

## **The Lateral Lexicon – Richard Slaughter Interviews Edward de Bono (21C, No. 2 1997)**

Richard

Edward, thanks very much for agreeing to this interview. I guess I could say without fear of contradiction that you are the most successful person this century to raise the issue of new thinking and to disseminate that successfully. Can you briefly sketch in some of your own personal starting points?

Edward de Bono

Well, with hindsight it's always easier to pinpoint starting points which may, or may not, have been the real starting points. Three things came together. My background is in medicine, partly because that is very much a family tradition. My father, his brothers, his father were doctors; so I started off in Malta doing medicine. Then, as a Rhodes Scholar, I went to Oxford where I took psychology and physiology. It was from psychology that I developed an interest in thinking. Then I went back to medicine at St Thomas' hospital in London, and later at Harvard. In medicine I was working with computer simulations, on interactive processes and in medicine. I was dealing with the complex interactive systems (glands, kidneys, collation, respiration ... all these) and had to develop some ideas on self-organising systems. So there were three strands: one was an interest in thinking; second was a view that computers probably could not be perceptually creative; and the third, the key one, was a question about what happens in self-organising systems. That led to the book *The Mechanism of Mind*. Now, one of the key points is that having a base model, whether it's right or wrong, allows you to move forward with a certain amount of confidence. Too much of psychology is just description. But description has no generative path. You can analyse things minutely but you can't move forward. So having that moral, physiological model allowed me to move forward with a certain amount of confidence, whether people liked it or not. So those three things came together.

Mine is not a career that anyone could ever have planned. You couldn't sit down and say I'm going to work in creative thinking ... no way! Things came together; they evolved. Take my first book. I had been having dinner in Boston. After dinner I started playing around with bottles and knives on the table, balancing them in different combinations. At the same time, a friend of mine had gone to work as Secretary for a New York Publisher - Arthur Rosenthal. He'd been saying 'I need some new authors from England'; so she said 'I've got a friend - Edward de Bono'. So, from playing around with knives and bottles, I wrote the book *The Five Day Course in Thinking*, which was sent to Rosenthal who wasn't terribly interested. He had it on his desk one day when Martin Gardener came in. They were talking and he saw the book. He picked it up and said 'that's interesting, some of these ideas are new. Martin Gardener assured Rosenthal that my work was OK. So that's actually how I began writing books.

Richard

Did you take off quickly then, or were there some early problems that you had to sort out?

de Bono

No, there always have been those who see the point of what I'm writing. If you look at my first books there's not a word about business in them. But, business people came to me and said 'what you're talking about makes sense to us. We need it'. In my experience the business community, not always for the right reasons, have had more interest in thinking than any other part of the community. With the academic world (and others, such as politics) it's enough to prove you're right or prove your case. But with business, you can prove you're right until you're blue in the face, but this is not helpful if you go bankrupt. The people who have always been upset by my work, and continue to be upset, are philosophers and psychologists. On the other hand, mathematicians and physicists are very much in favour of my work. They say 'what you're talking about makes perfect sense to us ... no problem at all'. So having the support of those who were interested allowed me to continue. Now, having said that there is another important point. Because my academic career was in medicine I didn't have to please my colleagues all the time. If my career had been in Psychology it would have been much more difficult. But my medical background allowed me to develop momentum.

Richard

Edward, why do people get upset with your work when it is obviously offering tools and helpful suggestions?

de Bono

Well, there are a number of levels. One is that some people hate simplicity, because in a traditional intellectual mode your role is to interpret the complex to the uninitiated. If someone has a simple concept, you feel frustrated because there's nothing to interpret. So, indeed in one of my books *I'm Right, You're Wrong* where there are three forewords by Nobel Prize Laureates, one of them says, at first, 'you may think this is very simple but you have to understand your subject really well in order to write it simply'. There is a certain breed of intellectuals which is upset by simplicity because it's not their mode. Then, there's always a certain amount of academic envy in the sense of ... 'here's a guy who's writing about ideas .. he seems to be successful ... why should he be when I could have thought all of those thoughts myself?' Also, there's always the point that any good idea, in hindsight, seems obvious. So, there are a number of layers, and most include professional jealousy.

