PRINCIPLES, PRACTICES, and PERSPECTIVES

The

NTL
HANDBOOK

of Organization

Development

and Change

Brenda B. Jones and Michael Brazzel
Editors

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Second Edition

WILEY

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FOREWORD

In the first edition of this book, we were writing this foreword from Bethel, Maine, the original site of the NTL Institute. Today, we are writing from our home in the San Francisco Bay Area community of Emeryville. Our use of Gould Academy and the Founders House in Bethel is now part of our history and NTL's. And our history as part of the Adult Education Division of the National Education Association has drifted into history as NTL's focus has expanded from small group and community development to organization development.

National is the word that seems to represent the tentative or conservative nature of the original group and a reluctance to assert that the methods and practices might somehow reach around the globe. There had always been broad interest in the work of international colleagues, even though the membership and programs focused in the main on domestic audiences. *Training*, by contrast, was a strong word that came from the work of Ronald Lippitt in his counterinsurgency training in Indochina during World War II. It was descriptive of the positive outcome of the process of learning by doing through skill exercises that involved feedback and reflection. *Laboratory* captured the essence of the work of Kurt Lewin, Lee Bradford, Ron Lippitt, and Ken Benne, the four founders of NTL, who articulated the need for action research through experiential learning.

Groups, however, were the one thing the founders were sure about. Small group process was the major focus in the early years of NTL: group dynamics, group development, and group research. Basic skill training groups (the name was soon shortened to T-groups) were viewed as the center of the learning laboratory. Learning objectives focused on the link between individual contributions in the dynamics of the group and the processes of the larger community; groups became the building blocks in applying democratic principles of participation in decision making and the world of action. Groups were seen as having the same critical elements for members working in a variety of settings: community, industry, education, and volunteer organizations. Specifically, distributed power, influence, and leadership were key elements in managing groups and organizations in the aftermath of World War II.

All of the key words in the original name find their way into the chapters of this book and represent the base from which our particular branch of organization development has evolved.

The role of the founders of NTL was critical in grounding all of these ideas and skills in an action research format. They outlined and evolved a process of reflective learning that changed adult education in general and constituted the base for the future of training and organization development. They brought their experience in role playing, simulations, and skill practice in cross-cultural scenarios together with the creative techniques for wide participation in the precursors of Future Search and Whole System Change. They combined the educational philosophy of John Dewey with a concern for ethics and democratic values, which was a compass that is still used to assess the values and ethics of planned change. The wide participation of all levels and functions in organization change led to the evolution of organizational culture change methodologies.

Democratic process was the key to all of these pioneers who conceived of the early programs in Bethel. This place was chosen because it met the requirements of Lewin for a cultural island: an island devoted to research and laboratory training; an island that looked and felt a lot like Brigadoon; an island hard to get to and even harder to leave; an island where people could explore new ideas for changing their own behavior and their visions of change outside of the constraints of their everyday environments.

As NTL members working with group development began to realize that groups were microcosms of organizations, they began to realize that the work being focused in improving the functioning of groups could be expanded to include the improved processes of organizations. Thus, in the 1960s, NTL added organization development to its programs and

research studies; changed its name to the NTL Institute; and became a separate organization, leaving the protective umbrella of the Adult Education Division of the National Education Association. A new era had begun, in which organization development would blossom and flourish and gradually distinguish itself from the focus on individual and group development.

We were fortunate to be early second-generation members of NTL. Edie arrived in Bethel in 1950 and Charlie showed up in 1957 as a research assistant. We met when Charlie participated in a T-group in which Edie was co-training, and our relationship with each other and Bethel has continued to this day. Our combined hundred-plus summers in Bethel and twenty-five years as faculty with the American University/NTL Master's Program in OD have spanned much of the history of the field of organization development as we know it. Our exposure to many of the pioneers in the field has given us a perspective that we want to share on the occasion of publication of this notable and important book connecting group development, participative leadership, experiential learning, and organization development.

Six decades ago, seeds were planted here in Bethel that became significant roots for the field of organization development. Those roots included not only well-known theorists and practitioners but also those people who have extended leadership to the organizations that embraced, expanded, and shaped the current state of the field of organization development. Among them are the Organization Development Network (ODN); the Organization Development Institute (ODI); and significant divisions of many other professional organizations: the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), the Academy of Management (AOM), and the many universities that developed OD master's and doctoral programs.

The taproot of OD that influenced the formation of NTL, and virtually all of the chapters in this book, goes back to Kurt Lewin. His work charted the way for much of what is widely shared by the many practitioners of our field. It also laid the groundwork for the differences and some of the uniqueness that characterize each scholar-practitioner's approach to our work. Philosophically and pragmatically, Lewin and his colleagues contributed the conception of individuals and their social relationships existing within a field of forces rather than the Aristotelian and Newtonian conceptions of simple cause and effect. This was an adaptation that Lewin made from field theory in physics. It served to open up the possibilities of action research and intervention in creating planned social change at all levels of systems. Lewin's basic formula of $B = f [P,E]$ was shorthand for

"behavior is a function of personal characteristics and the environment." This highlighted the importance of understanding how creating changes in the environment of a relationship, a group, or an organization could be an extremely powerful force in determining an individual's behavior, the outcome of group processes, and larger systems dynamics.

