



DARKSWAN

CHALLENGE BASED LEARNING



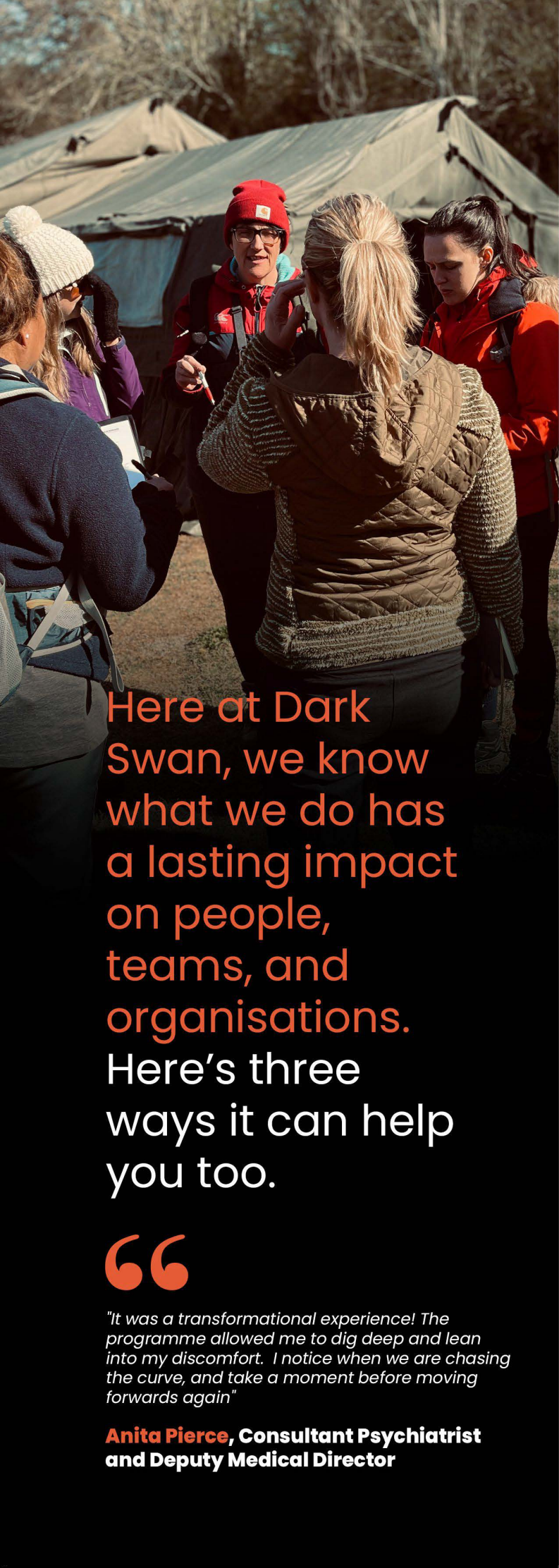
3 WAYS CHALLENGE

BASED LEARNING CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE



"It was life changing. I got to experience how I react in totally alien environments but was supported by the staff to navigate my way through these experiences. It was uncomfortable at times, and I needed to be compassionate towards myself and give myself time to process the experience and understand what this means for my identity both personally and professionally"

Carly Jackson, Clinical Psychologist



01

Being outside your comfort zone is where you'll really learn

We'll be honest, challenge-based learning isn't for everyone and attracts a certain type of team and organisation. Why? Because challenge-based learning exposes you in a way that most conventional learning and development programmes just can't. You'll learn more about yourself in a few short hours than sitting through endless hours of PowerPoint, reading reams of academic papers and books; or, attending a costly mind-numbing seminar, high-fiving each other and drinking awful coffee.

If you play it 'safe' in your development it shuts down your neural learning pathways. For most people their instinct is to avoid any learning experience that puts them under pressure and exposes their true character, where status and ego feel threatened and vulnerabilities, attitudes, and innate behaviours are surfaced so revealingly. Challenge-based learning demands that you (very quickly) get comfortable with this, but that you also recognise the value of your experience to build greater self-awareness. Importantly, you are able to acknowledge and accept your strengths, weaknesses and blind spots, and then be yourself with more honesty, openness and integrity.