Richard

What would you isolate from the stream of productive work that you've done ... What you, personally, would consider the most satisfying achievements?

de Bono

Well, that's difficult in the sense that there are different levels. If you were to say which of my concepts has had, is likely to have, the biggest impact ... it's probably *The Six Thinking Hats*. That is spreading very rapidly and the reason it's spreading is that Western culture has never developed an idiom of constructive thinking. I'm not saying that constructive thinking doesn't happen .. of course it does! But, in as much as we have the argument idiom, the critical idiom, we have never developed a constructive idiom. So *The Six Hats* provides that and it is widely used. Let me give you a recent example. The other day I had two letters; one was from the Head of Research at Siemens in Europe, which is a huge company (370,000 employees, turnover of about 58 billion dollars a year). The Head of Research was saying 'we were using *The Six Hats* at our last research meeting very successfully'. The same day, a letter from a water engineer who was on an aid mission to Cambodia to help the villagers drill for water. He had his daughter with him, who was out of school, so he had my book *Teach your child how to think* and from that he took *The Six Hats* and started teaching the villagers. He said they became so enthusiastic, they said 'forget about drilling for water, this is much more important'. The whole mission changed from engineering to teaching thinking. It was so successful that he was then invited to Vietnam to do the same, then to China. A few days later I was in New Zealand and someone from Wesley College was there. He said 'we teach *The Six Hats* to our five year olds'. So, in terms of spread and impact ... *The Six Hats*. In terms of intellectual satisfaction ... probably the *Mechanism of Mind* and the provocative processes of lateral thinking. In terms of, again, perhaps general emphasis, the notion that thinking is a skill, software for the mind.

Richard

I would certainly have picked *The Six Thinking Hats* as being the most well-known. When I work with groups of teachers and I say 'do you know about de Bono's *Six Hats*?' they say 'oh, yes, of course'.

de Bono

It has a 'spread' value. It's simple, it's practical and people are yearning for a constructive way of tackling things because the argument mode is so restricted.

Richard

There's a story that I've heard and I'd like to check out with you. Is it true that you've occasionally written the draft of a book on a single plane flight, or is that just a story?

de Bono

It's true. I wrote *The Six Hats* on a plane on the way from London to Melbourne; and I wrote *The Six Action Shoes* on a flight from London to Auckland.

Richard

I think I know the answer to this but I'll ask you anyway. Why is it that you find it so easy to write that well and that quickly?

de Bono

Well, I think the answer is that I spend a lot of time talking – in lectures/seminars six hours a day – and you've just got to learn to put words together to express ideas.

Richard

You are basically very familiar with the material.

de Bono

Exactly. The point is, of course, all of these things that I've written about I have thought about. Writing is just a 'transduction', it's putting out what you already know.

Richard

I'd like to take an analogy from my own experience to see how close it is for you. My area is futures studies. I find it such a rich conceptual area, opening up something that most people think is beyond them. A bit like thinking. What I find is that year after year I never know which nodes of this are going to become significant and grow and develop. Is that how it's been for you?

de Bono

In a sense. It's also, a little more than futures studies, a sort of geometric process. If you open up different ideas they start linking up and generating further ones, and then generating others. It's like a breeding process. So the more that's going on in your mind, the more can happen. The difference is, obviously with the future we're looking to something that hasn't yet happened, but with thinking we're getting inside designs or tools of something that is currently happening. So that breeding effect is probably quite strong.

Richard

You're obviously concerned about the future and, looking through your books, I see quite a few comments about that. I don't think you've ever done anything exactly on that, but what are your general views about ... the effort to look ahead?

de Bono

I think clearly the effort to look ahead is the key. Then there is something that I put a lot of emphasis on ... what I call 'design'. Now, with the English language we really don't have a

good word for 'design'. We have 'design' but it's been rather pre-empted by 'graphic design' and 'furniture design'. Design in the sense of bringing things together to achieve an effect. We have a lot of emphasis on analysis. 'Design' is equally important, though much less emphasised in education. For instance, our traditional mode of problem solving is to analyse the problem, identify the cause, remove the cause and solve the problem. Fine. That works in fifty, sixty, maybe seventy percent of cases. For the other times, you can't find the problem, you can't find the cause, or there are too many causes, or you can't remove it because it's human nature and you can't remove it. In those cases, the only way to move forward is with 'design'. Most of the major problems in the world are not going to be benefited by more analysis ... they need 'design'. So, in as much as design means new ideas and new thinking, there is a close correlation between how we move ahead in tackling the issues, problems and so on. The traditional analysis of identifying a standard situations applying a standard solution is not going to be enough. That's the key.

