

the
SHOWER,
the
COURSE
&
the
THOUGHT
BUBBLE

Rum Charles





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about the **AUTHOR**

London-born Rum Charles is the founder and principal consultant of Indigo Training. He is a vibrant, passionate and dynamic facilitator who specialises in training across a broad spectrum of topics, especially during times change and during the introduction of new technologies.

Rum began his working life in sales, before becoming a commodities broker in the UK, where he earned enough money to begin what became extensive travels.

He settled in Melbourne 16 years ago and soon established Indigo Training after being inundated by requests from organisations to train their sales staff (including the Australian Football League and Drake Training, to name but two).

Rum facilitates and trains people with same

passion and integrity by which he lives his life, encouraging participants to become fully involved in the learning process through engaging them in real life scenarios to reach training goals and integrate the principles learned throughout their whole lives.

FOREWORD

This is a self-help book that utilises a philosophy that guides you through five very simple steps to teach you the art of effective communication.

Communication is at the core of almost every daily activity, so it's important that we know how to do it effectively. It is a process of receiving information, letting it make sense, then returning the information – through finding out more or taking a course of action.

Even though this core activity is central to our lives, it is amazing how ineffective many of us are as communicators. This is where EQUAL will help.

Written through the eyes of well known training facilitator, Rum Charles, *The Shower, The Course and The Thought Bubble* takes us to a training room in need of a bit of oomph – and how the principle

evolved through simply testing it out.

Since that first day of EQUAL thirteen years ago, the philosophy has been employed as the centerpiece of every Indigo Training Program that Rum Charles and his team of talented facilitators conducts. Time and again he receives emails, letters and phone calls telling him how it has changed people's lives, and therefore is changing the world for the better, one person at a time.

EQUAL is born

(or beamed directly to Rum's consciousness)

What is EQUAL and how has EQUAL changed my life and the lives of others?

Well, there I was standing in the shower (sorry for the mental image), soaking up the positive vibes created by the negatively charged ions, when all of a sudden it hit me like a bolt out of the blue.

"My God", I thought. "No that cannot be! It's way too simple, how can that be so?!"

As I stood there allowing this very simple thought to run around my brain, looking for the holes, it became obvious.

"I know, I'll use it in a training room, and allow all the course participants to show me how this very simple idea could not possibly work."

With that, I got out of the shower .¹ (It's at this point I must apologise to Melbourne Water, because 25 minute showers are definitely not a good idea.)

A few hours later, there I was, standing in a room full of participants conducting a Customer Service course, or something along those lines. You know the type of thing – ten people, all from different companies and all with different needs, wants and objectives and for the most part not happy to be there in the first place.

We were about half way through day two of the course, following the standard Customer Service 101 manual. Eyes were glazing over, heads were nodding and bodies were stealing all the remaining energy to digest lunch, leaving brains to fend for themselves.

The course had hit the Doldrums. (For those of you who don't know, the Doldrums are a real place, between five degrees north and five degrees

1. All this began on a cold October morning at 6.48 am, in the year... Well, sometime in the mid nineties when Melbourne still had plenty of water and no water restrictions.

south of the equator. You can't give the Doldrums a precise location because they shift, depending on how the universe feels about our planet on any given day. The Doldrums are a totally becalmed stretch of ocean, feared by all mariners in the days of sail. Strangely enough, the Doldrums are also the source of all the worlds' winds (except perhaps for my Great Aunt Mabel, who creates cyclones of immense power inside her own intestinal tract).

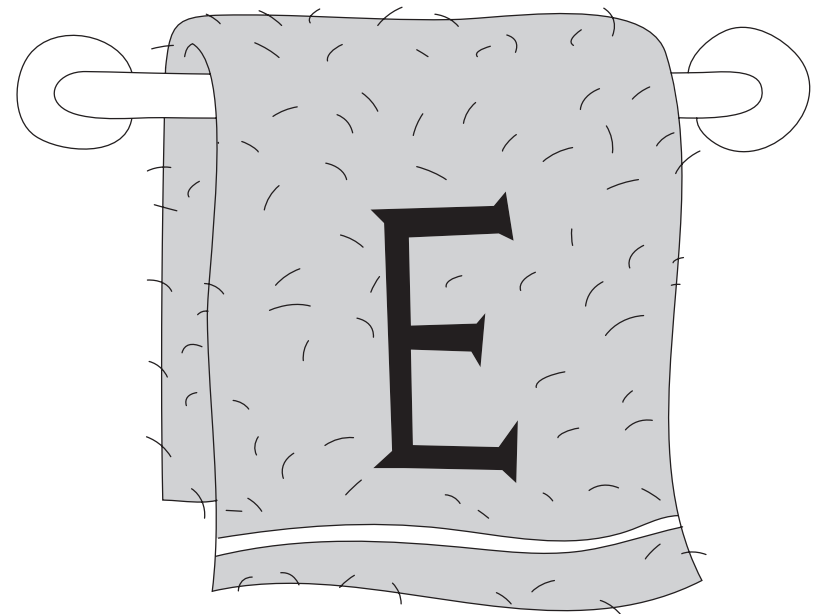
What was I to do? The course was in danger of being overtaken by lethargy, closely followed by despondency and then being dashed on the rocks of boredom – a sure way to sink any fledgling training career.

