

★ EURA The EuRApean

The EuRApean Questionnaire

Dr. John Potter

Opening Speaker, Vienna 2009



Please introduce yourself

I'm John Potter, a Business Psychologist working in a number of areas related to developing leadership, influencing and negotiation skills as well as helping people who have experienced traumatic experiences.

What do you consider the highlights of your career?

I had the privilege of being part of the Directing Staff at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst UK for eight years which enabled me to research for my PhD, be part of the military machine and work with very high calibre individuals.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Running an action group for the victims of a fraudulent investment scheme in which my mother had become involved. It was a real leadership challenge as the media and press were sceptical of our prospects for success but we guided a test case through the courts to determine negligence on the part of the investment brokers who had sold the product, won the test case and triggered compensation the whole group of around 500 investors.

What is your favourite film?

True Lies because it is a parody on the seedy world of intelligence operations carried out by many governments. There are great scenes in the film with Arnold Schwarzenegger playing the lead role with great impact and very amusing dialogue from all the actors in situations that would freak most of us out.

When were you happiest?

Sailing gently on the River Dart in Devon in the sunshine, watching a steam train meandering along the river bank and sharing a glass of wine with my partner.

Do you have any regrets?

Only that I did not take a year out between school and university. I didn't enjoy my time as an undergraduate in engineering as I really wanted to be a professional musician and a year or so out of the system would probably have been a good idea.

Who do you most admire?

That's a difficult question as I have many role models depending on the task at hand. However if there is one individual it would have to be Winston Churchill as he overcame great self doubt and nervousness to become the right leader at the right time. In fact when I have a stressful situation to face I always picture Churchill handling that situation and modelling my behaviour on how I think he would have behaved.

Where would you go for some winter sunshine?

Barbados. It's such a friendly place with fantastic people, great beaches and fabulous water sports.

Do you have a favourite saying?

Everything happens for a purpose.

What one thing would improve the quality of your life?

A greater ability to handle the mounting pile of paperwork in my office.

How would you like to be remembered?

"He made a difference helping people realise their potential".

If you could have dinner with one person, alive or dead, who would be your guest?

That's a very interesting question as I have been fortunate to have dinner with many of the people I admire during the course of my work as a speaker, consultant and trainer. However, given recent world events I really would like to talk through a whole range of issues with Barak Obama as the US plays such a pivotal role in all of us working towards world peace.

Do you have any ambitions for 2009?

To have the opportunity to influence the hearts and minds of as many senior executives, senior military officers and politicians as possible.