

BOOKS

SUGGESTOLOGY AND OUTLINES OF SUGGESTOPEDY

By GEORGI LOZANOV

GUEST
BOOK
REVIEW



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It's getting to be common knowledge today that most of us are going through life using only four to 10 per cent of our minds. The other 90 to 96 per cent is reserve capacity, waiting to be recognized and used. The human mind is, in fact, such an unused natural resource, that we've got to be indebted to those people who find ways of unlocking some of its innate potential.

Such a person is Georgi Lozanov. In this scholarly and stimulating book he documents early history, theory and practice of suggestology and suggestopedy. (Suggestology is the scientific study of suggestion and its effect on human behavior. Suggestopedy is the application of suggestology to the educational realm.)

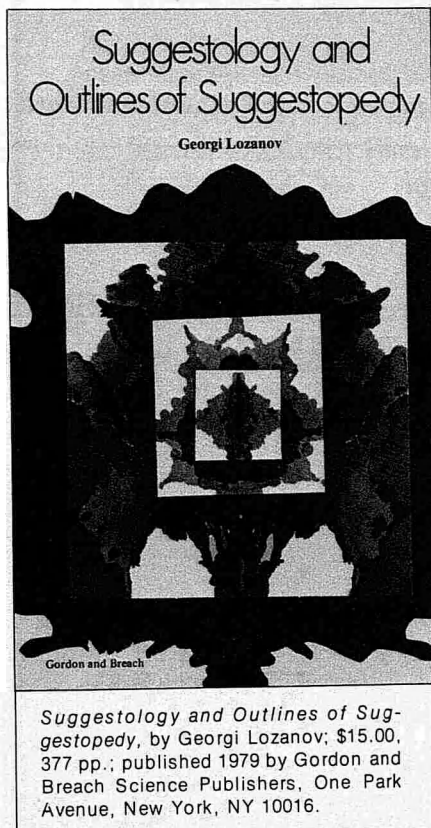
On visits to India, Lozanov was impressed with the seemingly effortless way some of the Brahmans could memorize massive volumes of Vedic literature. He studied their method, combined it with other scientifically researched techniques (such as music therapy, psychodrama, auto-suggestion, and psychorelaxation) and suggestopedy was born.

The first research experiments used foreign-language study as the setting. Lozanov wanted to see if he could, by providing proper environment and conditioning, induce hypermnnesia (super-memory) in a group of average people. The results were exceptional: a learning rate of five to 50 times that achieved in a normal classroom.

The initial part of Lozanov's book is an account of those early, exciting days — complete with statistics and glowing testimonials

from teachers and students. This is followed by the book's longest chapter, "Toward a General Theory of Suggestion." Here are just a few highlights:

- According to Lozanov, suggestology rejects 1) the negative



and limiting view of human nature inherent in Freudian psychology, and 2) the independent and isolated view of human nature inherent in existentialism.

- Rather, human personality is seen as full of positive, untapped potential. And it is seen as cast in a matrix of continual dialog and interrelationship with its social environment and the natural world.

- Most of this dialogue with the environment is subconscious. Hu-

man personality processes an enormous amount of continuous data from its environment that the conscious mind is unaware of.

- The subconscious (or what Lozanov calls the paraconscious) has an enormous effect on human behavior. Consciousness is just the tip of the mental iceberg. The paraconscious level is where we really live most of the time. And this is the level of "suggestion."

- Suggestopedy addresses the total person — including the vast subsensory world of the paraconscious. It is not restricted to or confined by one's conscious, volitional attention.

- Suggestopedy can work seeming wonders by providing an environment rich in what Lozanov calls desuggestion and suggestion.

- Desuggestion is like deprogramming. It questions and dissolves the former negative and limiting assumptions about human mental capability suggested by the old social and educational environment.

- Suggestion, on the other hand, defines and establishes new norms of mental capability and power for the individual. Together, desuggestion and suggestion liberate and stimulate the mind and the personality.

- Suggestopedic learning is done without stress or fatigue and with unheard-of ease. Basically, it's relaxing and it's fun. There is even some evidence that it improves a person's creativity, intuition, and psychological balance outside the classroom.

