
The Performance Technologist's Library PIQ's Book Review Column

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***A World Waiting to be Born:
Civility Rediscovered.* 1993. M.
Scott Peck, M.D. Bantam Books.
Hardback 366 pages (also
available in paperback).**

Reviewed by Elizabeth C. Guman

The first section of this review focuses on Scott Peck's book, *A World Waiting to be Born*. The second section discusses a workshop the reviewer attended that explores how the concepts in Peck's book can be applied in the workplace.

Book Review

Every now and then a reading experience can be a great learning process. I started reading Peck's book *A World Waiting to be Born: Civility Rediscovered*, believing it had little to do with HPT, and discovered that it had everything to do with HPT. And, having finished it, I decided that without knowing a thing about HPT, Peck may have identified where else HPT could go.

What is this book about?

The purpose of this book is to "resurrect and redefine the meaning of civility" (p.4). Peck maintains that civility is not the art of politeness many of us may automatically think of. He

explores civility in terms of people's behavior within the context of the organizations we behave in. He argues that "civility is something more than organizational behavior that is merely 'consciously motivated.' It must be *ethical* as well" (p.43). Peck further maintains that we are not born civil, but become so through development and learning.

Peck looks at all types of organizations, both personal and business. In the first part of the book, Peck spends eight chapters delving into the concept of civility as it applies within organizations. He explores what is healthy and unhealthy in organizations today, using systems theory to assume that all organizations are living systems and that a key problem is organizational unconsciousness. Organizational unconsciousness happens when the organization member, for example, is a competent performer and is caring about those in his or her department or team, but has no idea what decisions the "organization" is making—that is, what decisions workers in the executive offices are making. As Peck looks at organizational behavior in terms of its ethical nature, he explains that much that is unhealthy in our organizations comes from viewing the organization as either an "it"—some-

thing lower than oneself—or something higher than oneself that has a governing set of rules that a person accepts without question. The “proper relationship between the individual and the organization. . . is a *lateral* one. Civil people regard their organizations as they would the other person: neither superior nor inferior to themselves” (p.52). He goes on to show how the vertical relationship should be with each person’s own concept of a Higher Power and completes his definition of civility as “consciously motivated organizational behavior that is ethical in submission to a Higher Power” (p.54).

In the second part of the book, he deals with civility in the family. According to Peck, civility in our homes and civility in our businesses are very closely related. In discussing civil behavior in marriage and in the family, he provides further examples of what civility is. He explains organizational norms and suggests that if couples paid attention to these early on, perhaps through some management techniques, they would be much healthier. He challenges us to consider the civility of family relationships and says, “The hallmark of civility then is *not* conflict-avoiding pretense and politeness. The hallmark is, to the contrary, the commitment to *deal* with the significant issues of organizational life” (p.142).

Peck begins the third part of his book with a look at the profession of management. He explains that management is a very powerful profession in terms of the influence a manager’s decisions and behavior can have on the lives of others. He discusses the need to integrate political power with spiritual or personal power. He defines spiritual power as

“the power to influence others through one’s own being—by example, by kindness, by humor, by wisdom and love” (p.128). He argues that “the spiritually incompetent manager will, inevitably, abuse her [or his] power” (p.245). He illustrates this with an analysis of two companies, one with an uncivil culture and one with a culture of civility.

In the last section of the book, Peck proposes a technology for helping to implement civility into the workplace. He first reviews the different models for decision making in organizations, from authoritarian to consensual. He then begins to explain the discipline of community, which uses consensual decision making. “The principles of community are . . . a set of rules that can be given a group of human beings to teach them how to work effectively as a group. Any group of people willing to submit themselves to this system of rules will quickly learn to function together with remarkable efficiency and civility” (p.277). He finishes the book exploring how this technology can be used in the workplace, not to replace but to complement and enhance much of the existing structure already there. “The reason to introduce community into a business has nothing to do with making it easier. It has a great deal to do, however, with making that business more ethical and civil, more painfully honest, more healthy and disturbingly alive” (p.312).

How does this relate to HPT?