Now, what happens in futures studies? I think there's always a difficulty of how far ahead do you look? Now, in terms of threats ... perhaps environmental ones ... which we can perceive as happening, that is now a big problem. We can perceive them. In terms of trying to look ahead to what might happen, in terms of technology developments, technology implementation, there the time frame is pretty crucial. If you go too far ahead and you get into sort of science fiction future, then that is seen as not likely to happen. I suspect that some of the really fundamental changes are going to be organisational changes.

I think we are moving out of the information age, already. We're moving into the concept age which means 'how do you put information together, to give value?'. Just having the information is not enough. Concept change is in things like economics and so on, and politics and so on are going to be the key areas, the organisational changes. True, we may get certain scientific things ... you know hyper planes in space; getting from London to Sydney in two hours, I don't think that really makes a fundamental difference at all. Then the transition difficulties ... how we move from one stage to another when the cost of transition is high. I think an area which is going to be a very, very difficult one, where the potential for change is going to be huge is chemistry, pharmaceuticals with psychological effects; rather like designer drugs. It is conceivable that we will have drugs which make you have a better memory, make you better at mathematics, give you mutual obsession with your partner for a life. All of these will become possible, but how we deal with them, morally and practically, will be a huge problem. At one time science fiction was a laboratory for the future ... you could try out ideas. Then it got into Cowboys and Indians with laser guns, which is of no interest, really. So, I think I would see the really important things in the future are the organisational concept changes and the attitude changes.

Let me give you an analogy which I use quite a lot. If you put a ball on the table and you try and push it it's quite difficult to get the ball to go where you want to go if you're pushing it with one finger. If the ball is on a half- inch of foam rubber and you press, with your finger or thumb, just in front of the ball then the ball will fall, flow, roll into the depression you're making and you can take the ball anywhere you like on that table. In other words, if the next step is easy, available and attractive then things will happen. Push and exhortation has a value, but not much in leading things forward.

Richard

That's an interesting analogy.

de Bono

Yes, and it works. I was using it in relation to the Cyprus problem. It works. The ball will literally follow wherever you go.

Richard

I agree with you, wholeheartedly, about design for the future. But what about the fact that some of our most deep-seated problems actually come out of our world view? For example, our obsession with economic growth, our tendency to treat the environment as a utilitarian set of objects. These are things which are deeply embedded in a way of viewing within the culture. How do you influence those things?

de Bono

Well, that's certainly true. There are what are called 'background metaphors'. When I'm dealing with business I always show up the contrast between two metaphors. One is: a fellow walking along the road, and he comes to a fork in the road, and he's got to take the left or the right fork. He cannot walk along both roads. That's very often the metaphor that business people have. We've got to have one strategy ... which direction do we take? I say OK, that's one metaphor, but what about the portfolio investment metaphor where you have some of your money in government treasury bonds, some in venture capital, all simultaneously? The either/or metaphor is just one metaphor. We're not even conscious that we're using it but we are using it. So, some of the things you said are background metaphors which we use. I'll give you an example. Some years ago I was having dinner at Cambridge with a very famous mathematician. We were talking about chess, and chess being complicated. I said my interest is in a designer game where each player has only one piece. Last year a manufacturer was doing this and I said, 'OK, I'll design an even simpler game on a 3x3 board'. Then I thought, wouldn't it be nice if it was a game which you couldn't win just by winning? It was a design task. So, I ended up with the first social justice game: if you try too hard to win then you lose. Basically, it's a very simple, 3x3, and three spots. To win you've got to score 12, but if your opponent has not scored 6 you lose. So if you just try and bash ahead you lose. That's a very simple concept, but it changes the concept that winning just means winning. Now, if one can provide bridges, links, metaphors, images to change some of those background assumptions then maybe things can happen.

Richard

Two or three mildly critical questions. Number one, your focus on thinking can be seen as one modality of human capability. What significance do you give to other ways of knowing? For example, feeling, intuition and spirituality.

de Bono

Let me answer that question right from the beginning. A lot of my work in thinking is actually on perception, and all the self-organising systems of perception. Now, perception is by far the most important aspect of thinking in real life. A friend of mine at Harvard, Professor David Perkins, did some research on it and showed that something like eighty to ninety percent of the mistakes in thinking were not mistakes of logic at all, but mistakes of perception. Mistakes of logic are actually quite rare outside of trick questions, and so on. Now, we haven't done much about perception because we believed that processing, mathematics, statistics, types of logic, is sufficient and if you get your logic right then it doesn't matter about perception. That is totally untrue. And until about twenty years ago we didn't understand about perception anyway. Now the reason this is important is that logic will very rarely change emotions, but perception will. The classic case came up in teaching thinking to children in England. One of the boys told us that one day in the carpentry class he was standing behind one of his teachers with a hammer and was about to slug the fellow. He said he thought back to his thinking lesson where we were looking at consequence of action, thought back to it, shrugged, put down the hammer and walked away.

