

Back from Hell

Merydith Willoughby is an award winning international organization development consultant and author with over two decades in this industry. She is a prolific writer, published globally and regular commentator in the media. Merydith's excellence has been acknowledged in many ways, most recently Marion Citizen of the Year nominee – Marion Australia Day Awards and Australian of the Year nominee. She is listed in Who's Who SA, was awarded a Corporate Business Champion Award by Drug Arm and was on the Inner Southern Business Enterprise Centre as a board member when they were voted best enterprise centre in Australia. While project director at the SA Business Vision 2010 Think Tank she helped get her state on the map at the prestigious annual national Australian Chamber & Commerce awards for the second time in the awards' 10 year history.

Merydith went to university as a mature age student to study Labour Studies at the University of Adelaide. Since that time, she has gained a cross-institutional postgraduate qualification in education and politics from three major Universities. Other studies have included business development, coaching, training, HRM, neuroscience and cognitive behavior therapy. One result of this passion for learning in such a diversity of areas is that Merydith is able to look at the world and those in it in many different ways. This ability contributes much to her success.

When a corporate contract ceased in 2003, Merydith founded IB Coaching. IB has worked literally from boardrooms to the grass roots level of society. The approach they use is based on keeping it simple, to focus on building competencies, to inform, to involve and to engage all stakeholders. They then measure, monitor, mentor and manage key result areas. IB uses a clear, systematic and practical approach with all clients and there is no guessing going on.

Merydith was in the process of taking IB Coaching to the next level when she was struck down. For some time it seemed her goals and dreams would not be attained. This scourge brought her to her knees. She had no idea what was happening or how she would once again function as she had. For all of her adult life she had climbed her summits; paid close attention to her health and while having studied in many areas knew little about what unchecked, unmanaged stress levels could do to the long term health of a person. If you had told her it was going to get worse before it got better she would never have believed you – if you had then said – it will be four years before you are even back to square-one, she would have been horrified. Four years is a very long time to be ill and to not know what the outcome is going to be.

Determined not to give in she implemented a pragmatic approach to her recovery and has been staggered to see just how long it has taken her to firstly gain knowledge about what kept pulling her into ‘black holes’ and then to implement a plan that would see her determination once again come to the fore so that she could develop a key plan to recover. Four years down the track and after having been stuck in more black holes that she would like to remember, she views things quite differently.

Given that the author is like a fly on the wall and has confidential conversations with all levels of leaders and employees she is privy to information that most others are not and she knows that she is not a lone sailor - she sees with regularity how other leaders and employees are in the same boat as she was (but do not realize it). She believes that organizations and leaders need to be aware of burnout – what it looks like, the short and long term impact it can have on the organization (in many ways) and that as leaders we need to educate ourselves and those we lead about the dangers of unchecked stress levels. It is an issue that if left to fend for itself will cost industry significantly because the writing is already on the wall.

A highlight of Merydith's career was when she attended President Obama's inauguration and launched *Sex in the Boardroom* in Washington DC and New York. During this period she was a commentator for a radio program and relayed what was happening 'on the ground' at the inauguration to an Australian audience. Later that same year *The Washington Post* published an article of Merydith's 'Five Leadership How-Tos for Recession Survival'.

The term burnout used in *Back from Hell* does not refer to leaders who are just tired and cranky; having a bad day or in need of a good, long rest or holiday. It is about people who have become ill (physically or mentally) from continuing to push themselves and there is no age that it hits specifically – anyone can become its victim.

Back from Hell is semi autobiographical with anthologies and anecdotes and this book completes a trilogy.

Merydith travels the world doing what she loves and delivers services to New York and Adelaide.

Contents

About the author

- Chapter 1 Business trip
- Chapter 2 Black holes
- Chapter 3 Adrenalin kid
- Chapter 4 Whose agenda
- Chapter 5 Melissa
- Chapter 6 Personal audit
- Chapter 7 CBT or CBT1
- Chapter 8 Habits
- Chapter 9 Sarah
- Chapter 10 Coming home
- Chapter 11 Tenacity rules

Index

Bibliography