

UCT GSB course demystifies the magic of intuition

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The UCT Graduate School of Business (UCT GSB) is offering its Leading with Intuition executive education programme for leaders seeking to make more informed and less emotional decisions in the moment.

The course, which runs from 5 to 7 September, seeks to demystify intuition by showing leaders and managers how to use it to their advantage - rather than falling victim to its seductive powers.

"Thinking with your 'gut' is usually an unconscious emotional response to a surprising situation. In some instances this response proves to be enormously helpful. In others it is a huge liability," says Chris Breen, director of the course. "We need to become wise about our emotions and how they inform what we do," he said.

Breen explained that his course seeks to ensure that leaders increase their chances of the former being true. Intuition is a tool like any other in the leaders' arsenal - but people need to learn how to use it.

Intuition carries with it a sort of baggage. It is influenced by biological predispositions, culture, experiences and educational backgrounds. It is, in fact, a slave to what we think we know and as Edgar Morin, French philosopher and sociologist, said "everything we know is subject to error and illusion".

"When it comes to critical moments in business, and in any other aspects of our lives, we need to identify what we're feeling, the reactions we're having to the moment, stop, become aware of our behaviour and then from a calm informed point of view, continue. This way we don't over-look possibilities and opportunities for solutions because of our natural, primitive, almost reptilian responses and assumptions which can mislead us," said Breen. "Rigidity of behaviour is not for intelligent beings."

Breen said that one of his biggest challenges in running a course of this nature is to get participants to become aware of the unconscious negative consequences that inevitably come from an education system that has placed a total emphasis on the rational, complicated world.

Delegates leaving the course will have a greater ability to make informed intuitive decisions, while remaining willing to explore win-win solutions; they will gain the ability to consider different solutions in the moment, knowing when to slow down at crucial, pressured moments; they will improve their ability to listen and communicate, and learn to take a less judgemental attitude to colleagues that will ultimately improve relationships with them; they will have a greater capacity to deal with work-place stress and tension and have an increased sense of authenticity and personal integrity.

"Taking time with a decision and being more open to and aware of other options is a more intelligent, strategic approach to making a decision," Breen said.

Some of what Breen's past students had to say after taking one of his courses:

"The first session with Chris was brutal to my ego and what I originally saw as strong points. The number one major challenge is to accept that I need to change if I want to learn."

"Before our session, diversity was a de facto state of mind as long as I am not racist, anti-gay or anti-anything that is different from my attributes. I didn't know that I was not embracing diversity in the true sense because races and ethnic groups are simply the first layer of diversity. I have been running away from the real world. A world of feelings, relationships, true human values, intents and information that I had forsaken or tried to forget because I programmed

myself to be an outcome-driven and performance-driven person. This is why I was associating myself only with people that are like me, who think like me and who see the world like me."

"An environment needs a leader to create it, to unleash the potential of the whole team. It requires of me to play a critical balance above and below the line. Indeed I have been failing to notice what I fail to notice."

The course runs from 5 to 7 September. For more information about the course please contact Alison Siebritz on 021 406 1490 or visit www.gsb.uct.ac.za/intuition.

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