



# Structural Dynamics and Behaviour in High Stakes – Catherine Thomson

## Resource Guide

# About Catherine Thomson



[www.houstonexchange.co.uk](http://www.houstonexchange.co.uk)

Catherine Thomson is founder of CHT Consulting, an organisational development consultancy. She is also an Associate Consultant within the People and Organisational Development (POD) Division with Edinburgh Napier University. A graduate of Sheffield University, she is an accomplished organisation development consultant with domestic and international experience across all sectors. Her expertise is in supporting organisations develop leaders to attain a level of agility that matches the unprecedented level of change and complexity currently being experienced in the 21st Century.

She started her career in the Civil Service working across the Department of Employment Group in a variety of managerial and leadership roles including delivering executive and managerial training at the Civil Service College London. She has also worked in local government, heading up the training department for the education department within Lothian Regional Council.

Prior to setting up her own business in 1996, she was HR Architect with Barclaycall, the telephone banking channel of Barclays Bank where she was responsible for the design, build and implementation of an integrated approach to People, Process and Technology which supported the business to drive performance and maximise talent at all levels in the organisation.

Catherine is an advocate of working with leaders using “systems Intelligence”, helping them to go beyond reaching agreements to reaching new understandings from which to think and act. In this way they build organisations that are profitable, enlightened, healthy and compassionate. Catherine trained in Boston MA with the Kantor Institute on Dialogue™ a process that supports greater understanding of the dynamics of how teams communicate within their organisational system. Her recent assignments have included work with intact and cross functional teams at every level in the organisation, exploring personal and group insights into those areas of their communication that is normally less visible (assumptions, beliefs, values etc.) and the implications these have on personal contribution to the group dynamic, quality of decisions and employee engagement. She has helped individuals and teams develop insights and new thinking on how to expand their own behavioural repertoire when working towards new aligned thinking and meaning in relation to change, pivotal conversations and growing people capacity within the organisation.

# High Stakes

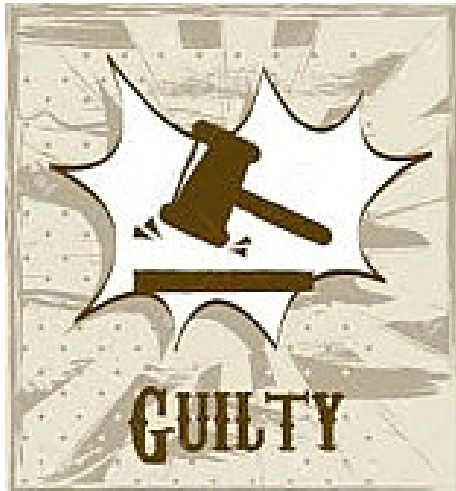
- A high stakes situation is one that causes anxiety or discomfort so intense that it provokes an involuntary behavioural response.
- At the extreme the response is physical. Your pulse is elevated. Your palms are sweaty.
- In either case, an ordinary moment has been turned into a “life threatening “ one

# Examples of Triggers

- Being separated from someone you care about
- Failing to deliver on an important work assignment
- Being passed over for a promotion
- Losing a substantial portion of your retirement savings
- Having your ideas grossly misrepresented to others
- Being viewed as having low integrity
- Experiencing a serious health issue
- Finding out you have been betrayed by a colleague
- Being shown up by a colleague
- Being silenced in an important debate
- Witnessing someone else being verbally mistreated
- Being perceived as cold and uncaring

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# Postures of Moral Justice



**PROSECUTOR**



**ADJUDICATOR**



**ADVOCATE**

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# Heroic Modes



FIXER



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PROTECTOR



SURVIVOR

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# Heroic modes (Kantor, 2012)

- The Protector –
  - Light zone – caring, compassionate, moral.
  - Dark zone – maudlin victim
- The Fixer
  - Light zone – lead from the front with formidable energy
  - Dark zone – overcoming whatever the cost
- The Survivor
  - Light zone – perseverance and endurance
  - Dark zone – martyring and abandoning

# Shadow of Heroic Modes


- Each heroic mode has a corresponding Light, Gray and Dark Zone where its characteristics assume more positive or

Light Zone	Gray Zone	Dark Zone
Your heroic identity assumes its most ascendant qualities and makes you feel vital, authentic and fully alive	As your identity slips into the gray zone, the value of your heroic identity becomes tainted, exhibiting both the hero's positive and negative traits	The dark zone or Shadow is the vast inner domain where each of us, no matter what hero type we embody, hold all our biases, doubts and fears



# Connect with Catherine

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