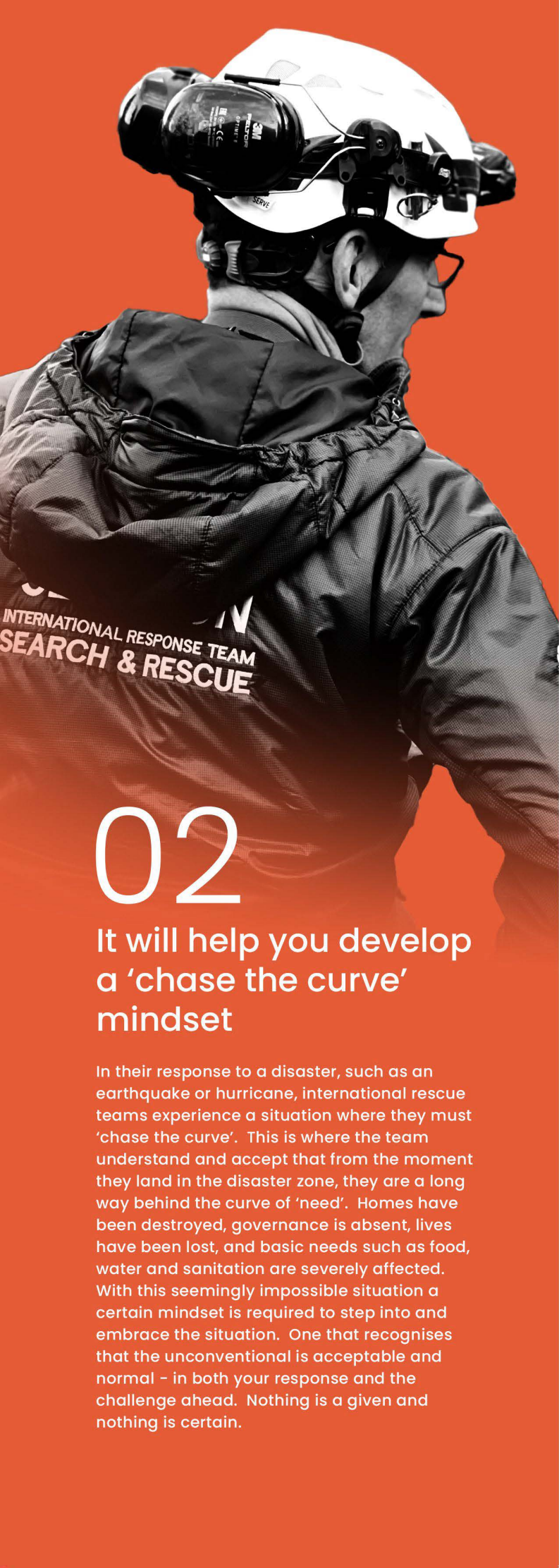
Challenge-based learning immerses you in novel environments and unfamiliar scenarios, where the task in front of you feels overwhelming and impossible. But this is a great leveller as no one is the expert in what you don't know. You must deal with pressure, competing demands and then craft a workable plan and make decisions based on very little information. You'll have to work with people who will look at the situation differently and have contrasting priorities to you. You'll have to confront and manage cognitive and emotional overload in your team that comes with uncertainty and continuous disruption. And you'll need to influence and build allies quickly, with the very real possibility of losing control of the situation and triggering a series of unintended consequences. You are literally on the back foot from the get-go, way outside your comfort zone and questioning your thinking and the decisions you make. But this is where the magic happens, and you can either embrace it or shy away. For those that choose the former, the experience can be transformational.

Here at Dark Swan, we know what we do has a lasting impact on people, teams, and organisations. Here's three ways it can help you too.

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"It was a transformational experience! The programme allowed me to dig deep and lean into my discomfort. I notice when we are chasing the curve, and take a moment before moving forwards again"

Anita Pierce, Consultant Psychiatrist and Deputy Medical Director



02

It will help you develop a 'chase the curve' mindset

In their response to a disaster, such as an earthquake or hurricane, international rescue teams experience a situation where they must 'chase the curve'. This is where the team understand and accept that from the moment they land in the disaster zone, they are a long way behind the curve of 'need'. Homes have been destroyed, governance is absent, lives have been lost, and basic needs such as food, water and sanitation are severely affected. With this seemingly impossible situation a certain mindset is required to step into and embrace the situation. One that recognises that the unconventional is acceptable and normal - in both your response and the challenge ahead. Nothing is a given and nothing is certain.

Challenge-based learning helps you develop and hone a mindset to face head on difficult and challenging situations. It highlights the power using cognitive diversity in your team and involving key allies to build situational awareness and a common operating picture.

