	Shanghai, China	Coaching in the dark workshop at Dialogue in the Dark, Shanghai Exploration of night markets
Saturday 17/08/13	Tokyo, Japan	Travelling Writing notes
Sunday 18/08/13	Tokyo, Japan	Tokyo Disneyland Resort (dark rides/entertainment)
Monday 19/08/13	Tokyo, Japan	Tokyo Disneyland Resort (dark rides/entertainment)
Tuesday 20/08/13	Tokyo, Japan	Tokyo Disneyland Resort (dark rides/entertainment)
Wednesday 21/08/13	Tokyo, Japan	Tokyo Disneyland Resort (dark rides/entertainment)
Thursday 22/08/13	Tokyo, Japan	Exhibition Tour and interview with staff at Dialogue in the Dark, Tokyo Writing notes
Friday 23/08/13	Tokyo & Osaka, Japan	Hana Yashiki (Asakusa, Tokyo) amusement park with traditional haunted house Travelling Writing notes Night exploration of Osaka
Saturday 24/08/13	Bangkok, Thailand	Travelling Writing notes
Sunday 25/08/13	Bangkok, Thailand	Writing notes
Monday 26/08/13	Bangkok, Thailand	Writing notes
Tuesday 27/08/13	Bangkok, Thailand	Writing notes

Date	City/Country	Dark Activities
Wednesday 28/08/13	Bangkok, Thailand	Exhibition tour, Coaching in the Dark workshop & interview with staff at Dialogue in the Dark, Bangkok Mansion 7 (haunted house shopping mall/restaurant)
Thursday 29/08/13	Kuala Lumpur Malaysia	Travelling Writing notes Dinner in the Dark
Friday 30/08/13	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Interview with staff at Dialogue in the Dark, Malaysia Night exploration of KL
Saturday 31/08/13	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Visit to the Dark Caves Travelling Writing notes
Sunday 01/09/13	London, UK	Travelling

Research Trip 2

Date	City/ Country	Dark Activities
Sunday 20/10/13	London, UK	Travelling
Monday 21/10/13	Mumbai, India Hyderabad, India	Travelling Exhibition tour & interview with staff at Dialogue in the Dark, Hyderabad Writing notes
Tuesday 22/10/13	Trivandrum, India	Travelling Arrival at Kanthari Campus
Wednesday 23/10/13	Trivandrum, India	Informal interviews with people who work in the dark Writing notes
Thursday 24/10/13	Trivandrum, India	Dialogue in the Dark International Conference
Friday 25/10/13	Trivandrum, India	Dialogue in the Dark International Conference (with presentation)
Saturday 26/10/13	Trivandrum, India	Trip into countryside /networking opportunity
Sunday 27/10/13	Trivandrum, India	Empowerment Programme
Monday 28/10/13	Trivandrum, India	Empowerment Programme
Tuesday 29/10/13	Trivandrum, India	Empowerment Programme
Wednesday 30/10/13	Trivandrum, India	Empowerment Programme
Thursday 31/10/13	Trivandrum, India Delhi, India London, UK	Travelling Writing notes

Appendix IV

List of Organisations/Venues Associated with The Diving into Darkness Project

Dialogue in the Dark Venues

Dialogue in the Dark International
Dialogue Social Enterprise GmbH
Alter Wandrahm 5
D-20457 Hamburg
Germany
(+49) 40 309 63 40
info@dialog-im-dunkeln.de
<http://www.dialog-im-dunkeln.de/>

Dialogue in the Dark, Frankfurt
Shop 215, 2/F
Dialogmuseums GmbH
Hanauer Landstraße 137-145
60314 Frankfurt am Main
Germany
(+49) 69 90 43 21 44
info@dialogmuseum.de
<http://www.dialogmuseum.de/>

Dialogue in the Dark, Singapore
Ngee Ann Polytechnic
Block 5 #01-03
Singapore 599489
(+65) 6460 6222
enquiry_dialogueinthedark@np.edu.sg
<http://www.dialogueinthedark.com.sg>

Dialogue in the Dark HK Ltd
Shop 215, 2/F The Household Centre,
No. 8 King Lai Path,
MeiFoo,
Kowloon, HK
(+852) 852 2310 0833
exhibition@dialogue-in-the-dark.hk
<http://www.dialogue-in-the-dark.hk>

