

BOOKS

GUEST
BOOK
REVIEW



By **BOB EDDY**

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RELEASE YOUR BRAKES!

Have you ever wondered why relocated slum dwellers soon ruin their new housing projects? Or why most of us are afraid of speaking publicly? Or why buttermilk is repugnant to so many people? The answers to these seemingly unrelated questions are actually consistent, logical explanations of the human system in action — and are found in Jim Newman's new book *Release Your Brakes!*

This book is a pleasant departure from the usual type of remedial, exhorting self-improvement book. For all of his adult life Newman has quested for the reasons why successful people succeed (rather than why failures fail), and his studies have led to what he calls the PACE philosophy. PACE (an acronym for "Personal and Company Effectiveness") is based upon a model that explains how attitudes and beliefs about the real world are acquired by and subsequently govern the human system.

More than 16 years ago, Newman developed and taught seminars in how to become aware of the processes we all go through and — more important — how to take command of those processes to increase the use of the potential inherent in each of us and in our organizations. He has now distilled the information from the PACE Seminars and published it in the form of this text/workbook.

The "goodness" of any model, theory, or hypothesis is a function of two variables: 1) the fewness and simplicity of the assumptions it is based on, and 2) the percentage of successful predictions it can make. The PACE model scores highly on both counts. Al-

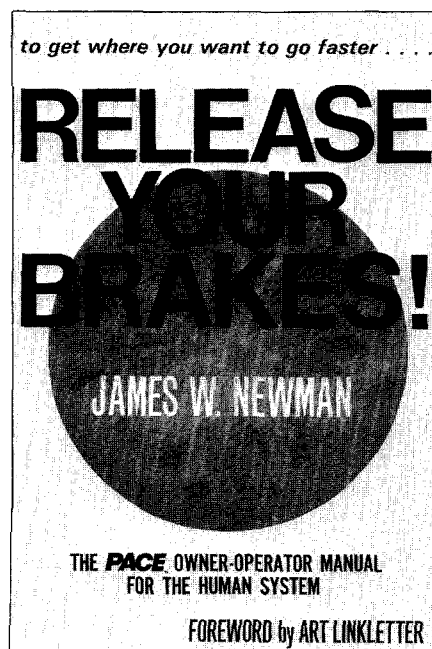
though it is consistent with complex theories and research findings, the PACE model, like Einstein's $e=mc^2$, is quite simple. Newman describes his model and assumptions in simple terms, drawing heavily upon analogies like the human system as a computer and as an automobile (thus

the acclaim and claims of improved effectiveness come from all quarters: Olympic and professional athletes and coaches, managers, salesmen, artists, fathers, mothers, et al.

The PACE method does not prescribe the type of individual each of us should strive to become. It is, rather, a method one can use to approach any goal, be it a personality enhancement, a skill improvement, or the acquisition of a material good. While PACE is areligious, it could be used by someone to improve his or her participation within any particular religion — as well as helping a burglar to burgle more effectively.

Most self-improvement books have excellent conceptual, eye-opening value, but, after completion, abandon the reader to the mercies of the backsliding tendency. Jumping out of bed each morning and stating "Every day in every way I'm getting better and better" doesn't radically change many people's lives. But *Release Your Brakes!* gives the reader a specific practice to use on a daily basis to implant the improvements sought in his or her human system.

One beauty of the book is that it does not teach one how to become successful at the expense of others. Books like *Power! How to Get It, How to Use It* and the other "one-upmanship" texts are based upon "zero sum" tactics, where the gains made must be concurrent with another's loss. PACE is a "nonzero sum" approach that is based upon the premise that helping others to release their potential adds to both oneself and the team or organization.



Release Your Brakes! by James W. Newman with Foreword by Art Linkletter; \$9.50; published by Charles S. Slack, Inc., 6900 Grove Road, Thornfare, N.J. 08086.

the title *Release Your Brakes!*) and the homeostatic tendency as a common thermostat. The simplicity of the analogies results in even nontechnical people (children, artists, athletes, housewives) resonating to them as having high face validity.

With respect to the PACE model's ability to predict behavior, well over 100,000 people have attended the seminars and

Newman's book is written in the same relaxed, conversational style one would experience in a seminar. The outboard margins are extra wide for note-taking, the chapters are short and punchy (making interrupted reading easier), and a glossary and bibliography are included along with the workbook sheets that the reader can use to personalize the experience.

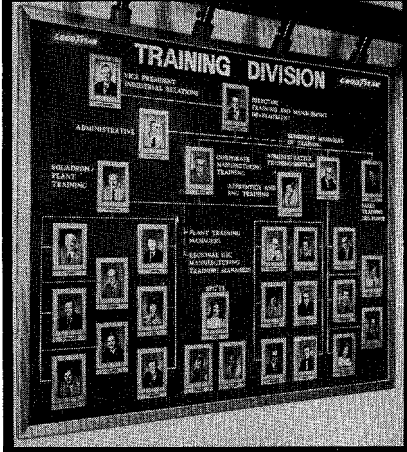
I see but two negatives — one real and one potential. First, the absence of an index makes it cumbersome to find the location of a specific subtopic, phrase or reference one might wish to revisit. And the potential negative is the degree to which this or any other book can deliver the affec-

tive learning that one can gain from acquiring the concepts in a seminar format. Seminars can instill that emotional insight and energy that propel the graduate into applying the concepts. Only time will determine if that energy can be created by the written page.

In sum, *Release Your Brakes!* is a fine book that can help anyone improve his or her effectiveness and can give trainers powerful methods for converting concepts into actual improved behavior. — *Bob Eddy*

Bob Eddy is an organizational development consultant on the headquarters' staff at Leeds and Northrup Co., New Wales, Pa.

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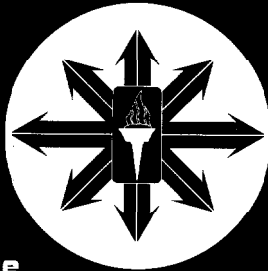
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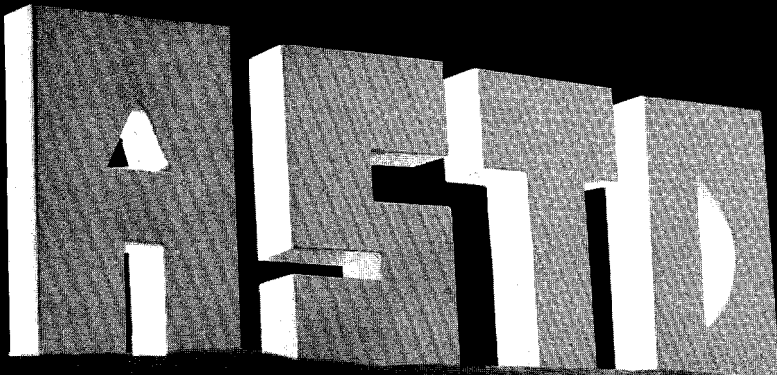
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