I had to whip up a storm! Something new, something controversial, something to be challenged, and something to boil the blood of this lacklustre, motley crew.

I did a mental search of my armoury, tossing aside cutlasses, bludgeons, muskets, and shot, and then my mind's eye fell upon EQUAL,

“Aha!²” I thought, eyeing the crew in front of me. “Here’s my chance to kill two birds with one stone, put some wind back in the sails of the course and dispel this crazy, simplistic notion from my mind!”

2. That Aha was worthy of “International talk like a pirate day” usually held in September.
<http://www.talklikeapirate.com/>



part ONE

Inspired by the thought of moving the course out of the Doldrums and doing my own market research, I grabbed the closest whiteboard marker, which just happened to be purple, and scrawled the following upon the whiteboard:



As I turned to face the group I was encouraged, but also a little bemused, to see amongst the faces two wry smiles and a look of shock.

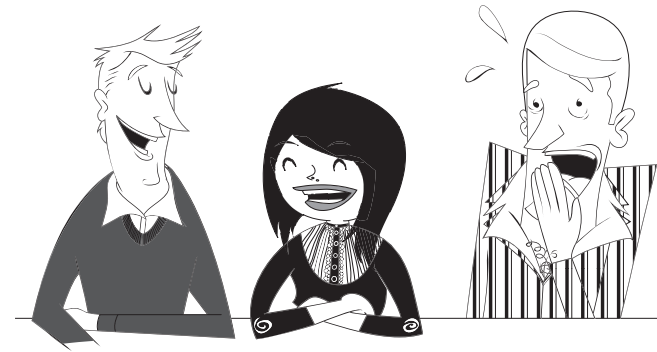


“Movement!” I thought.

I wasn't quite sure where the movement was going, but there was definitely movement. To capitalise on this slight breeze, I asked a question.

“What do you think the E on the board might stand for?”

At this point the wry smiles turned to broad grins and the look of shock to one of horror.



After a quick but heated discussion on the use and dangers of non-prescribed pharmaceuticals, which had the marked side effect of waking most of the group from their post lunch digestive slump, I again asked the question: “So ... what do you think the E on the board might stand for?”

As the group shouted out every word beginning with E they could think of (including ‘every’), I realised that EQUAL had passed its first test.

The letter E, thanks to popular culture, is now a contentious letter; therefore, by writing it on a whiteboard, I had created a great PIS³ for EQUAL.

3. PIS: Powerful Impact Statement. Any new concept or idea must have one of these to get anywhere

Eventually I heard what I was waiting for. A quiet woman at the back of the room uttered the word with as much disinterest as she could muster.

“Empaaathy...” she sighed.



“Did you mean empathy?” I asked, suddenly aware of her long drawn out tone.

“Yeahhhh...” she said.

I turned to face her, safe in the knowledge that anyone this negative would know just how to dispel this crazy notion from my mind.

“What does empathy mean?” I asked her.

“To put yourself in someone else’s shoes,” she replied. “Which of course is impossible, as ‘I am me’ and ‘they are them’, so how can I be them? It’s not possible, is it?”

Vindicated, I thought, “scrap EQUAL and get back to the 101 manual”.

Then, from the left side of the room, I heard a voice say, “Yes it is!”

“What do you mean?” I enquired, turning to face the voice.

“Well,” the voice went on, “there has to be two ‘yous’, one which is your normal you, and a neutral you!”

