

Word of Mouth

Read any good books lately? How about that hot-off-the-press "must-read" that's been circulating around the office? Or that tattered tome lying dog-eared on your bedside table—the old favorite you keep pulling off the shelf? Or maybe you've discovered a self-help book that really does? Do tell!

An enthusiastic response to a similar column last year yields the *Training & Development Journal's* second, perhaps annual, books-of-note round-up. We phoned a sampling of HRD folks to find out what books have influenced them in the past year—professionally and personally. Here are their favorites:

Jack Zenger, president, Zenger-Miller, Inc.

On Leadership, John W. Gardner (Free Press, 1989). "Gardner's books for me are an incredible combination of profound thoughts expressed with great eloquence. He quotes from history, literature, and his years of service in the government. The combination makes for delicious reading. The other thing is that he doesn't rush to publish; he takes his time and writes good books."

Beyond Rational Management: Mastering the Paradoxes & Competing Demands of High Performance, Robert E. Quinn (Jossey-Bass, 1988). "I like Quinn's honest description of the job of management, maybe because I identify with it. He essentially portrays the executive's job as one of balancing opposing forces. In a day when some authors try to make the manager's job seem simple, Quinn describes the complexities. It's not always easy, and Quinn captures that."

Corporate Transformation: Revitalizing Organizations for a Competitive World, Ralph H. Kilmann and Teresa J. Covin (Jossey-Bass, 1987). "It's kind of a 'tour de force' of information about corporate transformations, a compilation of papers from a group of scholars. It's a wonderful summary of what we know about corporate transition. Very enjoyable."

"For my own enjoyment? When I was young, I used to watch my father reread *Les Miserables* and *Ivanhoe* every few years. I never understood why he did it, but now I see the wisdom in rereading good books. Rather than asking what's new, we should be asking what's good."

"I like all of John Gardner's titles, including *Self-Renewal* (Norion, 1983) and *No Easy Victories*. Also, Arnold Toynbee's *Study of History* (Revisionist Press, 1979). And, of course, the Bible. The first five books of the Old Testament are full of great examples of leadership. Has there ever been a greater leader than Moses?"

Mary Gardner, president, Marel, Inc.

Zen in the Art of Archery, Eugen Herrigel (Vintage Books, 1971). "It's a wonderful and immensely philosophical paperback, one I keep going back to. It's the author's true story of his trip to Japan to learn archery based on the principles of Zen. The book becomes a metaphor for the concept of learning skills—a departure from a lot of HRD principles."

"It shows the close relationship between teacher and student. That relationship is so important. It shows that developing the inner person is not simply learning how to be a good archer, but how to be in control of yourself. The author finds himself exhorted to go further, 'to climb on the shoulders of his teacher.' Another good phrase is 'steep is the way to mastery,' which is based on the concept that the person, the art, the process of learning the art, and the work itself are all related."

On Leadership, John W. Gardner (Free Press, 1989). "I'm in the middle of reading it and am still letting the message sink in. Everything Gardner's ever written has influenced me. This book is making me think deeply about the issues of leadership, about identifying with and finding leadership at all levels. We've started to think of leadership as existing at all levels of the organization, even among people who don't see themselves that way."

Gardner helps people to see how to become leaders."

Soprano on Her Head: Right-Side-Up Reflections on Life & Other Performances, Eloise Ristad (Real People Press, 1982). This book has to do with turning the individual upside down, moving people away from their negative self-perceptions in order to promote their full potential.

"I was a voice major in college, and a professor recommended this book to me. She used it in her workshops. You'd think you were going in for a lesson, and she'd use this book to turn your world inside out. It has helped me make the connection between the control of my body and spirit and my production from that effort. It's about thinking of management not as a technique but as a life force. It's not unrelated to what I try to do in training."

Sivasallam Thiagarajan, president, Workshops by Thiagi.

Thiagarajan apparently didn't do much light reading this year, but here's the list he submitted:

Concept Analysis, Susan M. Markle and Phillip W. Tieman (Stipes, 1970).

Finite and Infinite Games, James P. Carse (Ballantine Books, 1987).