Now, that's is really getting into someone's emotions through perception. Another example is from a fellow named David Lane who ran the Hungerford Centre. It's a school in England which accepts children too violent to be taught in ordinary schools. Soon after they began to offer thinking lessons, the number of incidents where members of staff had to intervene with students dropped from eight a week to one a week. These kids were given a framework for perception.

Again, I was up in Queensland talking to some teachers at a local school, and one of them said 'when I read your concept of 'logic bubbles' that made me much more tolerant'. A logic bubble is when everyone is acting perfectly logically within their own bubble of values and perceptions. Once you have that bridge of perception to say 'okay let me see what that guys' logic bubble is' then you don't just say he's an idiot or he's malicious or he's stupid. So, sometimes these frameworks of perception allow you to change emotions and feeling. Coming back to feeling ... in the end feelings and values are what validate our thinking. The purpose of thinking is to so arrange the world that you apply your values and feelings effectively. They are the ultimate arbiter. But the point is that you apply them after you have opened up your perception. If you apply them before, you narrow your perception to select what your feelings have told you to select. Intuition and feelings are fine which is why *The Red Hat* is there and *The Six Hats* but I'm not terribly much in favour of those people who say just sit down and let your intuition take over and everything's going to be alright. I think that's much too passive. Intuition can be very wrong. The story I use is .... when they told Einstein about Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, Einstein wrote in a letter 'this is nonsense. God doesn't play dice, nature doesn't play dice'. It turn's out that Einstein's intuition was wrong, or seems to have been wrong. So, intuition has a value as an ingredient. The purpose of thinking and perception is to lay out things so that feelings, values make the final decision. Intuition is an ingredient. It's like a scientist says 'my

intuition is that this explanation is too complex'. That's intuition ... it's more aesthetic. So, all these things are important. So when I talk about thinking, I'm not saying that thinking is the only thing. Sometimes I draw a triangle. At the top of the triangle is 'values', one of the base corners is 'health' and the other base corner is 'thinking'. Health and thinking interact, and thinking is a way of enjoying our values, and so on. So, there's a place for all of these things, and spirituality too. Spirituality is a framework which, as I said before, gives values.

Richard

Ken Wilber has a useful framework for dealing with some of these questions. In some of his earlier work he wrote about 'the eye of flesh, the eye of reason and the eye of contemplation each disclosing their own truths in their own realms'. Would you accept that?

de Bono

I would say so. What I say is that there are at least three types of truths. One type of truth is 'game' truth. Game truth means where you set up the game, the rules, the pieces, so that interaction is embedded in what you've set up. Like when you sit down to play Poker, you follow the rules of Poker. To play Monopoly you follow the rules of Monopoly. Then there's 'experience' truth. 'Experience' truth means that in your experience it is always so; you can do experiments and it is always so, provided all the parameters are equal. Like the shift from Euclidean geometry to spherical geometry ... if you change the parameters the truth changes. The third is 'belief' truth where your beliefs so direct your perceptions so that what you perceive reinforces your beliefs. These are all valid. You could actually make an argument, though I wouldn't push it too far, that all truth is circular .. that what happens in the brain is a circular pattern ...

Richard

Your books seem to be, the one's that I've read, largely your own. So question that comes up about whether are you an intellectual loner or do you draw upon other people for inspiration?

de Bono

Very simply I'm an intellectual loner. I develop my ideas, they follow not unlike, I suppose, and maybe I'm wrong, a mathematician who would say 'I'm developing my ideas'. Now people come along and say well some of what you're saying is similar to what Vico said in Naples in 1780. I say 'great'. But the answer is 'yes'. I'm certainly not someone who scans through everything, abstracts the ideas and then forgets to mention where I got them from.

Richard

No, I'm not suggesting that. So, the inspiration for what you do ... am I right in thinking that it bubbles up from within this wonderfully rich framework?



de Bono

It's very like mathematics ... that in mathematics you do certain things which open up a universe. You then perceive what happens in that universe and you observe it, and those are ideas.

