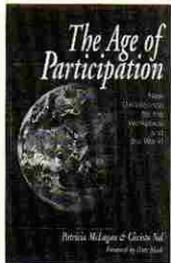


**THE AGE OF PARTICIPATION:
NEW GOVERNANCE FOR THE
WORKPLACE AND THE WORLD**

BY PATRICIA MCLAGAN AND CHRISTO NEL



From the statehouse to the boardroom, political systems are moving away from top-down models, in favor of more participative forms. The authors of *The Age of Participation* explain

why participative governance at all levels is a major issue for the times. But their main focus is on the workplace.

In the foreword, Peter Block calls the book "an owner's manual for entry into the Age of Participation." According to Block, few organizations have made that entrance. The *idea* of participation has entered the mainstream of organizational thought, he says, "but the *practice* of authentic participation is alive only in small segments of business, education, health care, and government."

In their book, McLagan and Nel recount the history of participative governance and review the mounting evidence that participative systems outperform authoritarian ones. But the word "systems" is key, they caution. Many organizations institute participative practices in only a few isolated areas—for instance, in setting goals, reviewing performance, or sharing information.

"Isolated and disconnected practices of participation have little or no impact on the bottom line," the authors warn. "What makes a difference is the presence of systems of cooperative labor/management relations and participative practice; plants that have such systems are significantly more productive than others."

McLagan and Nel combine theory, solid research, and practical guidelines to show what participation is, why it is necessary, and how to achieve it.

Most companies, they say, have already taken some steps on the road to participation—implementing total-quality strategies, reengineering, customer-focus campaigns, and coaching efforts.

"The problem...is not that the change has not started, but that it simmers along, never quite reaching a boil. It simmers because we often fail to realize that being world-class requires a long-term commitment to transforming the workplace.... Change also simmers because people at all levels often do not have the courage and stamina they need to carry them through the inevitable dark hours of resistance and confusion that accompany fundamental change.

"And change cannot reach the point of transformation unless everyone involved sees him- or herself as the departure point for change.

"If you stand at the foot of a tall

mountain—or even a bit higher, at base camp—the climb looks daunting. So is the view of participation as we move into the new governance era. The best first step is to take a deep breath and acknowledge that, for large organizations with long histories of bureaucracy and autocracy, the shift may take more than five years."

Some guidelines for making the climb:

- ▶ Don't expect to find a perfect place or time to start a change process.
- ▶ Work on several areas at a time.
- ▶ Move to action as quickly as you can.
- ▶ Don't try to control everything.
- ▶ Get people everywhere involved as soon as you can.
- ▶ Expect to balance plans with action learning.
- ▶ Provide early change initiatives with nurturing protection.

The book's appendixes include two useful worksheets—a guide for assessing an organization's current participation profile and a rundown of authoritarian and participative practices in nine crucial areas.

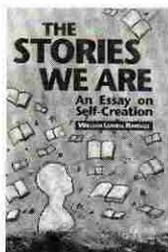
Patricia McLagan and Christo Nel are the founders of the Democracy and Work Institute in South Africa.

The Age of Participation: New Governance for the Workplace and the World, by Patricia McLagan and Christo Nel. 323 pp. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 800/929-2929. \$24.95.

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**THE STORIES WE ARE: AN
ESSAY ON SELF-CREATION**

BY WILLIAM LOWELL RANDALL



Most of us begin our fascination with stories early in life, when the phrase, "Once upon a time..." holds us spellbound. As adults, we experience stories in our favorite novels and in biographies, through films, in gossip and jokes, and even on the evening news.

In *The Stories We Are*, author

William Randall uses the metaphor of the story to explore personal development and growth.

"This is a book about the relationship we have with our own lives, and about one of the commonest metaphors by which that relationship is conceived. It is about the merits of the metaphor of life-as-story.... It is about the Pandora's box of insights and issues that is opened as soon as we push at such a metaphor, play with it, and peer into it through the lenses of typical story categories like plot and character and point of view.

"It is about expanding the metaphor

to embrace the possibility that we make sense of the events of our lives to the degree we incorporate them into our own unfolding novel—as simultaneously its narrator, protagonist, and reader—making it up as we go, so to speak, even authoring ourselves into being."

The author says the book is aimed at anyone with an interest in adult learning. But his discussion is eclectic, to say the least. Few books can coherently blend ideas and examples from such a wide variety of sources. To name a few: Abraham Maslow, Star Trek, Louis L'Amour, Carol Gilligan,

Mozart, Ursula LeGuin, Woody Allen, Roger Schank, Harlequin romance novels, Jean-Paul Sartre, Ron Zemke, and Randall's third-grade teacher Miss Pringle.

Randall weaves thoughts, images, and examples into a richly textured fabric. He borrows from a breadth of disciplines—including not only literature, but also adult learning, psychology, gerontology, feminism, religion, mythology, quantum physics, anthropology, and the law.