Dialogue in the Dark, Shanghai
Rm B104, No. 12, Lane 494,
Siping Road,
Hongkou District,
200086,
Shanghai, P.R.C
(+86) 21 6302 0090
jessie.zhang@dialogue-in-the-dark.org.cn
<http://dialogue-in-the-dark.org.cn>

Dialogue in the Dark, Tokyo
Re-samu Building B1F
Jingumae 2-8-2
Shibuya-ku
Tokyo 150-0001
Japan
(+81)-3-3479-9683
shin@dialoginthedark.com
<http://www.dialoginthedark.com>

Dialogue in the Dark, Bangkok
NSM Science Square @ Chamchuri Square 4th FL
Phaya Thai Rd.,
Pathumwan,
Bangkok, Thailand 10330
(+66) (0)2 577 9999 ext. 18 to 30 / +66 (0)2 160 5357
did_thailand@hotmail.co.th
<http://www.nsm.or.th/>

Dialogue in the Dark, Malaysia
Unit 8-83,
8th Floor, Berjaya Times Square,
No 1 Jalan Imbi,
55100 Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia.
(+018) 6681816
connect@did.my
<http://www.did.my/web/>

Dialogue in the Dark, Hyderabad
Level 5 Inorbit Mall
Hi- Tech City
Madhapur
Hyderabad
(+91) 40 64603341
info@experienceace.com
<http://www.dialogueinthedarkindia.com/>

Other Venues

Awfully Chocolate Singapore
368 Joo Chiat Road
Singapore 427613
(+65) 6345 8212
cakes@awfullychocolate.com
fullychocolate.com/Singapore/pdt.php

Night Safari Singapore
80 Mandai Lake Road
Singapore 729826
(+65) 6269 3411
infocounter.zoo@wrs.sg
www.nightsafari.com.sg

Hong Kong Disneyland Resort
Lantau Island,
Hong Kong
(852) 1-830-819
http://park.hongkongdisneyland.com/hkdl/en_US/home/home?name=HomePage

Sense of Touch Spa
1-5F, 52 D'Aguilar Street,
Lan Kwai Fong,
Central, HK
(+852) 2526 6918
enquiries@senseoftouch.com.hk
<http://www.senseoftouch.com.hk/>

Temple Street Night Market
Kansu Street and Jordan Road,
Mongkok,
Kowloon,
Hong Kong, China
contact@temple-street-night-market.hk
<http://www.temple-street-night-market.hk/>

The Oldest Amusement Park in Japan: Askusa Hanayashiki
Asakusa,
Taitō,
Tokyo
<http://hanayashiki.net/e/>

Tokyo Disneyland Resort
1-1 Maihama Urayasu
279-8511
Japan
(+81) -45-330-5211
<http://www.tokyodisneyresort.jp/en/>

Mansion 7
244/7 Ratchadaphisek Road,
MRT: Huay Kwang
Bangkok
(+66) (0)2 692 6311
<http://www.themansion7.com/>

Dining in the Dark, Kuala Lumpur
50 Changkat Bukit Bintang,
50200 Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia.
(+60) 03 2110 0431
customerservice@dininginthedarkkl.com
<http://dininginthedarkkl.com/>

Batu Caves Kaumaram
Batu Caves
Sri Subramaniam Temple,
Kuala Lumpur 68100,
Malaysia
(+60) 03-61896284
kaumaram@gmail.com
<http://www.kaumaram.com/batucaves>

Appendix V

Photographs from the Diving Into Darkness Research Trip



“Photo: Singapore at Night”



“Photo: Interview with Lynn Lee, Awfully Chocolate, Singapore”



”Photo: Chinese Opera Singer, Temple Street Market”



“Photo: Temple Street Night Market, HK”



“Photo: Cityscape, HK”



“Photo: Night Cityscape,
HK”



“Photo: Cityscape, Shanghai”



“Photo: Night Cityscape,
Shanghai”



“Photo: Family at Dialogue in the Dark, Tokyo”



“Photo: Street Scene, Oskaka”



“Photo: Bangkok Temple”



“Photo: Interview with Stevens Chang, Founder, Dialogue in The Dark, Malaysia”



“Photo: The Dark Caves,
Kuala Lumpur”



“Photo: KL Tower”



“Photo: Lynn Cox and Sing Yee Lai
(from Dialogue in the Dark, Singapore)
at Kanthari, Trivandrum, India”

Appendix VI

Creative Coaching Session in the Dark

Introduction

This is a creative Clean Coaching session that is performed within complete darkness. I developed it during my Diving into Darkness travel to Asia undertaking the coaching sessions with visually impaired and sighted staff at Dialogue in the Dark venues in Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Bangkok.

