

Four-Day Workweek Deemed a Resounding Success

Results are in from a four-day workweek trial in the U.K., and high levels of satisfaction are reported: 92% of organizations plan to continue with the policy, and virtually all the participating employees say they have no desire to return to old ways of working. Asked to make a hypothetical trade-off between working time and pay, 70% of employees say they would require a higher salary of between 10-50% to go back to a full, five-day schedule, and most of the others say there's no amount of money that could induce them to go back to a five-day week.

Recruitment expert Kathleen Quinn Votaw (talenttrust.com) notes that workplace flexibility results in less anxiety, more transparency, and improved mental and physical health, as well as increased productivity, staff retention, and revenue. When compared to a similar period from previous years, organizations reported revenue increases of 35% on average, which indicates healthy growth during this period of working time reduction, and staff turnover decreased, dropping by 57% over the trial period.


Organizations that participated in the trial weren't required to rigidly deploy one type of working time reduction as long as pay was maintained at 100%. Resisting the idea that the four-day week must be one-size-fits-all, each organization designed its own model, with recommendations by staff. Although the classic "Friday off" was the most common, a range of other four-day weeks were developed, including "staggered," "annualized," and "conditional" structures.

Work performance increased significantly during the four-day week, yet there was no increase in work intensity or stress. Through careful planning and staff input, organizations were able to put in place a variety of practical measures to adjust to the shorter workweek, including:

- **making meetings shorter**, less frequent, and with clearer agendas and objectives
- **introducing a "heads down" or "focus" period** – a designated time of day for staff to conduct independent work uninterrupted
- **reorganizing calendars** to promote "monotasking," eliminating the time wasted on switching between tasks
- **reducing e-mail exchanges** by encouraging staff to be more attentive to the purpose of their messages and who needs to be involved.

Over the course of the pilot, managers and staff alike repeatedly praised the value of the four-day week as a catalyst for organizational change, noting that the policy energized them to think in fresh ways about what they did and how they did it. Some staff talked about the sense of energy and shared purpose arising from the collective effort of implementing the

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four-day week. Others talked about feeling valued and being proud of their organization's leaders for trying something novel. One participant summed it up: "When you realize that extra day has allowed you to be relaxed and rested, and ready to absolutely go for it on those other four days, you start to realize that to go back to working on a Friday would feel really wrong – stupid actually." 


“Efforts to reduce complexity won't make the world less complex.”

The Power of the Culturally Diverse Leader

Leadership models have long been rooted in Western traditions, bound by time, place, gender bias, and ethnocentricity. Most such models are inadequate in today's multicultural contexts. They don't prepare us to lead in diverse human environments in which adapting is the norm. Current leadership studies tend to focus on the technical aspects of *how* to lead; we can learn much from traditions that include *what* to lead toward.

The effects of globalization are evident even in relatively isolated communities and will only grow. *Global and Culturally Diverse Leaders and Leadership* (emerald.com/insight) examines culturally-based models, not to compare one against the other but to explain how they can become complementary.

Efforts to reduce complexity won't make the world less complex. Most Western-taught organizations, including nonprofits, look to individual leaders for goals and often find that this "heroic" leadership isn't up to the task. More heterogeneous models of leadership are needed.

This book demonstrates the responsibility nonprofits have as community gathering places to understand how we shape values, goals, and interdisciplinary approaches to leadership. The book's authors offer examples that will open conversations about a more balanced view of leadership. Their approaches are designed to help us develop skills across a wide range of situations and to resolve nasty, hard, and interconnected social problems. Their insights help us reflect on ways to develop more inclusive leadership. 

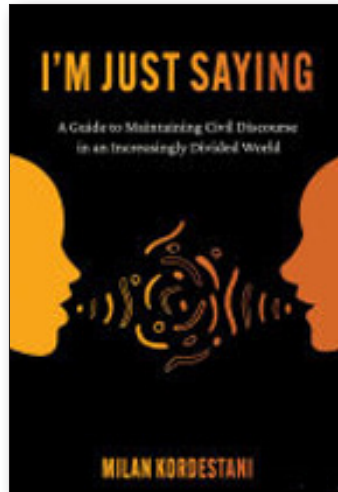
– reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Politeness in Peril: How to Have Constructive Conversations

As society becomes more and more divided, cordial communication is in crisis, and it's essential for us all to learn to communicate with those whose opinions differ from our own. Milan Kordestani takes on this issue in *I'm Just Saying* (Health Communications, Inc., hcibooks.com). These are a few areas that are undermining courteous communication, along with his tactical tips for constructive conversations:

1. The Challenge: So many of us today find ourselves overbooked and overwhelmed, leaving little time to explore why civil discourse has decayed in our lives.

