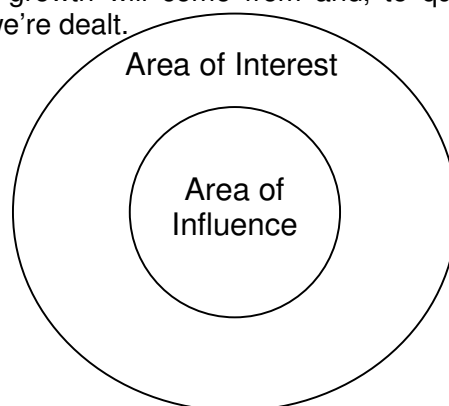


## **Playing Your Cards**

Listening recently to Simon Weston, I was struck by his positive attitude. It is admittedly twenty-seven years since he was thrust into the 'limelight' when as a young Welsh Guardsman who was badly burnt when Sir Galahad was bombed during the Falklands conflict, but nonetheless, his irrepressible approach remains inspiring. Sadly Weston Spirit, the charity he founded to help disadvantaged children in inner cities has folded – another victim of the credit crunch – but he is now actively involved in the Star and Garter homes for ex-service personnel. In the question and answer session after his presentation, he said several times that his attitude was “it’s not the cards you’re dealt, but how you deal with the cards you’re dealt”. His attitude has much to commend in these difficult times and, from a business perspective, it links closely with ‘Area of Interest and Area of Influence’.

Of course we are interested in the impact of the G20 discussions – too early to what the effect of those will be at the moment - and Alistair Darling’s budget of two weeks ago, but very few of us will have had any influence on it. As I write, there have been the usual and expected opposition jibes and complaints about the budget but unless there is a Commons Revolt that suddenly appears out of the blue (there was after all a defeat for the Government last week over Ghurkha rights of settlement in UK), we just have to accept it. How we deal with those changes will mark us out as leaders. Our role is to understand the impact of those changes on our business, identify with our teams the opportunities and challenges that come with those changes, and to communicate any resultant actions in a positive way – without of course being naively optimistic.

So as leaders, our psychological state is of vital importance. If we cannot get ourselves in the right place internally, it will quickly become apparent externally. An easy way to ensure we are in the right place is to listen to ourselves. If our internal voice is marked by resentment (they shouldn’t have done this) or resignation (there’s nothing I can do about this) then it will quickly become apparent in our external behaviour and we are actively disempowering ourselves – and our teams. What we need to do is to accept ‘What is...is’ (to quote the Dalai Lama) and then look for opportunities. That is where personal and business growth will come from and, to quote Simon Weston, we’ll be dealing with the cards we’re dealt.



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