The wide scope of Randall's essay occasionally gets out of hand, as the author explores and re-explores the same ground from too-similar vantage points. But many of the connections and insights he presents along the way are fascinating.

Don't look here for practical advice. That isn't the point of Randall's intellectual rambles. But the book's three main sections do investigate a series of foundational questions, including the following:

- ▶ What is a story? What are the different kinds of stories? How do they work? How does our attraction to them relate to the way we experience and express our identities?
- ▶ How do we make the shift from literary stories to *lived* stories?
- ▶ What are the implications of seeing the self as the main character in a story, its principal reader, and the storyteller?

"Our self is in many respects a fictional construction: a house of anecdotes, a tangle of tales, a web of stories that we tell ourselves...about our past, present, and future." As those stories change, says Randall, we change. In telling the stories, we create ourselves.

We leave some stories untold, resulting in self-deception and secrecy. Other stories take the form of gossip and prejudice, universal phenomena that directly affect our self-concept and the way we are regarded (or "storytyped") by our community. Friendship and intimacy inevitably involve us in "co-authoring" each other's lives; in effect, our personal stories are subplots to a larger, communal story.

"This is a book, then, about not only *having* a story but *being* a story as well, and about the complex relationship between the two. It is about self-

creation through self-storying...and about the aesthetic aspects of human development as a whole.... It is about the links between experience and art, between life and literature, and between psychology and poetics. In short, it is about the poetics of self creation."

Bill Randall is a teacher at Seneca College.

The Stories We Are: An Essay on Self-Creation by William Lowell Randall. 400 pp. Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 800/565-9523. \$45 (hardcover); \$19.95 (softcover).

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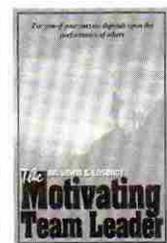
From Both Sides Now

Everyone in an organization is a leader or a follower—or both. The relationship between the two is more complex than it may appear. How do you support a leader? How do you motivate a follower? What happens when it's time to lead the leader or to move the followers to the forefront?

These two books look at the relationship between leaders and followers—from both sides. The first review, aimed at leaders, describes a simple guidebook that lists practical, hands-on techniques for motivating team members. The second book is an intellectual, comprehensive exploration of the role of the follower.

THE MOTIVATING TEAM LEADER

BY LEWIS E. LOSONCY



Does your success depend on the performance of others? Do you need some practical, positive approaches to motivating them? If you are a manager, a coach, or a team leader, says

Lewis Losoncy in *The Motivating Team Leader*, then the most crucial factor in your success at work is your ability to inspire, motivate, and encourage your human resources.

Losoncy's book offers 43 strategies for motivating your team—as well as insights into why teams fail, how to turn problems into progress, and why

people act the way they do.

Throughout this user-friendly handbook, Losoncy focuses on hands-on, practical approaches that you can begin using immediately. Most require little preparation and won't break your budget. And the author peppers his advice with questionnaires, real-world examples, bulleted lists, and summaries of the most important points from each chapter.

The 43 strategies aren't revolutionary; they make use of basic, familiar principles from the areas of management, conflict resolution, group-process facilitation, and adult learning. But that doesn't make them any less useful. And many of the strategies are also appropriate for the training room—just substitute the word "trainees" for "team members."

Here are some selections from the 43 approaches:

▶ **Approach 1: Transferring.** Encourage an employee to "walk a mile" in a teammate's shoes to understand the other person's own unique situation. For example, if you supervise workers at a fast-food restaurant, you could have the grill person and the cashier switch jobs for a day.

▶ **Approach 10: Converting.** If you've been agonizing over a difficult team member, make a list of the traits that are bothering you (for example, "stubborn," "gabby," and "impulsive") and see if you can come up with silver linings for them. For example, you may think of stubbornness as a negative quality, but it can translate into persistence and focus, which can be valuable assets.

▶ **Approach 16: Meta-Job Describing.** Give people greater purpose by reframing their contributions. Does a hairdresser give a haircut—or confidence? Does a doctor give a diagnosis and a prescription—or wellness?

▶ **Approach 24: Changing Spotlights.** Take a risk; give a challenging task to an often-overlooked team member.

▶ **Approach 41: "Sociograming."** Make a graphic representation of the team's social structure, by asking members who they would choose to work with and who they would choose not to work with. Draw a separate circle for each team member, with arrows to show those relationships. A sociogram can reveal which

members are unofficial leaders, which are isolated, and who makes up any subteams or factions.

"Motivating leaders are those who create encouraging conditions for their team members in order to bring out more of their measureless, unused human potential," says Losoncy. "Helping you acquire the encouraging strategies of the motivating leader is the goal of this book."