As a pioneer social psychologist, Lewin came to the United States in reaction to Hitler's persecution of Jews. His work was at the heart of the interdisciplinary movement in the pursuit of meaningful social change. World War II also heightened the deep hunger for structures and processes that would give hope to the idea of world peace. Shortly after the armistice, Lewin's Research Center for Group Dynamics was established at MIT and then moved to the University of Michigan following his death in early 1947. Rensis Likert brought leadership to the Survey Research Center and the umbrella organization, called the Institute for Social Research. Meanwhile, in other developments on the group process front, sociodrama and sociometry were flourishing under Jacob and Zerka Moreno, and the Tavistock Institute in London was exploring the relevance of psychoanalytic theory to group process and social change. Revolutionary ideas were simultaneously being explored in the fields of adult education, leadership, psychiatry, management, and community development.

Experiential learning was in the spirit of many of these innovations, as was the use of systematic data gathering as part of action research and the field of strategic planning. Social scientists who had been active in the war effort in both the military and the civilian sectors were fired up with the opportunity to reinvent democracy, put a new take on social justice, and experiment with applying scientific methods to human affairs, especially individual development and social relationships that form the backbone for exercising leadership in small groups, organizations, and communities. The concept of feedback, informed by the work of Norbert Weiner and colleagues in the field of cybernetics, became an integral part of the exercise of leadership and the processes of the management of change. The implications of new technology were additional challenges to the understanding of process management in successful task achievement. The foundations of sociotechnical systems work flowed out of the wartime experiences of Bion and others in the Tavistock Institute in London. All of this work is still relevant to the issues that have arisen in the approaches to improved efficiency and effectiveness promised in change management strategies.

The critical values underlying that work still inform the world of organization development. It is the expression of those values that you see in

the chapters of this book. First and foremost is the idea that people have a
right to participate in the processes that control their lives. Active partici-
pation, meaningful involvement, and an opportunity to make one's voice
heard can unleash the creative forces and collaborative activity that help
groups and organizations thrive and flourish. Functional leadership, the
flexibility in structures and process that reduce dependency and oppres-
sive hierarchical control of one set of persons by another, challenged the
prevailing models of autocratic position-based exercise of power. Sound
and current data that could be assembled, analyzed, and put to use in open
and transparent processes could amount to the basis for high trust and
collaboration at all levels of an organization. Feedback and the free flow
of information and communication among individuals, groups, and larger
units of organization became the focus of interventions and change pro-
cesses. Most important, social justice and the appreciation of differences
and diversity could be integrated into the goals and visions of organizations
to build a foundation for sustainable change.

These values had a high degree of resonance with those who chose to
see the importance of managing change at all levels of society. The core
assumptions about effective leadership were challenged and reassessed.
The search was on for more effective processes and procedures for man-
aging conflict, engaging the full potential of all members of groups and
organizations, and looking at leadership in radically different ways. The
tradition of power being associated with the position of the leader began
to give way to wide distribution of leader functions among group mem-
bers. There were powerful implications for the development of high indi-
vidual involvement, commitment, satisfaction, and competence as parallel
outcomes to effective task management in achieving organization goals
and visions. The conception of change management and the managing of
change were related to the idea of continuous learning and growth and
lead to the current interest areas of organization learning and planned
change in organization culture.

Doug McGregor, one of the early shapers of organization development,
gave us a simple language to explore the impact of individual processes
on people and organizations. Doug's classic *The Human Side of Enterprise*
spoke to the belief systems we have around process and people. Theory
X and Theory Y symbolized the beliefs we hold in working with people.
This theory was one of the key underpinnings of "OD = People, Process,
and Organization." He focused on the powerful connection between one's
beliefs about human nature and the effects of the self-fulfilling prophecy.
If leaders using Theory X conceived of people as lazy, avoiding work, and

reluctant to work together without coercion, they were likely to generate exactly that behavior on the part of the worker. If, on the other hand, leaders operated out of Theory Y beliefs, they would see individuals as creative and eager to join in challenging tasks for achieving group goals. That would then be the behavior more likely to be elicited in the interaction of leaders and group members.

At the time that Edie encountered Doug, she was a student at Antioch College and he was the college's newly appointed president. In his inaugural speech, he expounded on the concept of process and the role it played in all of our activities. It was an astonishing eye-opener to those who had always concentrated on task, never acknowledging that no task could be accomplished without an accompanying process and that the process often molded the shape of the task. That principle, once in focus, became essential to the practice of organization development.

