



What are you tolerating?

Many years ago when I did my first Executive Coach Training (2001, since you ask.....when Executive Coaching was very, very new in the UK) one of the exercises we completed was this: What are you tolerating?

What are you tolerating in your life, your work, with your family and friends – and what do you want to do about it? I have to confess it was the first time I'd really asked myself this question and I didn't like some of the answers.

We tolerate things because we think 'that's just the way it is', 'that's just the way I am', 'I don't know what else to do instead' or 'I'm scared that if I change it, X, Y or Z might happen' (which could be worse).

It's a question that I go back to again and again when I realise I may have got into a rut or a 'habit' and it may not be serving me well.

It's a question I use with coaching clients, too. In the last two weeks I've spoken to two leaders who are 'tolerating' what they describe as passive-aggressive or 'toxic' team members. They have worked round these individuals sometimes for years. Often they've been shifted around the organisation, or different managers have 'tried to manage them'. Nobody wants them in the team.

But no-one is really biting the bullet.

Or asking 'what's really going on here and what can we do about it'?

Instead, everyone continues to work round them and that takes up vast amounts of time and emotional energy.

Talk about the elephant in the room!

If you've got someone like that in your team then, believe me, the rest of the team is desperate for you to take action here.

Of course the 'passive-aggressive' or 'toxic' team members have their own view of the world and what's going on.

And one of my mantras is always 'first seek to understand'.

But if you continue to tolerate this any longer what will the impact be – on you, on the team, on your health and on your productivity?

Is it worth putting up with it or is it time to take action?

As always, just take the first step.

And get the right support – it's tough to do this stuff alone.