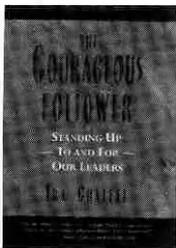
Lewis Losoncy, a psychologist, is a frequent speaker and writer on motivation, leadership, and teamwork.

The Motivating Team Leader, by Lewis E. Losoncy. 244 pp. Delray Beach, FL: St. Lucie Press. This book is available through ASTD Press, 703/683-8100. Order code: LOMO. Priority code: KGA. \$15 (ASTD members); \$17 (nonmembers).

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THE COURAGEOUS FOLLOWER: STANDING UP TO AND FOR OUR LEADERS

BY IRA CHALEFF



The author of *The Courageous Follower* says he is puzzled by the lack of available information on how to be a better follower.

"If you scrolled through the subject catalogue at the Library of Congress," says Ira Chaleff, "you would find the category 'leadership' and hundreds of books on the subject. You would not find a category 'followership,' and you would find only a handful of articles and a book or two on the subject, tucked away under the leadership rubric. This is curious, as there are many more followers in the world than leaders. Improving their performance would seem equally worthy of study as improving the performance of leaders."

In *The Courageous Follower*, Chaleff attempts to fill the gap. His model for the courageous follower encompasses five dimensions:

- ▶ the courage to assume responsibility
- ▶ the courage to serve
- ▶ the courage to challenge
- ▶ the courage to participate in transformation

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ADDITIONAL READING

Mary Parker Follett, Prophet of Management: A Celebration of Writings From the 1920s, edited by Pauline Graham. 309 pp. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 800/545-7685. \$29.95.

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Honoring Boundaries: Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, by Joyce Kaser, with Bette George and Arleen LaBella. 227 pp. Amherst, MA: HRD Press, 800/822-2801. \$19.95.

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Strategic Planning for Public and Non-profit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement (revised edition), by John M. Bryson. 325 pp. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 415/433-1767. \$27.95.

Circle 252 on reader service card.

The Wow Factory: Creating a Customer Focus Revolution in Your Business, by Paul Levesque. 172 pp. Burr Ridge, IL: Irwin Professional Publishing, 800/634-3966. \$20.

Circle 253 on reader service card.

Human Resources Management and the Total Quality Imperative, by Carla C. Carter. 259 pp. New York, NY: AMACOM, 800/262-9699. \$59.95.

Circle 254 on reader service card.

Designing and Implementing Successful Diversity Programs, by Lawrence M. Baytos. 323 pp. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall (and the Society for Human Resource Management), 800/288-4745. \$59.95.

Circle 255 on reader service card.

Secrets of a Successful Employee Recognition System, by Daniel C. Boyle. 133 pp. Portland, OR: Productivity Press, 800/394-6868. \$25.

Circle 256 on reader service card.

Violence at Work: How To Make Your Company Safer for Employees and Customers, by Joseph A. Kinney. 254 pp. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 800/288-4745. \$24.95.

Circle 257 on reader service card.

Employees, Careers, and Job Creation: Developing Growth-Oriented Human Resource Strategies and Programs, edited by Manuel London. 316 pp. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 415/433-1767. \$29.95.

Circle 258 on reader service card.

Team-Based Strategic Planning: A Complete Guide to Structuring, Facilitating, and Implementing the Process, by C. Davis Fogg. 337 pp. New York, NY: AMACOM, 800/262-9699. \$65.

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"The bottom line of followership is that we are responsible for our decision to continue or not to continue following a leader.... Competing values, such as love for and responsibility to our family, may make the choice difficult, even excruciating, but we always have choices and are responsible for the ones we make."

Throughout the book, Chaleff delivers his insights in elegant prose that carries a quiet ring of authority. He uses personal experiences and concrete examples to bring his ideas to life, as well as common-sense bits of wisdom and practical advice.

"It is important to move beyond viewing a leader as a good parent or bad parent, a good king or bad king, a hero or villain in our world. If we become aware of such attitudes, our challenge is to learn to relate to the leader on a different basis. By paying attention to how we interpret the leader's actions...we can begin to examine what other choices we have as adults for relating effectively to authority...."

"When leaders and followers fulfill their respective roles, they give each other the gift of being able to serve well."

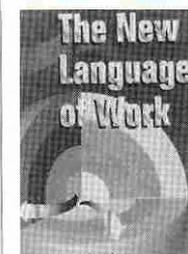
Ira Chaleff is the founding partner and president of the Institute for Business Technology, U.S., and works as an independent consultant.

The Courageous Follower: Standing Up to and for Our Leaders, by Ira Chaleff. 194 pp. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 800/929-2929. \$24.95.