Our field is based on an appreciation and understanding of process at all levels of social systems. Process underlies everything that is going on—individually, interpersonally, in and among groups. As Bob Blake and Jane Mouton demonstrated in the Managerial Grid process, process could be integrated with the focus of attention that had historically been on task. The profound realization that process could be observed and refined to enhance use of self, development of highly productive relationships and procedures, and creation of powerful organization cultures has been articulated in the work of Ed Schein, a colleague heavily influenced by his association with McGregor at MIT.

NTL's concern and understanding for the dynamics of groups became an international phenomenon. In the early 1960s, many European countries sent teams of group researchers to NTL to take part in building processes and structures that would help foster peaceful resolution for conflictual situations. These European teams returned to their countries and started institutes similar to NTL, many of which are still active today in Austria, Germany, Holland, Denmark, the Scandinavian countries, Hungary, and England. Many of these institutes are also moving their research and consulting from group development to organization development. Following right along with Europe came India, China, South America, and Asia, all of which started their own action and research training and consulting programs designed to focus on change projects in their cultures. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, as the civil rights and women's movements emerged as major forces in the United States, NTL reorganized by deliberate design from an organization whose members and leaders were predominantly white males to a diverse organization. At that time,

the leadership and membership of NTL became much more balanced in the proportions of women and people of color. Inclusion and diversity became powerful forces in the practice of organization development. This included the founding of firms specializing in diversity, such as Kaleel Jamison Associates and Elsie Y. Cross Associates. Diversity also became a strong program emphasis of individual OD consultants.

As the field of organization development matured, it moved more and more heavily into a focusing on work flow, organization models and structures, and use of increasingly sophisticated technology, all of which have the potential to squeeze out the values-based concern of the early years. Recently, these values are being slowly reintroduced into organizations through leadership and management training programs and, increasingly, the demand for executive coaching for leaders and managers. Now the shift in the field of OD is more than ever on how executives use themselves to affect the organization and set the tone for a productive organization culture.

The focus on leadership continues to swing between the charismatic leader at the pinnacle of the organization and development of leadership competencies throughout the organization, empowering more distributive decision-making capacity and building a culture of accountability. It is here that the values of organization development become a foundation for advocacy, challenge, and constructive engagement so as to maintain the "human side of enterprise." Corporate organizations are driven to produce profit margins that ensure survival and satisfy customers and shareholders. Nonprofits and governmental organizations are challenged to demonstrate their worth. All organizations share the challenges and opportunities of integrating values when balancing the underlying importance of people with the achievement of their goals.

Challenges that lie ahead for the field of OD and NTL's continued involvement are to continue its foundation of action research and concern for social justice in a diverse, international world that increasingly needs peaceful approaches to resolving conflict over major cultural differences. The underlying values that NTL and OD have brought to groups and organizations need to find a voice in the increasing complexity of today's virtual groups and global organizations.

The array of authors and editors in this book reads like a diagonal slice through the generations of OD over the last fifty years. Brenda B. Jones and Michael Brazzel have brought the wisdom and experience of the third generation. They have both been at the forefront of organization development and change as well as the diversity and inclusion movements

as an integral part of NTL. Brenda moved from graduate student at Johns Hopkins University to part of the faculty in the American University/NTL Institute Master's Program in OD and at the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland, as well as Chair of the ODN board of directors and, currently the president of the NTL Institute and vice president of the Lewin Center. Michael was a student in the first class of the AU/NTL program, has been on the OD faculty there, and is a co-founder and co-developer of the NTL Diversity Certificate Program. Both have been active practitioners over the past twenty-five years. Brenda and Michael have carefully selected authors to bring a fresh eye, a new perspective, and imaginative thinking on the current state of organization development to produce this creatively designed book.

The book takes its place alongside the state-of-the-art publications of the NTL Institute. Together with the other major professional organizations in our field, NTL has regularly amounted to a reference point or compass heading for our practice world. Together with the ODN, the NTL Institute has served as an incubator and major support system to generate a large and diverse assembly of scholar-practitioners. This volume is a direct outcome of the sustained energy, trust, and cohesion characteristic of a strong, healthy, collaborative group of colleagues along with the inclusion of significant differences that ensure the vitality and growth of new ideas and practices.

We believe this book can make a significant contribution to the evolution of our field through integrating new practices and challenging opportunities while continuing to articulate those underlying values of social justice, individual respect, and high internal collaboration. As the next decade unfolds, the discipline that we have known as organization development may change in form, or even in name. However, it is the consistent spotlight on human values that has given the field of OD as we know it the definition that will continue to shape our discipline. These values will always be our signature.

Emeryville, California   Edith Whitfield Seashore and Charles
November, 2012   Seashore

Edie Seashore and Charlie Seashore completed this Foreword for the second edition of *The NTL Handbook of Organization Development and Change* in November 2012. It was one of Charlie's last pieces of professional writing. Charlie died on January 20, 2013. Edie died a few weeks later on