I see Peck’s book and HPT relating in two ways. In the first way, I see HPT as a technology for helping organizations toward the goal of civility, and the people who use this tech-

nology in this helping process are managers and team leaders. Many in the HPT field have encouraged implementing and teaching HPT at the management level (e.g., Dean, 1995). HPT has tools managers and team leaders can use to facilitate the exemplary performance by their department or team. Reinforcing this idea, Peck talks about management as being "the most powerful of professions" (p.225). He goes on to say, "Far more than anyone else, it is the manager who determines whether the organization will be a civil or uncivil institution" (p.225).

How do managers do that? Peck says it has to do with organizational consciousness. He contends that "the prevailing lack of organizational consciousness lies at the root of our failure of civics, our severe problem in diagnosing our systematic ills and implementing timely treatment" (p.30). Managers are key to this consciousness, according to Peck. "One of the characteristics of an uncivil manager is that he will remain oblivious to the issues well past the point they could have been discerned" (p.249). HPT has technology that can help managers identify and solve difficult issues in a civil manner. This is done through systematic analysis that diagnoses ills not only in a timely manner, but also in a proactive or preventative manner. And because of HPT's systemic nature, people working in the organization can use it to see the "big picture" in a systematic way.

The second way I see this book relating to HPT is that the technology of community Peck outlines can be used as another intervention we as performance technologists can use in addressing performance problems

or facilitating performance improvement. He explains that "the technology or discipline of community is the single best means a top manager has at his disposal to develop and maintain an organizational culture of civility" (p.298). If we agree that a culture of civility promotes improved organizational performance, then certainly we should understand it as a possible solution, just as we might explore work redesign or incentive systems as solutions to performance problems.

The discipline of community has guidelines that facilitate and demand high quality communication. This can go a long way toward solving many of the performance problems caused by inadequate information (Cell 1 in Gilbert's Behavior Engineering Model, 1978). When a performance technologist uncovers a critical information or communication issue in which consensus of all parties is key to a truly successful solution, improvements in community may be the appropriate answer. But Peck warns that community, like most interventions we work with, can fail due to organizational politics, and that support by upper management is key.

Recommendation

Peck's goal in writing this book was to "assist us organizational creatures to be healthier, happier and more alive" (p.14). We have a similar goal if we believe that helping people improve performance is part of making them healthier, happier and more alive. And because I believe it's important for us to explore authors outside our field who share our goals, I chose to share this book in a PIQ review.

HPT helps us to analyze and improve the systems in which people perform. We look at the performance environment and the intellectual and psychomotor skills a person brings to a job. But Peck's book actually goes a step beyond HPT—he examines how peoples' emotional and spiritual nature affect their behavior in organizations. This insight helps us discern how peoples' thoughts and beliefs influence how they work in organizations. Maybe, if we can link Peck's deeper understanding of civil organizational behavior to performance, we can take HPT to a new level.

A World Waiting to be Born is Scott Peck's call to raise organizational consciousness. He warns that the purpose is not to make our lives easier, rather to make them healthier and more rewarding. Although this is not a "how-to" book, Peck does offer community as a method in raising consciousness. He explains how after writing *A Different Drum*, his book that introduces the concept and method of community, he thought the most interest would come from religious organizations, since community does deal with the spiritual nature of people. He was surprised when more of the requests for information and facilitation of community came from the business world. Peck now believes the workplace may be the key leverage point in transforming people and their behavior.

Certainly this is not a classic HPT book. But Peck is writing about improving performance in and of our organizations. I highly recommend it for any performance technologist who wants to consider taking HPT beyond its current boundaries.

Workshop Review: Renewing Spirituality and Learning in Organizations

After reading *A World Waiting to be Born*, I literally looked at organizational behavior differently. Peck's concepts and examples helped me to identify the almost constant state of pseudo-community that exists in our organizations. I could see when non-authentic communication was blocking others and me from addressing the real heart of a problem. I was left with a real desire to learn more how to apply the ideas of community that Peck believes can transform organizational behavior.