It is important that the sessions aren't interrupted as the coaching ambiance can be lost very easily. Also, I wouldn't advise doing it in more than one language at a time too, as again the coaching ambiance is disrupted and the deeper emersion of the participants understanding is lost.

Basic Coaching Structure

Creative coaching in the Dark is ideal for both individuals with personal/professional issues, and small groups of teams/individuals who want intensive solutions/clarification/impact on the same issue.

For group sessions, I would recommend between 6 to 10 participants, as increasing the numbers limits the impact of the session.

Start Time	Duration (mins.)	Activity	Details
0:00	10	Introduction into the Dark	Bring in participants, 2 at a time & place them into a circle
0:10	10	Feelings in the Dark	3 mins quiet in the dark & then participants say how they feel
0:20	10	Find your table	Ask participants to find their table & then to place themselves in alphabetical order
0:30	10	Explore table	Ask participants to find what is on the table and tell the trainer. The trainer mentions any art materials they haven't noticed
0:40	25	Creating in the Dark	Slow down voice & follow the coaching script (there is an example following this section)
1:05	25	Show & Tell	Participants describe their artworks (saying how it relates to their coaching goal) & then allow their artwork to be touched by everyone
1:30	15	I have Learnt	Participants say one thing they have learnt from their artwork & one thing they will take away from someone else's artwork for the future
1:45	10	Action	Briefly discuss the session & ask participants to establish their action points
1:55	5	Leave Darkness	Safely point out the exit & ask participants to leave the room themselves
2:00		Finish	

Coaching Script

The coaching itself should be undertaken with a slow quiet voice, which allows the participants to start to reach their deeper emotions.

Long periods of quiet should also be allowed between each section of the script, so in fact you say very little within the 25 minutes session.

The script for 'When you are working at your best in the Dark' is given below as an example:

"Just take a few minutes to think about: 'When you are working at your best in the dark, that is like what?'."

...

"So 'When you are working at your best in the dark, that is like what?'."

"Can you make an artwork with the materials on the table to represent 'when you are working at your best in the dark'."

...

Can you feel, taste, smell 'When you are working at your best in the dark'."

"Does it have a shape and size?"

...

“Is there anything else about ‘When you are working at your best in the dark’?”

...

...

“Remember we are making an artwork that represents ‘When you are working at your best in the dark’.”

...

...

“And is there anything else that needs to happen to the representation of ‘When you are working at your best in the dark’.”

...

...

“Just a few minutes to go.”

...

“So ‘When you are working at your best in the dark’.”

...

“It is time to finish now.”

Art Materials

I tend to use a variety of non-messy art materials, so you can undertake this session and keep the room clean.

I use a mixture of:

- Wool, yarns, string, rope, wire
- Wikki sticks (sticky thin wax covered sticks that can be used for drawing)
- Paper
- Tapes (masking, double sided and regular)
- Plastic drink lids with holes in them
- Beads, pasta tubes, straws, etc (all can be thread onto something)
- Cotton wool, felt, aluminium foil, etc

Additional Coaching Suggestions

The coaching session is ideal for coaching sighted clients with a range of issues. You would use the same basic structure of the session and simply change the content of the coaching script.

For example, a disjointed team that is not working well together may want to coach around 'When I'm working at my best that is like what'. This will allow the individuals to identify their strengths, and also through the process of acknowledging how others work and what they like about their colleagues working process, it assists to break down the barriers within the team. Further group and possibly one to one coaching would be needed in this situation as you wouldn't solve the team issues with one 2 hour session.

Other possible sessions could be:

- 'When you are coaching at your best, that is like what?'
- 'When you are creating artworks at your best, that is like what?'
- 'When you are writing at your best, that is like what?'
- 'When you have your work life balance at its best, that is like what?'
- 'When you are communicating at your best, that is like what?'

