

## 2020 – The Perfect Crucible

By Debbie Craig

2020 has felt like a **warrior style obstacle course**, with no map, no idea of the territory, no end in sight and a never-ending series of unexpected obstacles and surprises. The experience of each day depends on your own unique mindsets, attitudes, skills and energy AND access to resources and support you may need to get across the more challenging sections.

Each day, you need to rise again, with grit and resilience and a sense of humour for navigating the ups and downs of the day, eating some mud, getting a bit battered and bruised, but also working with and helping others and generating a sense of achievement of getting through another day – with a bit more strength and wisdom than the day before.



For me 2020 has been the **“perfect” crucible for personal growth** and putting into practice all the new knowledge, tools and habits I had just spent many months learning. It was not a smooth ride! I had just returned from a NeuroChange facilitator training course in Palm Springs when Lock-Down hit. I had been learning how to live and facilitate the neuroscience and biochemistry of change, learning, stress and addiction to certain emotional states. This was after a 7-day retreat with Dr Joe Dispenza to embed the science and the techniques to shift inner states regardless of internal thoughts or external triggers. And now the biggest global trigger arrived with a bang, impacting all aspects of life – health, financial, business, relationships and personal freedom.

I started out with a massive surge of energy and **“we can do this” attitude**, with 21 day yoga challenges, rugby bootcamps, offering on-line creative resilience webinars and meditation groups and joining a number of global healing and contribution initiatives. I also worked with my team and clients to learn new technology and figure out how to keep important projects going virtually both locally and internationally.

But once the initial 5 weeks turned into months with no end in sight, my extrovert, global traveler, group facilitator, hugger, wine lover, Type 7 personality **began to take strain**. My highest value is freedom and my biggest fear is to be constrained with limited options – and be made to be still enough to truly listen to and feel. I also thrive on interaction, conversations, feeling the energy in a room and seeing the light go on in people’s eyes – very difficult to do through a screen! The walls started closing in, I was getting no tangible validation of my worth, I couldn’t get out and run or travel to let off steam and I started questioning my value, wondering if “I am enough” and wondering if what I had created and who I was with ... was enough. I become rather critical of people around me who were not “loving” me in the way I “needed” or “wanted” and did some lashing out which I am not proud of. Thanks to some generous and skilled friends, I received some really great coaching .. and have been able to take back the responsibility of being the creator of my reality, rather than a victim to it or expecting other people to bring us our sense of worth or happiness.

After a few weeks retreating and struggling with myself and having some really honest conversations with others, I emerged with a **revised vision for myself**, a new acceptance of my ever evolving relationships and new energy to focus on the 4 big things I wanted to commit to. These were the 4 Bs of **BEING, BOOK, BUSINESS** and **BECOMING**. (Not the other nasty “B” words I may have been thinking in my lowest moments!!)

**BEING:** I wanted to focus on BEING joyful, free, optimistic, focused and energized. I re-engaged with my meditation practice and groups, joined the Tony Robbins 7 day #comeback challenge, dusted off my 20

year mountain bike and started cycling again and spent 5 weeks trying out celery juice, intermittent fasting and banting – a massive internal struggle, but with amazing health, confidence and energy results. Choosing how to BE is a daily choice - helped massively through a deeper commitment to daily meditation, breath and yoga habits to bring more awareness, choice and energy – even when you are not in the mood.

**BOOK:** I wanted to finish the BOOK I'd been dabbling with for over a year. I prioritised time to bring PowerUp8 to the world, and its associated surveys, webinars, workshops– to assist people with the critical capabilities to navigate an unpredictable world. This took an enormous amount of dedication, early mornings and weekends while I watched others just chilling. There were also many doubts about whether my own version of these capabilities would be appreciated, valuable and worth the mammoth effort. When you research and write about curiosity, courage, creativity etc, you can't help but notice areas in your own life where you show up a little differently – and this kept me going, as did so much support from many friends and colleagues!

**BUSINESS:** I wanted to build a sustainable business and team and create opportunities for interesting and meaningful work both locally and internationally. Covid-19 forced all of us to quickly adapt, upskill and find creative ways to engage our clients from a distance. Thankfully, our large projects continued and many additional hours and some tough conversations later, we managed to strengthen our partnership with them, and navigate the changing landscape together. I never imagined running large scale strategic transformation projects virtually including culture, leadership, strategy, operating models changes, performance, talent and capability building.

It was a significant challenge to balance timing, budgets, energy of the different teams, life curve balls and the frustration that comes with communicating through technology .. but I am so proud of my team and our client teams that showed outstanding resilience and commitment to the outcome. This time has also shown how collaboration can really add value, A big thank you to our many collaborators who co-created with us during this time to bring in the specific ideas, skills, events or tech needed to rapidly get results.

**BECOMING:** I wanted to spend my 50<sup>th</sup> year taking some time out to discover and define “my future self” for the next phase of my life. I had planned a sabbatical with loads of travel – and then all the borders closed. What now? I focused instead on creating the vision in my mind and heart using all the techniques I'd learnt at my retreat. What I didn't realise, is that in its own unique way, Covid would become a blessing in disguise and enable me to connect with people all over the world and build my international exposure and impact – without all the expense and travel. I found the energy to complete my Dr Joe Dispenza NeuroChange Consultant certification through diving into the world of virtual facilitation, and have since run “Change Your Mind - Create New Results” programs in Joburg, Cape Town, the Drakensberg and Cyberspace, with stunning shifts for the participants. I am very excited about bringing this next evolution of human potential into the corporate world to change organisations from the inside out. It's time for a change in how we manage and deal with change!