I began a search for how to learn more. A colleague recommended a workshop sponsored by The Foundation for Community Encouragement (FCE), an organization founded by Scott Peck. This particular workshop, *Community Building: Renewing Spirit and Learning in Business and Organizations*, focused on community and the business world, and one of the facilitators, Kaz Gozdz, would be presenting his work relating Peck's method of community with Senge's work on the learning organization. This really struck home as I had also wanted to learn more about how to apply the concepts outlined in Senge's *Fifth Discipline*. Peck and Senge both propose ideas on how to look and work with individuals and organizations. I was very intrigued to learn how Gozdz brought the two together.

What is this workshop about?

So off I went to a retreat center in Arizona in January 1995. The three-day workshop, the third of its kind,

had 30 participants including consultants, CEO's, human resource executives, health care professionals and a variety of other professionals. Coordinated by Glenn Waring of Community Methods, the workshop was facilitated by Kaz Gozdz and Sandi McCall. Sandi and Kaz have worked with Scott Peck and FCE for over 10 years. Kaz is also a research affiliate with the MIT Center for Organizational Learning. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss how the concepts of community and the learning organization related, to examine case studies of how they have been applied in the workplace and to explore further opportunities for application.

One of the focuses of the workshop was on Peck's group method for building community. The group reviewed the stages of community and guidelines for groups to follow. They explored the benefits and challenges of pursuing community in a business environment, and learned firsthand from case studies of some of the participants, such as the president of a private school who was in the midst of a concerted effort to expose administrative staff to community techniques. The participants discussed the benefits of the intensely authentic communication that results from working in community:

- the ability to get the full potential of each person's ideas without them screening the expression of the ideas so they are politically correct or nonthreatening to deliver or hear,
- the ability of the group to make very difficult decisions very efficiently,
- the ability to get full buy-in from the group on those types of decisions.

The second focus of the workshop was on learning organizations. Gozdz came to link these two concepts because, as he studied and applied them, he came across a question about each that seemed to be answered by the other. While working to help organizations pursue the benefits of community he wondered how organizations could continue to nurture community over time. As he learned how to establish learning organizations he saw a need for a methodology to keep them going. Could the learning organization be the context in which community could be pursued? Could community building be a method for sustaining the learning organization? Gozdz formulated a model that "incorporates and extends both Peck's and Senge's vision...It focuses on developing an organizational core competence that sustains both learning and community over time. Such a core competence requires the mastery of specific aspects of community that, taken together, comprise a system of skills for sustaining learning" (Gozdz, 1995).

A group in community creates an environment of intense trust and respect which allows for profound learning to happen. The group process of building community gets at the root cause of obstacles to real learning: non-authentic communication. So often people do not truly communicate because of a state Peck calls "pseudo-community," a state in which people essentially pretend to work together well for political or social reasons. The model also helps anticipate new challenges that arise in a group nurturing community. By having a map of the growth process "we can prepare organizational responses

that optimize growth while minimizing chaos" (Gozdz, 1995).

I also had some challenging personal learning experiences. The workshop design capitalized on the principle that we learn best by doing. We spent one and a half days experiencing the community building method. It was a very powerful group process in which I did some very deep individual learning. Some of the things I learned are:

- how to identify behaviors (my own and those of others) that are associated with pseudo-community,
- what some of my blocks are to authentic communication,
- how I could overcome some of my initial biases and frustrations with certain individuals through the power of being in a group that develops a complete respect for every other person in the group.

It was wholesome learning for me—it went beyond the intellectual level to the emotional and spiritual level. And I have used what I learned over and over again, in my personal life, and even more in my professional life.

How does this relate to HPT?

Light bulbs kept going off in my head as to how all these ideas relate to the field of HPT. In this workshop we talked about organizations as living systems and how that perspective can change how we analyze and diagnose our organizations (a big part of HPT). When we look at work teams and organizations as living systems, we can help them grow and become more healthy. By viewing this growth as a process, we can help people get excited about improving

performance rather than delivering messages of how "broken" they are. We talked about the huge impact an organization's culture has on people's performance and the huge potential we have for improving performance by using community as a method to transform an organization's culture. By the end of the workshop, I was convinced that by engaging in a dialogue about community building and learning organizations we can further expand the power of HPT.

