



## Matt Dean

Matt co-founded byrne-dean in 2003. His vision then was to create a cutting edge collective, excelling at the things then seen as peripheral by employment teams in the City: training, investigations and early resolution. From the moment of his first Employment Tribunal hearing (in 1990) Matt was convinced there was another way. He's been committed to early resolution using the principles of mediation since the early years of byrne-dean.

Matt is a great facilitator and has done his 10,000 hours since setting up Simmons & Simmons' market leading Employment Law Training Team (ELT) in 1998. Talking to groups about people risks soon became talking about inclusion and changing workplace behaviour. Kinder, fairer workplaces releasing potential was born.

The key skill of a facilitator is asking questions that get people to reflect on the impact they are having.

Originally a Unilever Brand Manager (including a period living and working in Singapore), Matt qualified as a lawyer in 1991 and worked at Richards Butler (now Reed Smith) and Simmons & Simmons until 2003.

Matt chaired the Training Sub-Committee of the Employment Lawyers Association between 2002 and 2006. He was also Chair of Islington Law Centre (formerly North Islington Law Centre) from 1999 to 2005 where he had worked as a weekly volunteer and member of the employment unit since 1991.

## Experience

**1:1 work** – regularly works with people who have been at the centre of employment problems; without doubt the most effective training we do. In a confidential session people are able to ask the questions that enable them to understand how the problem happened and how they can avoid it happening again.

**Workplace behaviour** – well versed in employment tribunal litigation, Matt's increasing specialisation in harassment cases has seen him focus on how to change the day-to-day behaviours that create tensions at work.

**Leadership and thought leadership** – from 1998 until his second cancer in 2016, Matt led ELT and then byrne-dean including through the financial crash of 2008/9. Matt thinks deeply about workplace dynamics and created the straightforward and accessible tools at the centre of byrne-dean's core work. How employment problems happen, the cycles that push colleagues apart and how to bring about cultural change by focusing on our individual roles in the workplaces.

**Diversity, equity and inclusion** – from 2004 inclusion has been at the centre of Matt's thinking. Living with cancer since 2009 inform his work and without doubt how he approaches inclusion.

**Mental health** – all employment problems can be viewed through a mental health lens: challenging your employer (or being challenged by a colleague) is a hugely stressful experience. Matt has lived experience of mental ill health including a diagnosis of trauma related anxiety following cancer surgery.

## Qualifications

BA (Law), Oxford

LSF, Manchester Polytechnic

Cross cultural understanding, Hofstede Institute

Matt's first book *The Soft Stuff: reclaiming kindness for the world of work* was published in 2019