

# The Courage to Be and to Create

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As the pace and the breadth of turnaround at work and in the world intensify, leaders, managers and other professionals within organizations are searching for profound explanations in the work and lives. I have examined the root cause of this search for explanation and have been helping others to break new grounds with the aid of the field of organizational sciences. It has been my strong intellectual argument that organizational scientists have created new strategies for filling the philosophical vacuum created by technocratic or administrative approaches to manage organizations.

In this new epoch, we have to create fresh interpretations for the daily practice of management while working with a wide range of issues raised by life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century organizations, including unemployment, motivation, work relationships, effectiveness, and organizational change.

The contribution of philosophy to management thought and practice is more important than ever and should not be limited by a single discipline. Fiction and other literary works are also relevant to management education (Lapierre, *Fiction and the Research on Leadership*). Such works not only present complex material in a vivid style and permit the student to share an inner dialogue, but also nourish people's imagination, their dreams and fantasies, allowing them to mobilize themselves for creative action. This different dimension can lead to more elegant, analytical approaches to problems within organizations.

One of my favorite lists of works particularly relevant for leaders, managers and professionals (and I have used it with law, accounting and psychology students) is the following:

- 1) "Animal Farm" (Orwell)
- 2) "The Brothers Karamazov" (Dostoevsky)
- 3) "The Castle" (Kafka)
- 4) "Death of a Salesman" (Miller)
- 5) "Don Quixote" (Cervantes)
- 6) "Othello and Macbeth" (Shakespeare)

- 7) "The Metamorphosis" (Kafka)
- 8) "Moby Dick" (Melville)
- 9) "1984" (Orwell)
- 10) "The Plague" (Camus)
- 11) "War and Peace" (Tolstoy)

I hope my readers have read some of these books because they offer simple and deep explanations to the problems of family, work, community and life.

As I share with my beloved students, reading these works of fiction with an eye on their relationships to organizational issues will surprise them in terms of their application to daily and concrete practice of management and other professions within organizations.

The educational use of literary works for understanding organizations is particularly important as an additional dimension to encourage and stimulate discussions about big questions and to induce personal dreams of individuals. This relative lack of attention to philosophical and literary works in formal professions and technical education has been pointed out by many scholars. For instance, the late and great Fritz Schumacher recalled:

The...maps which I was supplied at school and university...failed to show the large unorthodox sections of both theory and practice in medicine, agriculture, engineering, social and political sciences...Not surprisingly, the more thoroughly acquainted we became with the details of the map, the more we absorbed what it showed and got used to the absence of things it did not show, the more perplexed, unhappy and cynical we became...The maps produced by modern materialistic Scientism leave all the questions that matter unanswered; more than that they deny the validity of the questions. (A Guide for the Perplexed)

The integration of everyday life issues in management and organizational sciences is not a luxury. If anyone wants to become a good organizational analyst he or she will have to read much. Reading about these issues will have direct implications for the mental, physical, social, emotional, and economic health of human beings, and for the health of the entire society. Reading is good therapy. The literary works spring from the concrete suffering and challenges of individuals and this has been acknowledge since the beginning of science.

Again, I have always argued for the integration of the world of work with the worlds of the family, the educational institutions, the communities and the markets. A quick example may illustrate what I am saying. These days, people are discovering (and sharing emails) that the impetus for change is triggered by experience of a major crisis, leading to a potential renewal. This positive view of crisis has been emphasized in good literary works for a long time. While writing this article, I cannot help but remember the works of Rollo May, which I strongly recommend to readers: *The Meaning of Anxiety*, *Love and Will*, *The Courage to Create*, and *The Discovery of Being*, among others. In these books, May shows in a beautiful manner that CRISIS IS EXACTLY WHAT IS REQUIRED TO SHOCK PEOPLE OUT OF UNAWARE DEPENDENCE UPON EXTERNAL ORTHODOXIES AND TO FORCE THEM TO UNRAVEL LAYERS OF PRETENCE TO REVEAL NAKED TRUTH ABOUT THEMSELVES AND REALITY.

In a very candid book about change, *Paths to Change: Strategic Choices for Organizations and Society* (W. McWhinney), it is clearly stated that the first and most profound courage is that required to maintain awareness that the world we encounter is that of our own choosing. This is the courage to affirm that there is none among the alternative realities that will assure us of our being.

The courage of facing concrete problems despite one's fears, confusions, dismays and sense of helplessness is the courage to be and the courage to create.

I am sure that the cultivation of profound education and the reading of good literature can pragmatically assist courageous men and women within organization in addressing and managing the complex crisis that confront them today. The challenge is to discover meaning for themselves and for others.

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