In 1995 Diane Gayeski guest edited a special issue of PIQ that focused on the changing role of HPT. In her article "Changing Roles and Professional Challenges for Human Performance Technology," Gayeski asks, "How can we in this field of human performance technology ourselves perform more effectively?" Brethower offers the answer of developing our own knowledgebase by knowing what supports and what interferes with excellent performance in the workplace. He says, "We achieve results, in part, because we form partnerships with others whose knowledge complements ours." I recommend that we form such a partnership with those who have knowledge of community building and learning organizations.

Such a partnership will help us, as human performance technologists, to perform more effectively. Peter Dean suggests that we must become reflective practitioners (and therefore reflective learners) by developing good thinking skills. Community building is a skill and a process that allows groups and individuals in those groups to get rid of those things that block good thinking. The experience promotes deep and profound

learning. We can forge partnerships by:

- establishing a dialogue with experts in community building and learning organizations,
- establishing a dialogue among ourselves about the issues of community, learning in organizations, good thinking skills, and reflective practice of our craft,
- practicing community building, both the formal group process and the day-to-day push for authentic communication,
- exploring what learning in organizations really means.

As a result of these efforts, we can reach new levels of understanding about what interferes with excellent performance in the workplace. We can then offer new solutions that I believe can enhance organizational performance far beyond our current goal of "exemplar." We can help to make organizations immensely more healthy. And since organizations are living systems made up of people, we can have a huge impact on how each person in the organization learns, performs, and lives.

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Structured On-the-Job Training: Unleashing Employee Expertise in the Workplace.

1995. Ronald L. Jacobs and Michael J. Jones, Published by Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, CA.

Reviewed by Marcel R. van der Klink and Wim J. Nijhof

During the past decade, interest among HRD professionals and researchers in on-the-job training has been expanding enormously, resulting in a growing number of articles about it. The (re)discovery of the workplace as a suitable learning environment has been prompted by concerns about cost effectiveness, transfer of training, and the assumption that the practical nature of workplace learning meets the needs of employees with limited formal education. Despite the growing attention, until now no comprehensive book that presents stepwise the development, implementation, and evaluation of on-the-job training (OJT) has been available since Connor (1983). Jacobs and Jones try to fill this gap. Their book is extensive and more research oriented than Connor's publication, and is therefore a valuable contribution to the proliferation of information about the state of the art of on-the-job training.

The audience for this book is HRD professionals and HRD managers who are charged with determining the possible value of OJT in their organizations. Because of its research-based approach, we believe the book is useful for educational purposes and OJT development.

The book is characterized by a logical structure. It is well written and the many examples provide a clear insight into the application of the described ideas. It consists of three parts: Part One "Employee Expertise and Structured OJT," Part Two "Designing Structured OJT," and Part Three "Managing Structured OJT." Each part contains two or more chapters. Following is a brief summary of each chapter.

Part One focuses on the background and central concepts of OJT. The first chapter, "Expertise and Training in Organizations," deals with the growing necessity for employee training. The authors describe the usual OJT, which is commonly referred to as "Sitting next to Nelly," or "Sink or Swim training." This type of OJT is occurring whenever one employee intentionally seeks to impart job knowledge, skills, or attitudes to another employee in the workplace on an ad hoc basis. The growing interest in OJT is a consequence of managers' concern that off-the-job training programs do not promote transfer of training. However, according to the authors, OJT does have some disadvantages. In general, specified training objectives are lacking, the training content is often incomplete, and adequate instructional methods are rarely used. Therefore, OJT consists primarily of trial and error learning by new workers imitating the behaviors of col-

leagues. As such, it does not contribute in an effective manner to the achievement of organizational outcomes. These disadvantages have prompted the emergence of a more structured form of OJT.

In the next chapter, "Introduction to Structured OJT," the authors outline the concept of structured OJT, which they define as "a system approach of developing expertise in an interaction between an experienced and a novice employee in the location in which work is actually done or as near as possible to where the work is done." Because structured OJT is viewed as a system, the development of OJT requires a systematic design process.

