

# SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

## "THE GREAT ENERGY CRISIS"

BY JAMES H. MORRISON

A number of energy-related problems face us today. They are complex and serious . . . without question. But the energy crisis that costs us most and lays waste our national resources beyond estimation, is the "bad feeling" energy drain. The greatest embezzlements today are *not* by the master manipulators of financial institutions who can pilfer millions by clever control of computers. The great embezzlement today is the drain of human energy into hours, even days, of anguish, frustration, depression, hostility and worry, on the part of management and workers alike. They are victims of inept, often unconscious, interpersonal communications on the part of associates, bosses, subordinates and even customers.

We have isolated and can describe the common causes of this vast wasteland of energy drain. They are:

1. ploys and games
2. putdowns and discounts
3. emotional blackmail and rackets
4. communication static and crossed communications
5. bad feeling sink holes originating in NOT-OK miniscripts.

Each cause has a specific antidote, which is teachable and learnable, and can be acquired with a modest investment of applied effort by the afflicted. Why, then, aren't the energy drains plugged? Why don't we use the bodies of knowledge available to us to set us free of the misery we create and



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repeat again and again? My suggested reasons are:

1. There are not enough human resource development personnel to conduct the training and development activities required to plug the "leaks."
2. The human resource development personnel available are not trained to the professional level needed to change undesirable behaviors causing the energy drains.

Our task is of enormous proportions. ASTD has task forces seeking to provide the know-how and training of HRD personnel sufficient to meet the needs. One of these is the Professional Development Committee, now working on listing crucial HRD skills and competencies. Hopefully, in time, we can begin to measure these and

eventually improve them.

Meantime, we need to sharpen our own skills through *personal* application. This may require, in many cases, converting our own energy drains into constructive study and accomplishment. If your boss fails to recognize, or even respond, to an idea you have suggested . . . DON'T take it as a personal affront. Don't spend hours anguishing over what you consider to be a discount. Study the interaction that went on during your encounter. How was your presentation of the idea . . . was it well-organized . . . did you have back-up data to meet your boss's needs . . . was it realistic, practical and acceptable? What have you learned from this that will permit you to succeed when presenting your next jewel of an idea?

If you get some negative feedback from participants on a program presentation . . . DON'T discount them (what do they know about presentation anyway?). Put the "bad feeling" energy into some hours with a tutor or a videotape . . . it's so much more profitable!  
— Jim Morrison

Jim Morrison is a management psychologist, author, lecturer and a director and vice president of the management consulting firm of Lawrence-Leiter and Co., Kansas City, Mo. He has written numerous articles for national magazines and technical journals on selection, training and management development, and authored "Determining Training Needs" in the 1976 edition of the *Training and Development Handbook*.