Ten New Directions for the 1990s: Megatrends 2000, John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene (William Morrow, 1990).

Human Competence: Engineering Worthy Performance, Thomas F. Gilbert (McGraw Hill, 1978).

Analyzing Performance Problems, or, You Really Oughta Wanna, Robert F. Mager and Peter Pipe (Searon, 1970).

Judy Estrin, career center manager, Drake Beam Morin, Inc.

"Most of my work involves people who are undergoing career transitions and people who are changing careers or being outplaced. Right now I'm working with Lockheed Corporation, which is undergoing tremendous downsizing. Therefore I read a lot of books that help me understand people who are undergoing change and all the stressful emotions that go along with that."

All I Really Needed To Know I

Learned in Kindergarten: Uncommon Thoughts on Common Things, Robert Fulghum (Villard Books, 1988). "I liked it first because it's small and easy to read on an airplane. But it has a very important message. It's about being real and being nice to people and focusing on what's important in life. That message helps me in career transition and outplacement. I really enjoyed it."

Necessary Losses, Judith Viorst (Fawcett, 1987). "I've experienced a number of deaths in my family, so Viorst's book has been helpful in working through those losses. But again, it's also been useful in working and talking with people in transition and helping them deal with their change-related emotions."

Do What You Love, the Money Will Follow: Discovering Your Right Livelihood, Marsha Sinetar (Paulist, 1987). "Once again, there's a theme here. It's about people making transitions and about doing a better job of locking into their visions. As the title suggests, if you do what you love, then the money will follow. It reminds us to do what's important, and it's not all about money."

Steve Hanamura, consultant, Hanamura Consulting.

"I don't read entire books that much, but I do try to find out about as many good books and articles as I can. Mostly I talk a lot to people everyday about what they're doing and reading. I listen to them and think about what's important and about what we're doing and should be doing in training and HRD."

Out of the Blue, Orel Hershiser (Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1989). Hershiser is a pitcher for the L.A. Dodgers, and his book is about the time he was called into his manager's office. He thought he was going to be sent back to the minor leagues, but instead his manager told him this: 'You've got the talent to make it in the big time, but you don't believe you can do it. You don't believe in yourself. Once you do, you can become anything you want.' From then on, Hershiser's whole outlook changed.

"The lesson Hershiser puts forth

is that if you believe you belong, then your talents can be brought forward with a real energy that wasn't there before. We need to carry that sense of belonging and being on the team into our organizations.

"The book was very powerful for me because it made a few things in my own life click. As a blind person, I often didn't feel I belonged. Even though I think other people believed I did, I first had to believe it myself. ASTD also helped me realize that when I got the multicultural award in 1987. Something just clicked inside me, and I realized I could use what I had learned to help other people."

The Quest for Staff Leadership, Geoffrey M. Bellman (Scott Foresman, 1986). "I liked it because Bellman appeared to have a business sense as well as a sense of building relationships. His writing style felt like we were having a personal conversation. He has that personal touch that in the sixties we called touchy-feely. I believe that without that personal touch today, we will not be able to do business."

"I know this is supposed to be about books, but I recently saw on Oprah Winfrey's show part of a film that really touched me. It was 'Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes,' about a school teacher who did an experiment on her students 25 years ago. She divided the students into a blue-eyed group and a brown-eyed group. She then proceeded to treat the blue-eyed people as if they were inferior. 'You can't use this bathroom, you have to sit in the back of the room, etc.'

"Of course, she eventually backed out of the experiment, but the whole experience was so profound on the kids that 25 years later they had a reunion to discuss it, which is how it wound up on Oprah Winfrey.

"The point of the research was to show the degree of influence people have over other people and how quickly you can program people to behave in a certain way and convince them to believe they are something they're not.

"As trainers, we need to unprogram people and help make them transformational. We need to pro-

gram them to be their best. That's tough, and many times we're fighting against a system that's giving a different message. We have to take responsibility for what it is we say we're about."

Jeffrey Mayer, executive efficiency expert, Mayer Enterprises.