The Resolution: We need to schedule time for reflection. Doing so takes conscious effort and a focus on continuous improvement. Practice silencing the distractions around you while digging deeply into your motivations and remembering your core values.



2. The Challenge: Much of the problem with discourse revolves around our intent: Are we engaging in conversation to learn, share ideas, and benefit all parties, or are we just looking to score points and win no matter the cost? Ill intent is often encouraged and even rewarded in our polarized world. Even more challenging, some people deliberately mask their intent, taking control of discourse and manipulating its progression.

The Resolution: Always bring positive purpose to your conversations with the goal of having a harmonious debate. Ask yourself, “What is the most optimal outcome desired?” Discerning the intentions of others includes understanding body language, facial expressions, and verbal cues that signal intent at the subconscious level. For example, if someone covers their mouth with their hand while listening to you, it might mean they’re holding back something they want to express. Here, you can consider pausing and asking if the other person would like to interject before you continue speaking.

3. The Challenge: We all use different tones in different circumstances to impart meaning, but all too often we fail to harness this tool to our benefit. With the wrong tone, even the best of intent becomes misunderstood, leading to confusion and concern.


The Resolution: Tweaking the trifecta of tone, mood, and intention is a tool for better discourse. Learn to assess your own tone by paying close attention to how your speech affects others relative to volume, pace, inflections, and words chosen, Kordestani suggests. Endeavor to be controlled and intentional no matter what your mood or stress level is.

4. The Challenge: The polarization of our politics and media has encouraged us to fortify the social bubbles we live in, putting less effort into hearing the opinions and perspectives of those who are different from us. We have a harder and harder time finding common ground and maintaining respect for those with whom we debate.

The Resolution: The first step to finding common ground is accepting that others have different opinions and empathizing with their experiences and perspectives so that those opinions can be put into context. Find a human connection by asking fun, personal questions to disarm and break down barriers. Another powerful tool for building connections and finding common ground is humor. Sharing a laugh can highlight mutual fears and aspirations, reduce tension, produce a sense of camaraderie, and lighten the mood.

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5. The Challenge: No matter how hard you try, disrespect and hurtful language can occur. The challenge lies in identifying useful conflict and growing from those discussions while protecting yourself from dishonest or malicious speakers looking to hijack civil discourse.

The Resolution: Sharing conflicting perspectives for the purpose of growing is far different from engaging in malicious discourse. Learn to accept and reflect on constructive criticism by asking others to corroborate and expand on their judgments. Differentiate valuable critiques from belligerent expressions by examining the motivations of the other speaker, urges Kordestani. Also, strive to protect yourself from the double-edged sword of social media when looking through your feeds. Examine how the algorithms can create artificial bubbles. A practical technique for resetting discourse that has deteriorated into outright conflict is to take a step back, disengage, assess your own tone, and remind yourself of your ultimate intention. Doing so can help you model positive civil discourse and encourage the same from those around you. 

How Is Artificial Intelligence Transforming Our Organizations?


A recent survey by Ajroni Web Development (ajroni.com) provides insights into how artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing the way we communicate with our audiences. The survey findings, detailed in the “AI Revolution Report,” show that AI has firmly rooted itself as a fundamental communication tool, with over 80% of responders saying they use AI in their marketing efforts. The benefits of AI-driven strategies are real, the report makes clear.

Of the 1,057 participants (mostly in the marketing, technology, finance, education, and healthcare fields), only 3.7% reported not using AI at all. When asked which AI tools they use, 85.2% identified ChatGPT, which helps create content quickly; 47.2% use Jasper.ai, which specializes in conversational AI and helps generate responses through its intuitive interface; and 33.3% use Grammarly, a writing assistant tool. Other AI tools that were mentioned include GrowthBar at 18.5% and Midjourney at 17.6%.

Respondents say they use AI to provide personalized content to market to a specific audience; make predictions about how their audiences will behave; identify the most relevant audience segments; schedule social-media posts; analyze metrics; optimize voice search queries; send personalized e-mails (which improves open and click-through rates); analyze keyword search trends; suggest content that will improve search-engine rankings; and rank people most likely to donate major gifts.