In Part Two, "Designing Structured OJT," a chapter is devoted to each step of the design process. Each step is presented extensively—therefore we restrict ourselves to mentioning the main topics of each chapter. In Chapter Three, the first step, Selecting when to use Structured OJT, is presented. Its appropriateness is determined by five criteria: 1) nature of the task, 2) availability of resources, 3) constraints in the work setting, 4) financial considerations, and 5) individual differences. Chapter Four presents thorough information about task analysis. Stepwise the reader takes note of the goals, products, and methods of task analysis.

Chapter Five deals with developing structured OJT trainers. The authors stress the importance of taking into account not only the task expertise of the candidate but also the candidate's ability to perform as a trainer. To judge this ability, selection criteria are presented such as willingness to share information, in-

terpersonal skills, and respect of peers. Further, the authors stress the importance of preparing the trainers for their job with a "train the trainers" program. A list of training objectives for this program is presented.

The next phase, "Preparing Structured OJT Modules," is outlined in Chapter Six. Jacobs and Jones limit themselves to the preparation of written materials. They provide the components of the module, their sequence and possible formats. As a basic guideline for the sequencing of the training, they recommend using whole-part-whole instruction, irrespective of whether the training content is technical, managerial, or awareness. For each type of training, content-specific guidelines are presented. Chapter Seven addresses the issues of scheduling the training event and securing training resources, and the importance of reviewing the module before delivering it. Guidelines for the actual delivery of the training are presented in Chapter Eight. With regard to delivering the training, a five-stage approach is recommended that has much in common with the approaches developed in industry during both world wars. This approach consists of: preparing the trainee, presenting training, requiring trainee responses, providing feedback, and evaluating performance. This method is applied to structured OJT for technical, managerial and awareness objectives. The last chapter of Part Two deals with evaluating and revising structured OJT. A list of questions is presented that guarantees information is gathered about the training outcomes, the training process, and the training inputs. As

an additional aid, an analytical model is presented that supports the identification of causes of insufficient training outcomes and their possible remedies.

Part Three, "Implementing Structured OJT," focuses on the process of implementing OJT and contains some conclusive remarks. Chapter Ten deals with managing structured OJT. A four-step model describes in detail the change process favorable for implementing structured OJT. The underlying thought in this chapter is that in organizations without previous experience with structured OJT, implementation is best begun with a pilot project. In the final chapter, some benefits and problems of structured OJT are highlighted, and limited attention is paid to alternative concepts for workplace learning.

The major contribution of this book is its emphasis on structured OJT as a valuable solution for certain performance problems. Further, the authors succeed in their attempt to articulate that structured OJT is no quick and easy solution. Desired outcomes may be expected only if certain design standards are applied. Although we view this book as a major contribution to the field of OJT, we would like to make two marginal comments and a remark from our own research perspective.

The first comment deals with the systems approach on which this book heavily relies. In the description of OJT as a system unto itself, no attention is paid to the issue of front-end analysis and the problem of transfer. For example, in Chapter Four "Analyzing Tasks for Structured OJT," the authors assume the task analysis starts with a list of documented performance problems. Usually, how-

ever, HRD professionals do not enter organizations and find a list of performance problems waiting for them. Often, the first problem they face is how to develop a complete overview of the problems related to performance; they wonder which methods are appropriate for producing a list of performance problems. The authors offer no guidance on how to overcome this obstacle. Furthermore, rather limited attention in this book is paid to the issue of how to ensure the learned skills will be applied permanently after the training event. Supplementary post-training measures contributing to the maintenance of the performance (e.g., job aids and supervisory support after the training event) have to be considered as an integral part of the systems approach.

Our second comment concerns the extensive description of the separate phases of the design process. We note that not all described methods and activities are characteristic for designing structured OJT. Some of the chapters could have been more limited to the questions, methods, and activities that are unique to structured OJT, especially since other sources are available for in-depth information with regard to, for example, designing training (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1992) and performance analysis (Swanson, 1994).

Finally, we conclude that from a research perspective, this book demonstrates the need for sound new research in the domain of OJT. The authors rely on a concept of OJT that has its roots in the industrial training conducted during both world wars. Unfortunately, new concepts are not available or are not crystallized (see for example, Brown,

Collins & Duguid, 1989). In our view the main challenge for research is to develop and test new concepts of OJT that are in line with the kinds of skills needed in the workplace now.

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