Recommendations

This technique is very powerful and will assist your clients to get results, but you do need to be familiar with clean coaching. It is advisable to be trained in Clean Coaching, so you can make the greatest impact from using these techniques.

If you would like a list of recommended Clean Coaches then please contact me on +44(0) 7818 437651 lynn.cox1@virgin.net or DivingIntoDarkness@hotmail.co.uk

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Appendix VII

Clean Coaches

Below are three Clean Coaches who can both undertake clean coaching sessions and teach this technique:

Angela Dunbar



Angela is an accredited coach, coach trainer and supervisor, in full time practice since 1994. As a former council member of the Association for Coaching, Angela is passionate about developing coaches and was a 2010/11 Nominee for the AC Honorary Award for “Impact” within the coaching profession. Angela is an expert in the use of Clean Language and other Clean techniques, with hundreds of hours of practical experience. Angela’s first book “Essential Life Coaching Skills” was published by Routledge in 2009. Angela combines a solid understanding of psychological theory with a practical approach for self-understanding and change.

Contact:

Tel: +44(0) 1189 968259

Email: Angeladunbar@cleancoaching.com

Website: www.cleancoaching.com

Anne Munro-Kua



Anne Munro-Kua's mission is to help others access practical and proven skills so that they can achieve success that is founded on wellbeing both at work and at play. Her clients include blue chip corporations, management institutes, successful career women, civil society organisations and support groups for those in need. Her clients report achieving greater creativity and balance, more meaningful relationships and increased resourcefulness both professionally and in their personal lives.

Anne has designed what has become her company's signature PATH suite of programmes which is based not on theory but on "practical models of what actually works". These cutting-edge methodologies, in which she is certified, include NLP (Master Practitioner), Core Transformation, Clean Language and Emergent Knowledge, and Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT).

Anne is the lead facilitator of the Kuala Lumpur-based consultancy, Anne Munro-Kua Transformations (AMKT) which she founded in 1995. She is a certified coach and facilitator with a background in education and a PhD in Sociology from Manchester University, UK. While Anne originates from the UK, Asia has been her home for more than 25 years where she is very much at home working with a diverse range of multicultural clients.

Contact:

Tel: (+60) (0)3 21697710

Website www.amktransformations.com

FaceBook: www.facebook.com/AnneMunroKuaTransformations

Lynn Cox



I specialise in using Darkness as a coaching tool, because the unfamiliarity of darkness can assist you to either overcome fears or give you insights to your full potential. This unique Power of Darkness coaching uses a mixture of Clean Coaching Techniques which can facilitate individual and group sessions. I tend to work with creative open-minded people who want to make a significant change in their lives, whether that is finding a new career or getting their work/life balance congruent to their desires.

I'm a Member of the Association of Coaches (MAC). I have obtained a coaching accreditation through the Cultural Leadership Programme. I'm also an Action Learning Set Facilitator for both Face to Face and Virtual sessions. I have published a number of articles in established coaching magazines and a chapter in the Association for Coaches book "Diversity in Coaching" on Coaching Disabled People.

Contact:

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Email: lynn.cox1@virgin.net

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Appendix VIII

List of Past and Future Dates for Dissemination of WCMT Research

Date	Media/Event Type	Organisation	Detail
15/05/13	Radio Interview	Mushroom FM	3 hour slot discussing the Diving into Darkness project
28/05/13	Presentation	Blind Art Cologne, Germany	Presentation including Diving into Darkness
28/06/13	Blog	Shape Arts	Launch of Diving into Darkness blog on travel & other dark interests
07/07/13	Social Media	FaceBook	Launch of FB page on www.facebook.com/divingintodarkness
10/07/13	Presentation	Shape Arts	Fundraising presentation including WCMT application process
02/10/13	Radio Interview	Mushroom FM	3 hour slot discussing the first travel to SE Asia
25/10/13	Presentation	Dialogue In the Dark International Conference, India	Presentation on Diving into Darkness research
13/12/13	DVD	Shape Arts	Launch of 'Shape Creatives' DVD including Diving into Darkness
31/03/14	Report	WCMT	For WCMT website
22/04/14	Social Media	LinkedIn	Launch of LinkedIn Group for CPD/showcasing opportunities
22/04/14	Press Release	WCMT & More	Press Release covering Diving Into Darkness research
28/05/14	Event	WCMT	Fellowship Event, including PR from radio/press
?/06/14	Coaching Session	Diving into Darkness	Coaching session for coaches, trainers & facilitators in complete darkness, venue will be in London

