



Focusing on Potential and Dignity to Win Success

Two books highlight ways to transform your organization.

By Terrence Fernsler

Appreciative Intelligence: Seeing the Mighty Oak in the Acorn

By Tojo Thatchenkery and Carol Metzker.
232 pages. Hardcover. Berrett-Koehler Publishers,
www.berrett-koehler.com.

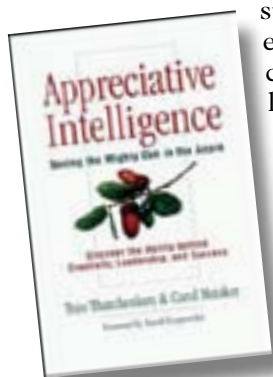
Appreciative intelligence is the ability to reframe your experiences, appreciate the positive, and see how possible futures unfold from the present (symbolized by looking at an acorn and envisioning the oak tree it can become). Using appreciative intelligence can lead your organization to a higher incidence of innovation, more productive participants, and greater ability to adapt to a changing environment, giving you a competitive edge and more powerful impact.

Using these techniques can bring higher rates of employee satisfaction and entrepreneurship.

The authors of this groundbreaking book are searching for the ingredients to success. They find a correlation between successful leaders and high appreciative intelligence. Such leaders are creative, optimistic risk-takers who put resources into ideas that work.

Appreciative intelligence can be cultivated and strengthened. The authors include exercises you can perform to increase your own appreciative intelligence and that of your organization. These exercises will help you understand how to reframe reality, explore new areas, and learn from success.

Viewing the potential of the future and developing scenarios to get there can become contagious. Using these techniques can bring



Boost Your Organization's Appreciative Intelligence

Answer these questions to help you determine where pockets of appreciative intelligence exist in your organization and how to use these assets to create a successful future.

1. What does your organization do to reward, recognize, and appreciate people and their actions? Who in your organization does this most often, most sincerely, or most effectively?

2. What individuals in your organization are most likely to appreciate the positive, reframe reality, and see how the future unfolds from the present?

3. Under what conditions is your organization most effective? Which qualities are your organization's strongest, or which occur most often? When are people in your organization most likely to be optimistic and creative, looking forward to a positive future?

4. Describe a future scenario in which your organization is thriving. What qualities show up most often? What stories are spreading through the organization? What rewards are people experiencing?

5. How can you expand the profile you described in question 3 to realize the scenario you described in question 4?

higher rates of employee satisfaction and entrepreneurship and keep organizations relevant and important. This is a fascinating book, with an idea necessary for organizations to explore as they forge into the future. ■

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All Rise: Somebodies, Nobodies, and the Politics of Dignity

By Robert W. Fuller. Hardcover. 213 pages. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, www.berrett-koehler.com.

In a previous book, Robert Fuller discussed the issue of rankism—the abuse of power inherent in rank—and the need for dignity in what we do. In *All Rise*, he explains how to create organizations and societies with dignity at their core.

Nearly all of us have been treated like a nobody at some time.

Many of our societal shortcomings can be traced to rankism. Racism, sexism, and classism are all forms of rankism. Rankism is intended to make its victims feel like nobodies. Treating others with dignity—valuing them for their qualities as human beings—will improve all our lives.

Nearly all of us have been treated like a nobody at some time, and just about as many of us have treated others as nobodies. Fuller believes a “dignitarian” society is a step in the gradual evolution of human cooperation. He explains where resistance to this evolution arises (and why) and how to respond to it.

Many ordinary people are dignitarians. They not only protect the dignity of those around them but bear

Leaders who abolish rankism reap enormous benefits.

How to Root Out the Evils of Rank

Leaders who abolish rankism and treat everyone with equal dignity reap enormous benefits. Here are some guidelines to transfigure your organization:

Flatten unnecessary hierarchies, and foster diversity. Celebrate and tap differences for the wisdom they hold.

Encourage questions and dissent.

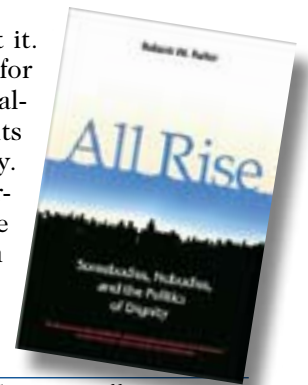
Exemplify rather than exhort. You can do more by providing people with a personal example worthy of emulation than by invoking your authority.

Adopt “flex-rank.” Be ready to change everyone’s rank on a task-by-task basis to facilitate each new undertaking.

Delegate power. Every decision made at the top should be lamented as a lost chance to delegate responsibility.

Be open about compensation. Doing so will allay suspicion, yield savings, and create a sense of communal trust. It will also discourage favoritism, one of the most invidious forms of rankism.

witness to unfairness and protest it. These people serve as models for building a more just world. Equality and fairness, which nonprofits strive to attain, will follow dignity. Fuller describes how to encourage the use of dignity to become a more functional organization and develop a safer, fairer, more desirable society. ■



Terrence Fernsler is the individual-giving officer for the Olympic Park Institute in Seattle.

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