If You Haven't Got the Time To Do It Right, When Will You Find the Time To Do It Over? Jeffrey Mayer (Simon & Schuster, 1990). "Because it's my own book, I think I can speak for its merits. The focus is on how to get organized, save time, improve the quality of the work you produce, and have more quality time for yourself. It describes how you can organize all the piles sitting on your desk, and save an hour's worth of otherwise wasted time during the course of a normal business day.

"Time is so important, and I believe that being organized is a means to an end. When I was a little boy, my mother would say to me, 'Jeff, if you get your work done, you can go out and play.' And I took her seriously. I have always looked for ways to save time, improve the quality of what I do, and still make sure I make it home in time for dinner."

The Last Lion, William Manchester (Little Brown, 1983). "Manchester has written an excellent series of books chronicling Winston Churchill's life. The first volume covers Churchill's birth to 1934. The second goes through 1940, when he became prime minister, just before the fall of Dunkirk. Manchester is now working on the third volume, which goes through Churchill's death."

Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat: The Speeches of Winston Churchill edited by David Cannadine (Houghton Mifflin, 1989). "This is another excellent, just-published book on Churchill. I have found Churchill to be one of the most fascinating men I've ever read about. As a manager, I admire his innate ability to stay on top of everything that was going on during those years. Also, his incredible command of the English language is in a class all by itself."

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John J. Franco, president, Learning International.

Rude Awakening: The Rise, Fall, and Struggle for Recovery of General Motors, Maryann Keller (William Morrow, 1989). "It's conversational and anecdotal, yet provides a comprehensive look at how a corporation can become insulated from its markets, its customers, and its suppliers, basically rendering the corporation unable to compete."

Well-Made in America: Lessons from Harley-Davidson on Being the Best, Peter C. Reid (McGraw Hill, 1989). "It is heavily statistical, but it truly gives you an understanding of what is needed to compete in the coming decade."

The Marketing Edge: Making Strategies Work, Tom Bonoma (Free Press, 1985). "A book that explains the 'how' of marketing strategy and really brings meaning to marketing principles."

Barbarians at the Gate, Richard Bankowski (Little, Brown, 1972). "It's about the life and fall of RJR Nabisco. It's about good people run amok. Reads as engrossingly as fiction."

Bonfire of the Vanities, Thomas Wolfe (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1987).

Melinda Bickerstaff, senior manager of professional development, Deloitte and Touche.

All I Really Needed To Know I Learned in Kindergarten: Uncommon Thoughts on Common Things, Robert Fulghum (Villard Books, 1988). "The book tickled my funny bone and brought out uncommon ways of thinking about everyday things. It reminds you that life can be very simple if you get back to the basics. You should say you're sorry, be nice to people, and that sort of thing. The book warms your heart."

Co-Dependent No More: How To Stop Controlling Others and Start Caring for Yourself, Melody Beattie (Harper & Row, 1988). "This book continually presented messages of self-care and reminded me that I need to take care of myself and be good to myself."

Leading the Association: Striking

the Right Balance Between Staff and Volunteers, James J. Dunlop (American Society of Association Executives, 1989). "It gave me insights into the ways organizations with volunteers and staff members can work together as well as separately. It made me realize that no organization is really without a community or volunteer structure. It provided a nice framework for looking at different levels that we as stakeholders have. Rather than looking at we/they situations, we must try to look at how people work and at how we can help them do it better and more collaboratively."

Marcia Heath, director of marketing communications, Learning International.

The Dictionary of Misinformation, Tom Burnam (Harper & Row, 1975). "First of all I like it because the entries are short, and it makes for good airport reading while I'm on business trips. It gets into the wisdom you think you know but really don't, such as who designed the first bathtub and who really invented baseball. It makes you feel smarter at the end. It's one of my favorites."

What I Saw at the Revolution: A Political Life in the Reagan Era, Peggy Noonan (Random House, 1989). "Peggy Noonan was Ronald Reagan's speech writer, and I highly recommend her book to anyone in communications. It gives you a sense of the power of an image, whether it's real or not. It makes corporate politics look infantile when you realize what really goes on in the White House."

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