Date	Media/Event Type	Organisation	Detail
23/06/14	Podcasts	Drake Music YouTube Sound Cloud	Presentation of main long Podcast of research journey
25/06/14	Presentation	National Federation of the Blind	Diving into Darkness travel and research
TBC	DVD	MAMOMI Initiative	DVD looking at the development of Diving into Darkness research into CPD experiences & art/media showcases in complete darkness
TBC	Podcasts	Drake Music YouTube Sound Cloud	Mini Podcasts Covering the main 7 research locations for Diving into Darkness travel
TBC	Showcase	Diving into Darkness	Showcase of visually impaired singers, musicians, artists and actors in complete darkness
TBC	Book	TBC	Diving into Darkness book on serious and more light hearted aspects of darkness

Appendix IX

Undertaking WCMT Research with a Disability

The WCMT team were very understanding about my visual impairment. Everyone was very friendly and went out of the way to ensure I could undertake a successful fellowship. They made a few small changes which really assisted me to undertake the application process, do the research trip and then complete the documentation.

The modifications they facilitated included:

- At the short listing stage, giving me a few additional days because the online form wasn't completely accessible. I could fill out most of the information myself but I found it impossible to check the layout and put in the countries I wanted to visit. Also, most of the airline sites were impossible to access properly with a screen-reader, so my assistant had to do research, send it to me, await my response and then do the next lot of research. This just slowed down the overall process.
- Allowing me to get a taxi at the end of my journey to the WCMT office for my interview. I had no problems travelling on public transport to Waterloo Station, but I would have found it very difficult to have found Church House without a taxi.
- Funding an escort to travel with me on the first research trip to Southeast Asia. I couldn't have completed the busy itinerary without sighted assistance.

- The confidence to believe me when I informed WCMT I wouldn't need an escort for the second research trip, as it was based in mainly one location that had been adapted for disabled people to move around safely by themselves.
- Information that was normally provided in PDF format, which isn't completely accessible, was altered into Word documents which I could then read easily.
- Additional time to complete the report as my sighted assistant had to check through the written content, check the layout and put in visuals.

The only recommendation I could make to WCMT is to ensure the online application form and short listing forms are completely accessible. I had money to pay for my assistant to do the initial application form, but without that element I couldn't have even put in an application. Only minor changes would need to be undertaken on the online forms to ensure complete inclusion.

Whilst undertaking the fellowship, I did find a few aspects more difficult with my visual impairment. These were issues that I can resolve, or minimise, in the future. They included:

Getting a sighted escort who wanted to travel for 4 weeks to 6 countries through a busy schedule. My usual assistant didn't want to travel for such an extended period of time. I looked around but found it hard to find someone I could trust for such an intensive period. In the end, I was lucky enough that my partner could get time off work. This solution worked out well as I had complete trust in my sighted assistant, but it did mean that we chose to pay for the two children to come along as neither of us wanted to leave them for such a long time. In future, I doubt I'll be doing such an intensive travel regime, but I'm already looking for people who I feel comfortable with for such a journey, as the solution this time will not normally be available.

Flight organisation is another potential issue. I knew I would get assistance when travelling by myself to India for the part of the trip that I did unescorted. The only issue I had was at 4:00 in the morning, trying to get someone to help me transfer from Mumbai International to Mumbai Domestic Airports was a nightmare. Someone put me on the interconnecting bus, but no one was there to meet me off. Luckily a non-English speaking driver of the bus managed to work out where I needed to go and left his bus to escort me to the assistance point. Kindnesses like this one were given by so many individuals on the solo journey, that I feel that in the future with a simple schedule and good organisation that I could do a similar trip. However, I will not be changing in the middle of the night at any airport!

The unforeseen cost of housing my guide dog in the UK whilst I was travelling. For short periods of time I can often get someone to look after my guide dog for no additional cost. However, I couldn't expect someone to look after the dog for six weeks without getting financially compensated. I was happy to pay this cost as I know my dog was safe and with someone who would look after her very well, but I hadn't factored in the cost. So next time I'll do it properly!