Richard

A paper written by a colleague of mine – a bright chap who works in Brussels – is called 'Future coping strategies beyond the constraints of proprietary metaphors'. He has a critical comment about your use of them. Is it okay if I check this with you?

de Bono.

Absolutely, I haven't seen it. By all means.

Richard

His last section he called 'Transcending constraints of proprietary metaphors'. His work is very much about metaphors so he's looking at your work and he's very positive about it and he thinks it's great, but he comes to a point where he says "is the issue a dissemination of strategic repertoires or rather is it empowering the generation of strategic repertoires? de Bono is selling a single repertoire packaged as a metaphor. As with IBM he is endeavouring to capture a market, effectively disempowering higher order creativity, creating dependence and locking customers into a particular approach. He is not selling the capacity to generate such a package."

de Bono

Well, you see, all of these things are on a level. Supposing, again I use the same metaphor of mathematics. If, in the beginning of mathematics, someone generates some processes in mathematics, every one of those remarks would apply to it. You're generating a package, you are disempowering people from doing their relationship exercises about mathematics. Sure. So, are we better off with mathematics, or without it?

Richard

I wanted to ask you that because it arose in this paper, and in my view the writer has a reasonable point of view.

de Bono

That's the point. Whenever you move in any direction, automatically you are – to use his words – "disempowering" people from moving in another direction.

Richard

But they have the choice.

de Bono

They have the choice. And the question is if, for centuries, we've been sitting around having all the empowerment available and not made much progress in creative effort and direction, aren't you better off to have some? That's the point.

Richard

Could I conclude asking you what are some of your specific goals for your new Centre here in Melbourne?

de Bono

Well, I think the key goal for the new Centre is to have a place, a base, which can act as an organising Centre for bringing together people, effort, directions, projects, to carry out new thinking. The need for a base, a certain amount of logistics, an amount of funding and support, is something which allows things to happen which otherwise would not happen. For instance, one of my goals is to set up, world-wide, permanent creative Commissions – in fields like law, health care, crime, education – which would review existing concepts, dying concepts, emerging concepts, alternative concepts, whether these have been tried and tested, pin-pointing areas which need new concepts. These Commissions would be made up with people in different countries, connected probably by Internet or something, with occasional meetings. For instance, if we take banking. Increasingly people are becoming aware of the Grameen bank in Bangladesh. It is an extraordinary innovation: it's located within an Islamic country; it lends mainly, 92%, to women; it lends, on average, \$100; the default rate is less than the best banks in the worlds' default rate. It's a whole concept.

Most banks would say 'forget about \$100, the paperwork is worth more than \$100. We can't do it.' So, this is a powerful and effective. It uses social peer pressure – not legal sanctions. You don't say well, you're responsible for that lady's death, not at all. There's a general understanding that if that lady messes up it's going to be more difficult for your village to get another loan. Now, a lot of these 'peer pressure' strategies are very powerful.

The Koreans have another one - which is why Koreans run most of the groceries in the United States. They have clubs, and each month the club meets, 12 people, and they each put in some money – maybe \$10 maybe \$100. All of that money goes to one person sitting at the table. So if there's 10 of us and we each put in \$100, the guy gets \$1,000 which he can use as he wishes. So, he sets up his business, or borrows, or whatever. Now, you may say that's pretty daft because if everyone sat in their own backyard and kept their \$100 then at the end of the year they would have \$1,000. The psychology is totally different. It's another of these 'social fabric' methods which are very powerful. My point about the creative commissions is that one would pick some of these out, examine them, make them available,

pinpoint areas where we need a new concept – like traffic congestion in the city. We need a concept which rewards people for choosing not to drive into the city. We need a concept for making it happen. So pinpointing areas which need new concepts, reviewing emergent concepts, and making these known and available. So permanent, creative Commissions in different fields. Something like the Centre would be the organising base for these, among other things.

Richard

It seems to me that there is a definite overlap here between what you're saying about creative Commissions and what I see as the result of successful futures work, ie. social innovations.

de Bono

Absolutely. I'm looking at the tool side, but in the end, sure we're designing and we're designing for something and for the changes we hope to see. There are two aspects, I suppose, of the future. One is the future which we choose to design rather than let it happen by default. The other is what I call the predictive capacity of what will happen by default. Now, the first half is of great interest to me. The second half is of interest, but it's not a field I'm particularly working in.