Organizations have integrated tools like ChatGPT into virtual assistants, noting that this chatbox can handle people’s inquiries like real humans. Some customize educational and

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training programs to provide personalized learning experiences. Many use ChatGPT to automate social-media posts, respond to user comments, and generate engaging marketing content. A significant majority (76.9%) attest to AI's transformative effects on their website traffic and conversion rates, witnessing remarkable improvements in website visits and engagement as AI-driven strategies optimize user experiences. These survey responses highlight the versatile ways that AI caters to diverse needs and strategies, the report's authors conclude. 

Four Strategies for Meeting Budget Goals


Tad Czyzewski, Executive Director of Choral Arts (choralarts.org), points out that keeping a nonprofit afloat is a balance of income, efficiencies, and expense monitoring. He shares these strategies for meeting budget goals:

Pricing strategy. Choral Arts used to have standard section pricing for almost every concert, Tad says. Then he looked at historic data and saw that there were seats that never (or very seldom) sold. "Why decrease marketing-dollar efficiency by trying to sell every seat in the house at historic prices?" he wondered. His advice: Start lower. Some revenue is better than none.

Dynamic pricing. "When a venue allows us to modify pricing after a program goes on sale, we monitor sales very closely," Tad explains. "As capacity decreases in certain sections of the concert venue, we raise the price on those seats. If certain seats aren't selling, we do the opposite."

Patron retention. "During COVID, without in-person concerts, the subscription model went out the window. (Choral Arts is lucky to still have a healthy yearly subscriber program)," Tad says. "To retain patrons, we created a Netflix-like streaming-service subscription model. For \$9.99 a month, we offered subscribers an 'experience' every month. Most were 45 minutes to an hour to keep us top-of-mind with our patrons so as to hopefully convert them back to in-person subscribers when we returned to live performances. These experiences could be interviews, videos of signature moments in our history, or virtual choir videos. We also had poetry readings with the Irish Ambassador because he was our honorary patron for the year and poetry is a passion of his."

Staffing retention. A critical aspect of any organization is maintaining a stable and experienced workforce. Poor employee retention can be both costly and damaging to an organization. "We didn't lay off anyone during COVID even though we didn't have concerts. We kept our employees engaged and enthusiastic by cross-training. For example, our artistic production coordinator became our main streaming guy and video editor," Tad tells us.

"Without sound business practices in place, nonprofits can't meet budget goals, thrive, grow, or even survive," Tad says. "Choral Arts is a small business, albeit with a beautiful product." 

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Walking Together for Social Change


Advocates for justice are in tough times. Increasing economic inequality, political polarization, racism, and global warming are afflicting many lives. Our institutions, usurped by elites, are proving unable to protect us.

Yet opportunity knocks louder and more frequently in troubling times, asking us to stand up, speak out, and take leadership. In *Stand Up!* (bkconnection.com), Gordon Whitman explains that we have the power for social change if we engage with each other. Taking charge of change isn't mysterious: It requires hard work, critical thinking, and the courage to make some sacrifice.

Whitman begins with personal motivation. Being open to personal growth is important because often the work that seems to be about fixing the world helps us as individuals find our own purpose and place. We may first enter social change with the intention of serving or advocating because we see people suffering. But social change doesn't come about through service, it happens when we "walk together."

Movements are built through relationships. Learning each other's stories connects us so we can act together. Community members who can't articulate their stories may be more aware of the struggle for dignity than the professional organizer. So it's important to be open to finding a role for all who dream of equality and justice. Social change is a team activity. There are many people waiting to be asked to join.

With sufficient support, we can identify who profits from inequality and why it's important to address it. Operating in teams unveils the power we have to make change. Even so, justice isn't entirely in our hands. When progress is difficult, we are still called to the struggle, as the author quotes Ta-Nehisi Coates, "not because it assures you victory, but because it assures you an honorable and sane life."

Whitman's book is inspiring as well as instructive for professionals and volunteers in the nonprofit sector. Nonprofit organizations can be conduits to social change if they focus on working as teams, helping people come together for a cause. More and more frequently, organizations join together to rebuild society into one where everyone participates. Now, more than ever in our lifetimes, is the time to get involved and speak up for dignity, and do it together. We shouldn't be afraid to rebuild our organizations to give voice to those who currently have none. What results from walking together is always an improvement. 



— reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

“Internet for All” Essential for Human Equity

High-speed internet is widely recognized as a “super determinant of health,” notes Amy Sheon of Public Health Innovators. Yet, according to the Census Bureau’s “American Community Survey” (ACS), one in four U.S. households have no high-speed internet service, and one in 10 have only a mobile service plan.