Following this, Lozanov outlines some of the major components of the stimulating/liberating suggestopedic environment. A com-

fortable, even playful setting is provided. The instructor is seen as an authority (not an authoritarian) and friend. The student is led to a state of mental and physical calm and to a condition of openness and childlike plasticity. For part of the learning, music is used (generally Baroque at about 60 beats/minute) and the material is delivered by psychologically effective intonation in ways related to the natural rhythm of the brain.

Whatever is going on, it seems to work. In traditional language training, to learn 50 new words a day would be a significant accomplishment. Through the suggestopedic method, one hand-picked and specially conditioned student learned more than 1,000 words a day with an average retention rate of 97 per cent.

People new to this method can not, of course, expect to achieve

those kind of results. But, at the Lozanov learning centers, people are routinely getting the equivalent of a two year college language course in 24 days (three hours a day).

Additionally, students claim that the learning experience is relaxing, refreshing and thoroughly enjoyable. Obviously, Lozanov and his researchers are on to something.

This book, written as it is for the community of scholars and educators, is meant to build up a solid case for the validity of the suggestopedic approach. As such, it's full of charts and tables (99 to be exact) documenting everything from test scores to retention rates to EEG histograms to the comparative learning speeds of men and women.

There is a sample of a full suggestopedic Spanish lesson, complete with the music and words

of two enchanting little Spanish songs. And there's a fine bibliography citing more than 600 entries, plus an additional list of 407 books and articles published in Bulgarian.

Studying this book is in itself a desuggestive-suggestive experience — both liberating and stimulating. It documents exciting new possibilities that have opened up for the field of education and training. This is not the end, only the beginning. And Dr. Lozanov expresses the humility of the true scientist when he remarks: "We are far from saying that we can supply the ultimate answers to all the problems (of education). We have only taken one of the possible roads to revealing a small part of man's possibilities."

If suggestopedy is a road you'd like to begin to travel, this book can be an excellent guide. — H. David Meier

FAILURES IN ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE

By MIRVIS AND BERG

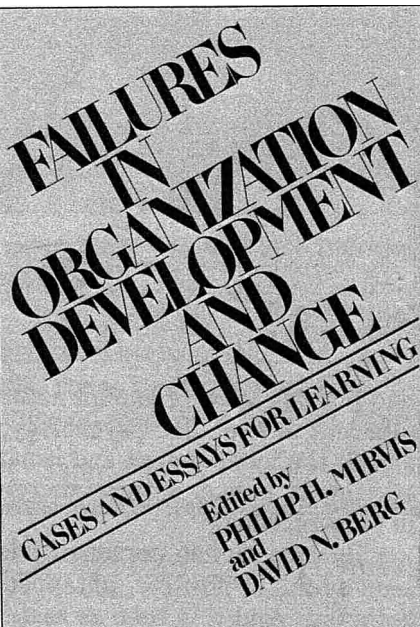
GUEST
BOOK
REVIEW

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For too many years individuals and organizations involved in organizational development and change strategies have promoted their successes while ignoring their failures and abortive attempts. Though the forces behind this phenomena are understood, Mirvis and Berg have done the profession a service by editing this volume of OD failures and pointing out some of the reasons they are not often publicized. They effectively argue that it is essential that failures in organizational development be shared. If we are ever to develop respectable theories and lower our failure rate, they are correct.

Old hands in the business swap war stories by the hour every bit as enthusiastically as hardened fishermen share tales. In fact, one cannot really be socialized into organizational development with-



Failures in Organizational Development and Change, by Mirvis and Berg; 346 pp., \$19.95; John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 605 Third Ave., New York, NY 10016.

out participating in its colorful oral tradition. Most of the important things I have learned about OD have taken place on airplanes and in foreign hotel lobbies as I listened to the craftsmen and maestros of the trade. What makes the learning of the art so confounding to the academics and those who wish to turn us into one of the genteel professions is that to know is to be initiated by way of oral tradition and apprenticeship.

Failures in Organizational Development and Change is one of the few volumes I have read which admits there are failures in organizational development and attempts to share the lessons learned from several failures. The fact that no individual, body of knowledge, or profession can grow without failures is reason enough for serious organizational practitioners and theorists to read this book.