

# PERSONAL ETHOS CASE STUDY **MARCUS McEWEN**

**Marcus McEwen explains why he chose to undertake the Personal Ethos Process, how this has changed the way he processes the world around him, and the impact it has had on his personal effectiveness.**

*By Marcus McEwen, June 2013*

I'd been using Jonathan's personal effectiveness system for a year, it was embedded in my daily routine and I was reaping major benefits from it – on a personal level as well as on an organisational level. I saw the personal ethos process as the next step in tuning my mind.

I'd read a lot of resources looking at the science behind how the brain works as part of my on-going work with Jonathan. Now I wanted to apply that and essentially make my mind more efficient.

The personal ethos process took me 15 days in total, in 4 chunks over about 9 months. Essentially Jonathan guided me through a series of steps where I reflected on my experiences at various stages in my life – homing in on what was and is important to me. From this, he then helped me identify and turn this reflection into a set of guiding principles for my life going forward.

At a very basic level this enabled me to identify patterns in the way my brain processed the world around me and what I did as a result. I realised some of those patterns weren't actually that helpful and discovered what I had to change to be even more effective.

The personal ethos process is time consuming and very challenging. But I certainly got what I wanted from it. I have a much better insight, not just into my own behaviour but also why other people do what they are doing.

You learn to look at intelligence and capability in context and become better able to manage yourself and those around you. You start to make decisions based on a clearer sense of what is genuinely important to you, rather than dysfunctional programming you learnt a long time ago and have been unconsciously repeating ever since.

When you learn you have been doing certain things and behaving in certain ways over the years because of some ingrained pattern, it can make you feel kind of uncomfortable. You find a lot of your little ways of coping with life need to be updated. But it does help you make better decisions, that's for sure.



## **Marcus McEwen CV**

1996 to Present  
CEO and Founder of Equivoice

1992 to 1996  
Director of Service Bureau Sales  
Prairie Systems

1989 to 1991  
Director of Sales  
Bell South Communication Systems

1986 to 1989  
National Account Director  
Ameritech Communications

1981 to 1985  
Key account sales person for several  
large phone companies

1981 MPA University of Miami

1978 BA University of Florida

Marcus has homes in Chicago and Miami Beach and runs an organic farm in Wisconsin that specialises in grass fed Mini Herefords and other small cattle breeds. His company, Equivoice, is a multimillion dollar leader in the deployment of converged IT networks and shared services.

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There are now many times when I stop and check myself and ask ‘Am I about to react, do this or say this based on some old neurological pattern that does not in fact serve me?’

And before I make a big decision, I take a look at the outcomes of my personal ethos work and use this as a guide – to keep that decision in alignment with what is most important to me in life ... so, it’s a kind of very high level personal checklist for decision-making.

The main thing is that you achieve a higher level of clarity in all things. I’d always got pretty much everything I wanted in life, but now I’m better at knowing what I want – as well as achieving it.

I’m in a fortunate position, I’ve made enough money that I can do a lot of things other people can’t do. But at my age time becomes more important than money – I know I can always make more money, but time ... well, there’s only so much of that left.

## About New Leadership

New Leadership Ltd is a small international training and development company, specialising in taking a capacity-building approach to improving the effectiveness of leaders and their senior teams. The company was founded in 1999 by Jonathan Wolf-Phillips, after a career working in the IT industry (in the UK and Europe).

All the company’s work is based on a competency framework and interdisciplinary theoretical underpinning, developed and applied in a wide variety of private, public and civil society settings over the last 20 years. The company’s work is delivered by Jonathan Wolf-Phillips, through the following four fully integrated training and development programmes:

- Personal Effectiveness (1-to-1 training)
- Team Effectiveness (group training)
- Organisational Development (group facilitation)
- Personal Development (1-to-1 facilitation)

Jonathan’s LinkedIn profile:

<http://uk.linkedin.com/in/jonathanwolfphillips>

## The Personal Ethos Process

The Personal Ethos Process is one of the elements in New Leadership’s Personal Development Programme. It is an externally facilitated (1-to-1), highly structured, self-directed autobiographical reflection process. The process uses a specially designed methodology, and a number of innovative ‘visual-thinking’ tools, and requires a number of 1-day sessions to complete.

The process has been used over many years by people of differing ages in a variety of settings for a variety of reasons, including:

- Improving the ability to prioritise the use of time and focus day-to-day
- Preparing for a major life decision
- Increasing clarity about (or motivation for) an existing or new personal and/or work direction

Over the years, the most common application of the Personal Ethos process has been using it as the basis for an in-depth ‘mid-life review’, for people in their forties, fifties or sixties.

After completing the Personal Ethos process, clients can expect to have:

- Reflected on their past and identified what they remember as being important to them up until now
- Reflected on their future to see what they would like to remember as being important to them from now on (and articulated this in a ‘statement of personal ethos’)
- Identified the current main areas of focus or responsibility in their life
- Learned how to identify and refine realistic and flexible, short, medium and long-term intentions, that take into consideration their ‘personal ethos’
- Learned how to make short-term day-to-day decisions about how to use their time, energy and focus; that take into consideration the broader context of their ‘personal ethos’.

**Related case study:** Marcus McEwen, CEO of Equivoice, shares the thinking and tools he used to transform an already successful company into a serious industry player, poised for greater, more sustainable growth. February 2012