## WHAT HAS GOT ME THROUGH THIS TIME

My GO TO's when its feeling overwhelming, tough or just too hard are the following (all them still a work in progress for me!)

- ❖ **BE GRATEFUL:** When in doubt look for what you have to be grateful for
- ❖ **CONTRIBUTE:** When you are feeling down, help someone else in need
- ❖ **SHARE:** Have real conversations with friends and colleagues and share your progress and your struggles – it builds trust, understanding, compassion and enables mutual support
- ❖ **CREATE:** Trust that you are the creator of your own experience – through your own filters – of thoughts, beliefs, feelings and interpretations of people or events. If you want a different experience, examine your filters and choose more empowering beliefs, words and internal dialogue

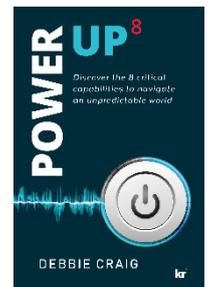
- ❖ **CONNECT:** When feeling overwhelmed, be quiet, go within, use your Alpha brain wave state and connect to your source of wholeness, love, possibility and inspiration – whatever that is for you. We always emerge more at peace with what is, and see many possibilities than we do in a brain fog of stress
- ❖ **STAY OPEN:** Always – to learning, feedback and different perspectives. We always have blind-spots and derailers that others can see better than us. When we get out of our rightness, opinions or preferred ways, we can become unstuck and start to flow again.
- ❖ **TRUST YOUR TEAM** and your special people – to do their best. Even when their best is not how you would or could imagine it, rather ask, encourage or offer assistance, than jump in to criticize or take over.
- ❖ **TRUST YOURSELF** – you have come this far, learnt so much, survived and have many skills and resources. Learn to listen to that inner voice as to what is right for you now, when to drive and when to rest, who to trust and who to let go of, what advice to listen to or what to invest your time and energy in. Many of the answers are there within.

### WHAT'S NEXT: 2021

Our big focus areas for 2021 are to bring our big 3 new offerings to their full potential in a way that is engaging, powerful and impactful and will be investing significantly in how to optimise virtual learning, coaching and consulting experiences.

**PowerUp<sup>8</sup>:** Building the 8 critical capabilities to navigate an unpredictable future

Check our December newsletter for more on the book, webinars, workshops, surveys, learning journeys to cultivate new identifies, shift beliefs, choose emotions and practice habits for more powerful and sustainable life and work results. We will be running facilitator training early in 2021 and it is very exciting that the workshop is currently being translated into Spanish with some awesome global partners for 2021.



**NeuroChange Solutions:** changing organisations from the inside out – by applying the neuroscience and bio-chemistry of learning, change, stress, resilience and peak performance

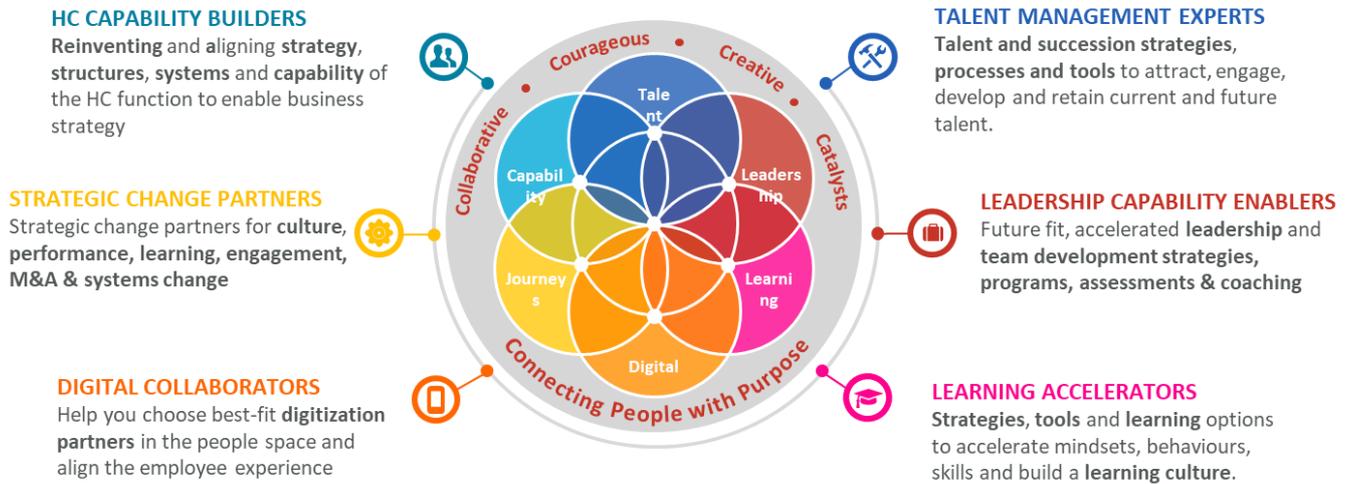
*Contact us for more on the webinars, workshops, tools, coaching and culture change consulting.*

## Talent **SHIFT**

**Talent Shift:** build the agile capabilities and talent needed for the rapidly evolving business environment

*Contact us for more on the tools, workshops, webinars, consulting and learning journeys*

We will still have on offer our 6 core areas of expertise that have built our success over the last 23 years and connected people, teams and organisations with their true purpose. Our creative, courageous, collaborative CATS are ready to co-create with you on your next transformation journey.



Wishing you a positive and powerful end to a very strange year and trust that you will discover the inner resources to navigate what is, imagine a “future you” and cultivate the beliefs and habits to walk into that future with a smile and a zest for adventure!

Happy Holidays

**Debbie**