

## A personal letter from Tony Buzan...



Let me take this opportunity to invite you to the first ever Buzan BrainSmart Kids Camp held this coming Dec 2008 in conjunction with Buzan Centre Asia's Mental Literacy programmes and conducted by Senior Buzan Instructor, Ian Dyason, and his fabulous team at A I Training Consultants. I congratulate you for making the effort to participate in the next stage of human evolution – the Age of Intelligence. And what better way than to use the mental development tool that more than 100 million people worldwide are using now – the Mind Map®!

I started thinking about how we use our minds back when I was in university. One day, I stopped by the library and asked what books they had on developing the brain. The librarian pointed me to the medical section. I exclaimed, "I want to learn how to use my brain, not perform surgery on it!" But that was all they had. And thus started my 40-year journey into how the mind worked and how to keep it active throughout life. I started out by working to develop my memory power. I discovered what the Greeks had used centuries earlier when they were considered conjurers of the mind. Their systems are known as mnemonics.

As I continued on my journey, I made the most profound discovery that most of what we had been using in school was programmed to make us less smart! We couldn't use colour or images; and we were definitely *not* allowed to daydream! But what a difference it would have made if indeed we were allowed to use them! All geniuses do! And thus was born the Mind Map – the tool to tap the infinite potential of the human mind! But I was not content to rest there. I found that if we accelerated the way we took information in, the way we assimilated it and churned it out as knowledge, we would be able to multiply our Mental Literacy by tens of times and more! And thus was born my vision of Global Mental Literacy. Of teaching the world not *what* to learn, but *how* to learn. We are continuing this to this day – and the Buzan BrainSmart Kids Camp is certainly the next major step to take in achieving this dream!

Let me end with a little story. This happened in 1982 but it could easily have happened yesterday. I met a boy by the name of Edward Hughes. He was 16 years old then and studying to sit for his O Levels. He was a boy with passion and wanted to study in Cambridge. However, there was one problem. He averaged a C grade for all his subjects. When he mentioned to his teachers that he wanted to try out for the Cambridge entrance exams, they all laughed at him. No one wanted to sponsor him. So his dad said to him, "Alright son. If you want it so bad, I will back you up. But not until you meet with this man named Tony Buzan." The senior Mr Hughes had just finished reading my first book, *Use Your Head*. So I met Edward and I taught him three things: how to Mind Map, how to speed read, and how to use his memory. Then something in his mind clicked. Everything about learning made sense to him. And he applied them all towards his studies. Then he took the test. Not only did he get accepted into Cambridge; he also scored the highest for the whole country for two subjects. His teachers were dumbfounded! But that is not the end of the story. Edward went to Cambridge and jumped headlong - not into his studies - but into all other activities. He became President of several clubs in the university and he was also elected President of the Presidents Club. Edward seemed to have had time for everything except studies. However, when he finally graduated valedictorian, everyone was stunned. How could someone who did not seem to have studied do so well? The answer comes from Edward himself: "I would speed read everything and apply Tony Buzan's learning methods. So while I was reading several books, most of my mates were only on one." Today, Edward is a retired multimillionaire living in California with two teenage children who are getting straight "A"s because he was teaching them what he had learnt to get into Cambridge.

*So don't contemplate signing up for the camp. Jump at it!* You are in hands of one of my trusted senior instructors, Ian Dyason. And I am sure many of you, if not all, will have an Edward Hughes story to tell too. I look forward to hearing these stories from you when I next come to Singapore in April 2009!

Tony Buzan  
5 October 2008