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THE NEW LANGUAGE OF WORK

BY DANNY G. LANGDON



Does your firm do an effective job of communicating to its staff the most basic information about the business? Are job descriptions and roles clear? Do people understand their own work assignments—and each other's? If you answered "no" to those questions, then Danny Lang-

don is the author of *The New Language of Work*, a book that provides a practical guide to effective communication in the workplace.

the courage to leave. Chaleff begins with the basics of what it means to be a follower. "Followers and leaders both orbit around the purpose," he reminds us. "Followers do not orbit around the leader." He examines the challenges of establishing and maintaining a true relationship with a leader—a relationship in which the follower and leader "work together with mutual respect and honesty to achieve our common purpose." At times, a follower may disagree with a leader. Chaleff provides advice for challenging a leader's decisions or expanding the available choices. "If we have courageously but unsuccessfully challenged a leader's policies, where do we stand in rela-

tion to implementing them? "If we choose to continue being a follower of this leader and if the policies are not morally repugnant to us, we have the responsibility to implement the policies. It takes courage to follow leaders when we are not convinced they are right, courage to truly allow leaders to lead." Courageous followers strike a balance between two extremes. "If we follow too slavishly we contribute to groupthink," warns Chaleff. "If we can't follow at all we contribute to anarchy." Chaleff's discussion includes advice on when and how to use an outside facilitator, how to contain a leader's abusive behavior, and how to know when it's time to extract ourselves from a leader/follower relationship.

don's new book, *The New Language of Work*, may be just what you need to start turning things around for your organization.

According to Langdon, a fundamental communication gap affects everyone who works in business, from line workers to managers and executives. The source of the problem, he says, is clear: "We lack a basic, complete work language that provides us with a clear definition of work and a common method of communicating."

Langdon calls for "a new language of work, a model of communication that not only unifies the various components of the organization in a general way, but fulfills the specific needs of those who bring those components to life: the workers and the managers."

Many authors have recommended that everyone in an organization "speak the same language"—though few have offered a specific lexicon, as Langdon does. And Langdon goes much further.

What he is really talking about is more than words. It's a common mind-set that expands the way most people look at the work they do and their place in the organization.

The vocabulary Langdon proposes is not the technical terminology of subject matter specialists. It is not the financial and management-related vocabulary of business leaders. The language of work is for people at all levels of the organization and in all fields and functions. In fact, the lexicon consists of only six terms, and most people will already be familiar with them: inputs, conditions, process, outputs, consequences, and feedback.

According to the author, we can break down any kind of work into those six elements. Many people recognize only the process element of work—for example, training, marketing, or manufacturing. But the other five elements are equally as important to consider.

Langdon uses the example of a performance review to illustrate all six concepts. One input into a performance review is information from interviews with an employee's co-workers or customers. The conditions

affecting the review include the company's performance-appraisal policies, procedures, and schedules. The process involves a manager and employee meeting to discuss past and future job performance.

In most cases, the output of a performance review is a document. The consequences might include a better understanding by both parties of what has occurred in the past and what will occur in the future; they could also include improved morale. Typical feedback on a performance plan might be a statement that the plan could be better or that it meets the employee's needs.

■ *The lexicon consists of only six terms, and most people will already be familiar with them* ■

In addition to a list of defined words, a language must have syntax—an ordering system for those words. For its syntax, the language of work looks to the field of human performance technology. The performance paradigm provides the model for creating meaningful relationships among the six words in the new language's lexicon.

The performance paradigm says that an employee uses inputs to perform a process and produce outputs while being influenced by certain conditions. Along the way, the person receives feedback and may change the process because of it. The outputs result in various consequences.

After building a theoretical foundation for understanding the language of work and applying it in the workplace, Langdon spends the next few chapters showing how the language functions on several levels:

- ▶ improving individual skills
- ▶ communicating within a work group and between groups
- ▶ improving work processes
- ▶ creating organization-wide understanding and change.

Throughout the book, Langdon

peppers his discussions with examples from a hypothetical engineering firm and the work of three of its employees—an engineer, a proposal writer, and a trainer.

The author concludes by outlining a two-phase process for implementing the language of work in your organization. Naturally, he uses the language as a framework for that implementation, describing inputs, outputs, processes, conditions, consequences, and feedback at each stage.

"The overriding major consequences of the new language of work—understood and spoken by everyone in the business—is that it helps individuals understand fully their own work, how to improve it themselves, and how to measure their clients' satisfaction. The language of work helps everyone in a business share an understanding of work.... A total quality-driven culture can never be fully achieved without a common work language spoken and used by everyone in the culture."

Danny Langdon is president of Performance International in Santa Monica, California.

The New Language of Work, by Danny G. Langdon. 215 pp. Amherst, MA: HRD Press. This book is available through ASTD Press, 703/683-8100. Order code: LANL. Priority code: KGA. \$26 (ASTD members); \$28 (nonmembers).

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This month's "Books" column was written by Catherine Petrini, a freelance writer based in Alexandria, Virginia. Send books for consideration to Books Editor, Training & Development, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043.