Richard

When I first heard about this Centre being set up, I intuitively thought if one took, what I understand to be the realm of future studies, with its very rich concepts, not being predictive, but exploring what I call the 'near future context', if one bought your material, and your tools and your thinking, and overlaid one with the other there might be a very productive synthesis of possibilities.

de Bono

Yes, I agree with that. For instance, I was in Vancouver talking to the Commonwealth Law conference about two weeks ago. Six years ago it was held in New Zealand and I gave a talk. They had an intermediate one in Cyprus and they asked the participants, about 1,300 judges (High Court judges, Chief Justices) what they wanted to hear more of. Apparently, they most wanted to hear more of de Bono, so they invited me back to Vancouver. So, I was talking – my keynote address – about legal system. One of the suggestions which I was making was that the jurors, the juries, should have a day of *Six Hats* thinking before they went on jury service. In other words, lawyers get smarter and smarter and juries don't. Another example is that there's a move, including here in Australia, away from the adversarial system towards the, what is being called the inquisitorial system. Now the interesting history of it is that in 1215 England there was a Council that decided the purpose of justice was to discover the truth. Now, the British judiciary didn't like these new fangled continental notions so they said 'we're quite happy with the way things are', which was, at the time, trial by combat and trial by ordeal. Now trial by combat meant you turned

up and the Queen or King had to provide a champion who did battle. Indeed the last one was 1818, in the U.S., where there was a well-known gangster murderer. He turned up, in court, with his guns and said 'I demand trial by combat'. Trial by combat was still on the statute books. No-one was willing to take him on, and he was released. They changed just after that. Basically, trial by combat continues today but instead of physical muscle power you have financial muscle power. The same thing – trial by combat.

With trial by ordeal some were physiological based. Like, they give you a mouthful of flour and if you're terrified because you know you're done the thing you can't swallow it because you've got no saliva. Others were pretty illogical as with so-called witches ... you threw them in the pond and if they drowned they were innocent, if they floated you took them away and burned them because they were witches. Then, trial by ordeal relied on God to make the decision. So, instead of God we substituted the jury to replace God. So the English common law system still is based on trial by combat and trial by ordeal. The French and other systems have the Assessors whose job it is to try and find out what happened. Now, I don't think there is ever going to be a sudden switch from one system to the other. So, what I suggested, in Vancouver, is that there should be an Assessor in Court. An Assessor is a, sort of, friend of the jury, not of the Defence or the Prosecution, but a friend of the jury who can say 'well, wait a minute I'm not clear about that point, or that point'. So, that is a, sort of transition phase which allows us to move away from just the straight adversarial which is concerned with case-making, not with the truth.

Overall I think democracy is a system which badly needs rethinking. For instance, a key weakness, which is responsible for all of the Northern Ireland problems, is that a permanent minority need not exist. They have no political part, ever. Now, one of the suggestions I was to give a talk on 'The future of democracy' on television last year in England was that we have a third notional party. The number of seats would depend on the gap between the other two parties in the two party system. No-one would sit in these seats. But, on an issue, these seats would be voted by an opinion poll. So, if 70% of the opinion poll says 'we like it', then 70% of the notional seats vote in favour. So, now the opposition can also introduce legislation because if the notional seats support them it passes. Then you can modify it. You can say those notional seats can be voted by an opinion poll within 5% error, or whatever. Or, you could say on certain issues, like economics, those notional seats will be voted by an economics panel to which anyone could get access by passing a simple test of understanding economics. Now, that's a very simple modification to democracy. It allows a continual interaction with the electorate, whether otherwise you just keep quiet until the next election when they promise you everything.

Richard

Some of our politicians might find that rather confronting. One final question and then I'll wrap this up. Is there anything for you that is now bubbling in your mind about a future direction for your own work?

de Bono

There's a number of things. One of them, which I won't talk about in detail, is a whole new language for thinking which I have invented which will allow us to see things at a glance, and allow us to describe complex situations, allow us to invent new concepts which we can't do with ordinary language because we're bogged down. I re-developed it some years ago, and had been figuring out how to launch it. Current thinking is that I'm having talks with the *Financial Times* and so on, and obviously the business application is very strong. Using that as a base then to spread out. It is a whole language which allows to do new thinking.

Richard

How difficult will that language be to learn?

de Bono

It will be very simple to learn ... extremely simple.

Richard

How long will it take to learn?

de Bono

About two hours.

Richard

That would be something! Thank you very much.

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