You'll discover the value of failure, learning fast and then sharing new knowledge and approaches with your team and across key allies. You'll learn to 'chase the curve' of need knowing that - in any given moment - you'll feel like you're not making much progress but still able to dig deep to find the energy and motivation to pursue a common purpose. You'll need to make tough decisions and you'll continue to make mistakes along the way. But you will also learn to accept this knowing that it is part of the process and that you'll need to continually inspire and empower those around you going forward.

In business, sport, and in life it is not uncommon to deal with challenging situations, and the last few years has shown us all that the world is becoming increasingly uncertain and disruptive. Who in sport would have thought that the 2020 Olympic Games or a whole season's play would be disrupted? Who would have considered their job at risk from an unforeseen virus? How many businesses have had to change their business model to deal with not being part of the EU, or because the high street closed for months on end?

Challenge-based learning helps you shape a mindset to tackle these types of situations head on. To look for the critical path in any given situation and not the path of least resistance.

You'll learn to value being in this space and how it can help you confront uncertainty, adapt to a changing situation, and develop resilience in yourself and your team. To 'chase the curve' persistently and consistently in your work and in life.

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"The best practical learning in leadership I have ever experienced. The Radical Immersive provided useful and revealing insights into how I operate in team situations and helped me utilise that knowledge to improve my leadership skills"

David Hanna, Consultant in Paediatric Emergency Medicine

03 Future success can be shaped through three simple lenses



Whether in life, service, business, or in sport, you can look at the framework of how you operate through three simple lenses: **purpose, people, and performance**. However, this is rarely done well across all three domains, if at all. Many organisations are performance focussed and gauge success purely on outcome(s). For example, selling a product, making money, or winning medals. But this can often be pursued at the cost of peoples' development as well as their health and wellbeing. It can contaminate the organisation's purpose, its vision and mission, and then sabotage its culture and people's sense of belonging and feeling valued. Examples of where this is done well include the apparel company Patagonia who 'uses business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis'. Or UK Sport, that seeks to 'inspire the nation through Olympic and Paralympic success'.

Challenge-based learning helps you look through these three lenses and then teaches you how to apply them in a much more strategic way. To quickly assess and articulate the purpose of your team or organisation through a much broader range of factors - not just through short-term outcomes - that better align to the needs and aspirations of your team and long-term vision for your organisation. It teaches you to keep the bigger picture in mind and provides you with a useful framework for decision-making. And when considered equally, the pillars will keep egos, emotions and self-interest in check to help you stay on mission. They are hugely powerful and can also help you shape and embed meaningful values with agreed and aligned behaviours. And importantly, it provides you with a framework of responsibility and accountability that everyone can buy into. Ultimately, by doing some focussed work around **purpose, people, and performance** you give your people greater clarity of how you want to go to work and can inspire performance that is truly transformational.



"This experience was exactly what I needed -practical application of leadership skills, the right balance of challenge and support and importantly no death by PowerPoint!"

Lucie Cornish, Assistant Director of Therapies and Health Science

So, there it is. Three powerful ways challenge-based learning can change your life. Why not incorporate this powerful approach into your people development strategy. Give us a call today.



HERE'S HOW WE DO IT:

- 01** Book a call
- 02** Get the know how
- 03** Thrive

So, you can stop worrying about crumbling under pressure or underperforming as a team and put more into life, whatever it throws at you.



It was such an amazing experience, the more I think back the more I realise how great the experience was.

Rhoswen McKnight, Trainee ANP

Book a [Calendly](#) Call



DARK SWAN CO-FOUNDERS



Dan Cooke is the Operations Director for the humanitarian response charity, Serve On. He has deployed on rescue operations around the world. He spent 20 years in the Fire & Rescue Service, reaching the rank of District Commander. More recently Dan's work in high-performance has seen him consult for elite sport, multiple cross-sector businesses, and several UK special forces units, helping them develop human factors around the pillars of Purpose, People and Performance. Dan's main interest is around developing cohesion and belonging for authentic growth and collaborative success.



Al Humes has spent the last 5 years working with Elite Sport and consulting in the private and public sectors. He has chaired numerous culture review panels on behalf of UK Sport and has designed and delivered workshops on strategy, leadership, and human factors for businesses and across multiple sectors. Prior to this he served for nearly 30-years in the British Army where he deployed all over the world and was instrumental in the design, development, and delivery of training policy. Al's main interest is helping organisations create the right environment and conditions to align and communicate Purpose, Vision, Mission, Culture and Performance for sustainable success.

Contact us to discuss how we can help your organisation or team. info@darkswan.uk
www.darkswan.uk