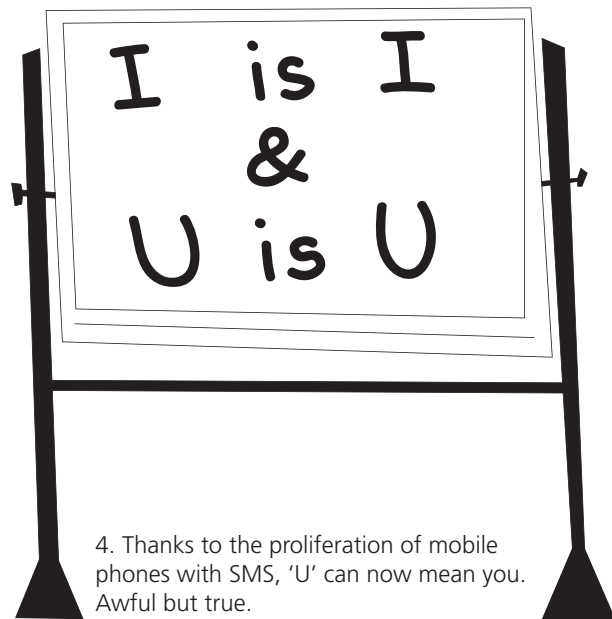
At this point everyone in the room looked totally confused, including me.

The voice went on. “No, no... you stay one person, but it’s not about you, it’s about them,” now looking directly at me, pleading for some kind of recognition or understanding, and as he did so, a volcano erupted in my head.



“Yes... yes,” I said. “I do understand!”

I turned back to the whiteboard and wrote⁴:



4. Thanks to the proliferation of mobile phones with SMS, ‘U’ can now mean you. Awful but true.

“You are both right,” I said, addressing ‘Ms Negative’ and ‘The Voice’. “No-one can be anyone else, but we can open ourselves up and put our own experiences and feeling towards the person and/or situation on hold.”

“In most cases, everything we see and hear is filtered through the experiences of our own lives, therefore we respond with an EGO-driven answer. When we respond in this way we set ourselves up for disappointment or miscommunication. We do it all the time.”

“What do you mean?” asked a guy wearing an expensive suit, looking up from his impossibly small techno toy.



“Well,” I went on, “people say things like, ‘if I were her, I would not do it like that, I would do it like X’ or ‘if I were him, I’d be able to do X much better than that.’”

Both of these statements are fundamentally flawed. If you were them, you would do it exactly as they were doing it, because you would be them, hence:

I is not U

I is I and U is U.”

The suit with the techno toy eyed me with a mixture of suspicion and scepticism, implying I was fine as long as I stayed well away from him. I continued anyway.

“So going back to having two yous... two yous gives us a double you (W), and if we put a W in front of EGO, we get WE/GO not EGO. By removing our ego we can, in effect, remove the filters of our own mind and become a neutral listener – listening, in reality, to what the other person is actually saying,” I said, and then took a breath before continuing.



“By communicating without ego, we can be empathetic. It takes courage to be in the world without ego, as it leaves our IDD exposed (The IDD being our inner selves, our inner child).”

This is cool, I thought. Nothing like a bit of Jung in the afternoon. I turned to the group. “Do you get it?” I enquired, feeling somewhat pleased with my own revelation.

Blank... except for a tiny giggle.

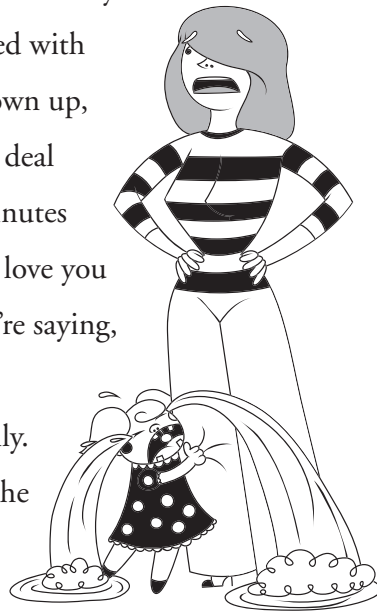
“What’s so funny?” I asked.

Still giggling, the answer came. “Well, it’s like being a mum isn’t it?”

“What?” I replied, feeling more than a little insulted. “Go on...”

“It’s obvious really. If I got upset and took it personally every time my two-year old banged her fists on my legs telling me she hates me and wished I wasn’t her mother, I’d spend most of my time on the floor a blubbing wreck,” she began.

“But I know she doesn’t really hate me, she’s just frustrated with the situation. So as the grown up, I rise above her words and deal with the situation. Five minutes later, she’s all smiles and ‘I love you mummy!’ That’s what you’re saying, isn’t it? Be a grown up and don’t take it all so personally. Get over it and deal with the situation in its reality.”



Feeling somewhat embarrassed at the brilliance and simplicity of her explanation I spluttered, “Yes, spot on! Don’t take it personally, take it professionally.”



The entire group nodded their understanding, and those who had children gave a knowing giggle of their own.