

Upside the Head

Julia R. Galosy's "In Practice" article on creativity is flawed in two distinct areas (*Journal*, December 1985). First, she appeals to the long outdated and discredited left brain—right brain metaphor. Second, she sets up a "trivial pursuit" exam to *prove* her biased point that being analytical never helps her audience to be more creative.

This reliance on the pseudo-scientific cerebral laterality metaphor and the false dichotomy between creative and analytical thinking reveals an impoverished view of both the complexity of the human brain and the issue of creativity.

Top-flight researchers have demonstrated that many areas of the brain are involved in all thought. Moreover, any bright student at a good university knows that you can dictate the results of your research by selecting an appropriate task.

To expect anyone to show more creativity on a trivial pursuit type of test by being analytical is ludicrous. If Galosy would have her students work on situations such as reducing the U.S. trade deficit or developing cures for low productivity in their organizations, she would discover the logical necessity of incorporating the analytical and logical analysis which the right-brain holistic-thinking aficionados constantly deplore.

I have yet to encounter someone whose overuse of logical analysis hampered their creativity. Conversely, I have encountered countless woolly thinkers who lurch from one "creative" solution to another without ever having taken the time to comprehend the complex problems they were attempting to solve.

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The Hidden Agenda in Personal Development Programs

I recently had an opportunity to participate in a panel discussion at the Association of Humanistic Psychology Annual Meeting. The title of their conference was "Change Agents-85," and I accused them of trying to "change" the belief systems of their clients. I suggested that some practitioners have a "hidden agenda," and that their clients are entitled to know how certain psycho-spiritual therapies will affect the client's employees. I went on to suggest that all personal development programs be voluntary, with complete disclosure as to the philosophical or spiritual origin of the therapy. And, I must admit, those who heard my remarks were quite receptive to them.

But human resource development practitioners, the primary points of entry for most of these programs, are in a different position than that audience. I urge care in selecting programs for your companies to use. HRD practitioners should ask these questions:

- Does the process require a change of beliefs?
- Will it require the employee to do something he or she would otherwise never do?
- Is the emphasis on the process rather than on the desired end result?
- Is there a great deal of emphasis placed on removing the inhibitions that limit growth (i.e., letting go)?

These and many other questions should be answered before offering personal development programs to employees. After all, there is too much at stake here to risk picking the wrong program. The jury is still out when it comes to questions regarding the nature of man (intrinsically good, bad, neutral), the nature of reality (materialism, monism, dualism), the origin of man (creation, evolution), and the existence of a spiritual realm. For years, it has been thought that questions of these types should be left to the philosophers and to the theologians.

But, the holistic movement has recently stressed the integration of all aspects of a person: body, mind, emotion, and spirit. This is the meaning of Gestalt. Some believe that a corporation can contribute to the employee's spiritual growth, just as many encourage and assist in the employee's emotional or intellectual growth.

While I believe that all should grow spiritually, I have difficulty seeing how this can be done in a purely objective way. I think it best that we confine our involvement in "encouraging" our employees to consider their spiritual growth, without actually participating in or trying to contribute to the process. We each have the right to believe what we choose and to express our beliefs to those we work with, whether superior, subordinate, or peer. But nobody has the right to exercise managerial influence over his or her employees in an effort to persuade someone to embrace a new belief system.

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