To address these connectivity gaps, Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which included \$42 billion for the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, \$14 billion for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), and \$2.75 billion for the Digital Equity Act (DEA). These funds, now known collectively as “Internet for All,” are intended to improve broadband availability across the country, especially in rural areas. However, experts have long agreed that lack of affordable service, digital literacy skills, and devices are barriers keeping a much larger fraction of Americans from using the internet. More than 19 million households are enrolled in the ACP, but this represents just 37% of eligible households (see acpdashboard.com).

The “Internet for All” program has asked states to create plans that include a needs assessment for those with the greatest barriers to internet adoption – older Americans, communities of color, those with language barriers, veterans, people with disabilities, incarcerated individuals, households affected by poverty, and those residing on tribal lands or in rural locales.

Visualizing data at the neighborhood level has proved invaluable for seeing sharp geographic disparities in health outcomes. Such information also reveals the association of health outcomes with the social and demographic characteristics of people living in those neighborhoods and with internet subscription and device ownership patterns. Newly available information on historical economic redlining has led to insights about how discriminatory lending practices also impact health and broadband adoption. Understanding these underlying factors can be key for crafting approaches to improving digital equity.

Community-based organizations are uniquely suited to facilitate broadband adoption among those who have been



excluded from digital opportunities. Yet such organizations often get bypassed for funding because they don’t have the resources to conduct evaluations that are needed to demonstrate their effectiveness. Data reflecting broadband need and impact are now widely available at the neighborhood level and can be parsed to show changes over a short period of time for population subgroups that are served by community organizations. Having access to such metrics should open the door to greater engagement of community-based organizations with “Internet for All” programs. 

—prepared by Amy Sheon, PhD, MPH, a digital-health-equity consultant, and Latoya Edwards, a DEI leader at Conduent Healthy Communities (conduent.com)


How Well Are Nonprofits Meeting Diversity Challenges?

When it comes to diversity, nonprofits are making progress but still face some roadblocks, according to a new survey by Nonprofit HR (nonprofithr.com), a consulting firm focused on nonprofit human resources. “This comprehensive survey, conducted across the nonprofit sector, reveals commendable efforts in prioritizing diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ),” says Atokatha Ashmond Brew (abrew@nonprofithr.com). “However, it also sheds light on challenges nonprofits still face, as well as some key shifts in strategy they must make in order to meet those challenges.”

An impressive 79% of respondents indicate that their organizations prioritize diversity, 75% prioritize inclusion, 74% prioritize equity, and 89% believe their organizations are making progress toward their DEIJ goals. Nevertheless, there is still a considerable way to go, as only 38% of organizations report having a staff that reflects the diversity of the communities they serve.

One of the critical takeaways from the survey is the urgent need for a well-defined strategy, sufficient resources, and a dedicated budget to achieve DEIJ objectives. Only 39% of respondents state that their organization has a formal DEIJ strategy in place. Furthermore, only 34% feel that their designated staff member responsible for DEIJ initiatives has access to the necessary resources. Similarly, just 38% of organizations have a formal budget allocated for DEIJ initiatives, and only 33% plan to increase that budget.

Among the greatest challenges faced by nonprofits in improving DEIJ are attracting a diverse pool of candidates and fostering diversity within their senior leadership positions. A majority, 64% of respondents, express difficulty in attracting a diverse pool of candidates, while 60% struggle with promoting diversity in leadership roles.

“What I find really, really interesting is, in our 2021 and 2022 data, objectives were more centered on just diversity,” says Antonio Cortes, Managing Director, EDIJ, at Nonprofit HR. “And as we look forward, organizations are looking more broadly at diversity, equity, inclusion, and potentially justice, as well. So, I think the scope of how we assess an organization’s functioning or commitment to DEIJ is really expanding and has expanded over the last four-plus years. That’s a great thing.” 

Can You Hear Me Now?


In *Breaking Through: Communicating to Open Minds, Move Hearts, and Change the World* (Harvard Business Review Press, hbr.org) Sally Susman provides a masterclass for communicating with authority and authenticity. She explains:

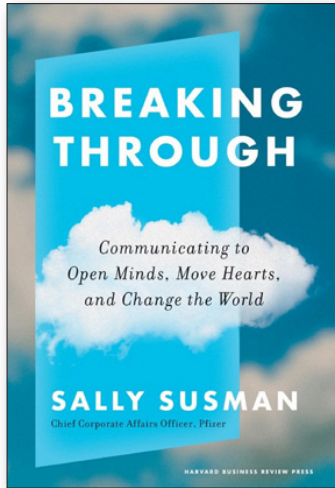
Communication isn't a soft skill; it's a rock-hard competency. It's a skill set that's crucial to success as a leader.

