



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

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ETHICS AND THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINER

The professional trainer is a person who has responsibility for initiating, designing, and implementing learning efforts that will hopefully change individual, group, organizational, or community performance and behavior. What right does the training and development professional have to try to make others grow, develop and change? On what grounds does he base his values as the professional training and development person tries to influence others to change in one direction or another?

Recognizing that many words have achieved evaluative weight, it might be well to divorce, for the moment, our necessary value judgments from the processes these words describe. Manipulate, for instance, means the arrangement of conditions so that change in a certain direction may or will take place. The training director who arranges his classroom setting, provides certain selected skill practice sessions, asks certain questions, demands certain self-directed learning experiences, and creates certain motivational drives, is "manipulating," whether he is teaching supervisory skills, technical expertise, or interpersonal effectiveness. From this point of view, each training professional, acting or refusing to act as a learning influence, is under judgment in accord with his basic beliefs and, stemming from those beliefs, his ethical system.

If we accept this line of reasoning, if we recognize that our commitment to a specific training and development responsibility in the organization often makes us potential renewal agents, then I submit that the question usually asked, "What right have I to try to make persons, groups and organizations different than they are?" must be reversed. The basic question which we cannot avoid is "What right have I to withhold myself, my skills and my convictions in a changing situation from helping that change to take place in a direction consistent with my convictions?"

In other words, the training and development professional should be *pro-active* and not just *re-active* in the way he demonstrates certain beliefs and values about the way people learn and change.

Our culture is based upon a system of values which embraces both individual and social ethics. To apply these ethical standards to the organization, the group, and one's self is an essential undertaking. As I point out in the book, *Organization Renewal*, it is an even greater challenge to relate these ethical values to individual and organization development. It is also important, I think, to clearly understand that there are some underlying assumptions supporting the need for individual and organization renewal:

1. In today's organizations there are unavoidable human problems which involve varying degrees of interpersonal and intergroup tension and conflict that keep the organization from functioning most effectively.

2. It is better that such human problems be solved than remain unsolved.

3. Deliberate planning of solutions to these problems, which necessarily involve changes in the people, the groups, and institutions concerned, is necessary to a degree that it has not been in the past. Trial and error processes of historical accommodation are no longer adequate to the organizational needs of today.

4. The most promising source from which to derive principles of ethical control in the planning of the changes that we must make is in our system of democratic and scientific values. These values can be translated into norms or principles of *method* which can be used in the guidance and direction of the learning and development process, of deciding what changes are needed, and in evaluating the changes that are produced. The alternatives are

to identify "democracy" or "scientific" with one substantive solution or another. Some people who favor decentralization will argue for it as "democratic management" — others will identify centralization with the "democratic" way. Let us translate these values into norms of method acceptable to both sides. Through conflict they may work out a solution which may not be what either held in the first place, but which hopefully will be mutually satisfactory to both.

Let me identify some guidelines that I feel might be helpful to the training and development professional.

The first guideline concerns one-way motivation. A trainer can be motivated, in part, by such individual needs as status, security, and prestige. One's own awareness of these motivations may clearly demonstrate the professional aspect of his role. The approach to problem solving should be *task-oriented* rather than prestige-oriented. The essential concern should be that the new condition achieved is better than the first, not that the person initiating change should receive credit or have an enhanced standing in the eyes of others in the organization.

NEW ASTD SEMINAR DEALS WITH PROBLEMS OF RETAINING DISADVANTAGED

Secondly, the processes by which individual or organization development is planned should be *collaborative*, it should involve appropriately the persons affected by the change.

Thirdly, in order for training specialists to conform to democratic and scientific values, the methods of problem-solving should be *experimental*. Though this norm may be most difficult to derive from basic democratic values, it is still very important. The opposite tends to be a kind of absolutist conviction that your present views are right beyond question. An experimental attitude means giving any reasonable but novel plan a try; it also means building into the learning and training methods of evaluation which will reveal whether the altered practices approach the desired change goals.

Fourth, the method used for individual and organization development, if it is to be democratic and scientific, must be *educational and/or therapeutic* for the people involved, leaving them better able to face and control future situations. We are not trying to only solve present problems, but rather to know better how to deal with future

The coming ASTD seminar on the disadvantaged will be different from the original one held in Philadelphia, Pa., in March of this year.

The newly designed seminar, set for September 22 to 24, 1969, in Chicago, Ill., deals with the next step after hiring and initial training of the disadvantaged. It is entitled, "The Next Step: Retaining and Advancing the Disadvantaged Employee."

The seminar will focus on the methods of making the disadvantaged employee a permanent and productive part of the work force.

The emphasis will be on improving existing programs for training and developing disadvantaged employees. Therefore the seminar is not designed for persons

problems as they arise. The idea is not to get away from problems, which is to get away from reality, but rather to help people know better how to confront, diagnose, and solve problems.

Finally, it is my feeling that those of us who are initiating planned educational change must always be aware that we are *accountable*. In the first place, we are accountable to ourselves. The responsibility rests with us to examine our motivation, the results we desire and the methods we employ, and to see how consistently they correspond with the value response required of a professional. And we are accountable to those who are affected by our efforts. In this it is a help, and further guide, to accept the fact that the training and development specialist is always involved in and affected by the change he produces. He does not stand over and above — a little God who calls the shots and determines the destiny of others. He, too, is involved and affected, whether he be an outside consultant or a part of the organization system. He can never disassociate himself from the profoundly inextricable relationship he has with his fellow men in the learning, training and development process.

from organizations in which no programs of this type now exist.

Enrollment fee for the seminar is \$200 for ASTD members, whose dues were paid as of July 31, and \$235 for non-members.

The seminar will be held at the Lake Tower Inn, Chicago, Ill. Room reservation cards will be sent with registration confirmation and reservations should be made directly with the Inn.

A brochure containing more details about the seminar and a registration form is being mailed to all ASTD members. Non-members may obtain the brochure by writing to: Program Department, ASTD, P.O. Box 5307, Madison, Wis. 53705.