Brilliant communication begins with a clear intention. What do you want to convey? Sharpening your focus is essential to delivering your message with clarity and impact.

Being a powerful communicator is the first step to being a great leader. Only exceptional communicators can inspire people, create momentum, and drive meaningful change.

Seeking harmony is more important than ever. In our highly divided, often acrimonious world, we don't all see things the same way. Rather than argue, we must learn to disagree amicably, to co-exist with varying views, and to show respect.

Be sure to perfect your pitch. Susman defines pitch as "the tenor, word choices, and attitude we bring to any human encounter. It's a striking of the right chords that allows us to reach and relate to one another more profoundly." It includes portraying a positive attitude and finding your unique voice, tone, and cadence so that your own engaging style will emerge. Doing so will help you break through all the static and noise in the world today so that you're heard and understood. 



Nonprofits as Economic Organizations

Should nonprofit organizations be managed like for-profit businesses? There has long been a trend to make nonprofits more business-like, an effort rooted in the dominance of capitalist practices. Managerialist approaches have been transplanted to the nonprofit sector for accountability purposes and, if we were to be honest, isomorphism.


Besides being familiar in our dominantly for-profit economy, there are advantages to holding nonprofits to some business practices. Doing so makes it simpler to measure objectives, for example. The author of *Management in the Nonprofit Sector* (taylorfrancis.com), Renato Civitillo, approaches the management question by arguing that nonprofits are economic organizations. However, as he points out, a nonprofit is a distinct form of economic organization that's also held accountable to civic and engagement objectives by its own mission and by societal expectations.

Civitillo explains why nonprofit organizations exist and their recent history, then explores two efforts to hold nonprofits accountable by regulating them like for-profits. He concludes that, even as economic organizations, the difference in purpose separates their management needs from for-profit

“Nonprofits are economic entities, but they aren't businesses.”

organizations (and even from public agencies). Nonprofit management is outwardly oriented, directed toward the satisfaction of beneficiaries and communities. Most stakeholders in the nonprofit sector intuitively understand this; what Civitillo does is explain how the values of nonprofit organizations differentiate them from their for-profit counterparts enough that their management practices should also be distinguished.

So, who will benefit from this book? It's valuable to any stakeholder who wants to explain the important differences between nonprofit and for-profit management. The two approaches have many stark contrasts when it comes to leadership, values, and the complexities of board-staff relations. The author does a good job of making this clear distinction.

Even when one agrees that nonprofits are economic entities and that they follow many for-profit strategies, they aren't businesses. Civitillo refers to Peter Drucker, who noted that the nonprofit sector provides definite advantages over for-profits when it comes to generating community bonds, active citizenship, and global value. 

—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Beyond the Briefs

To explore issues raised in these briefs in more detail, take a look at these articles (NonprofitWorld.org):

What Followers Want from Leaders: Capitalizing on Diversity (Vol. 25, No. 5)

How to Tap into Purpose to Motivate People (Vol. 38, No. 2)

Study Shows Gaps in Nonprofit Management – and Ways to Improve (Vol. 19, No. 9)

Why You Absolutely Must Train Millennials (Vol. 37, No. 3)

Is Your Organization Culturally Competent? (Vol. 26, No. 6)

How to Price Strategically (Vol. 29, No. 3)

Are You Risking Legal Action because of Discrimination? Study Shines Light on Leadership Diversity (Vol. 38, No. 4)

To Make an Impact, Improve Your Non-Verbal Awareness (Vol. 38, No. 3)

Overcome People's Resistance with These Steps (Vol. 38, No. 3)

Are You Equipped to Lead in a World of Great Complexity? (Vol. 37, No. 1)

25 Ways to Cut Costs (Vol. 26, No. 2)

How to Make Your Training Stick (Vol. 39, No. 4)

Grounded Visioning: A Quick Way to Create Shared Visions (Vol. 26, No. 4)

Unleash the True Power of Conversation (Vol. 37, No. 2)

The Skill Every Fundraiser Needs: Cultural Wisdom (Vol. 34, No. 3)