

Human Relations

**People
&
Work**

Lawrence L. Steinmetz



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HUMAN RELATIONS: PEOPLE AND WORK

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PREFACE

This book is about people and their relationships with work—how they view their work, their work setting, and their interpersonal relationships with colleagues at work.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive book about the human relations of working. That would be impossible. Therefore, what I have tried to do is identify and explore the more common circumstances that exist at work, because it is my intention that this book be used by the individual who has not really had the opportunity to analyze interpersonal dynamics. Most of the readers will be college students; therefore, many of the examples used are ones with which they can relate. However, businesspeople will also benefit from the opportunity the book provides to analyze human relations and interpersonal dynamics. Thus, the book will be appealing and useful to anyone who is interested in studying what goes on at work.

Many concepts are examined. Motivation is one; relating with other people is another. However, problems are also addressed—problems of how one perceives oneself in relation with other people; how one relates with one's supervisor or behaves if one is a supervisor; how one can improve one's listening skills, and so forth.

This book varies from the usual textbook on human relations in that it presents a fairly thorough treatment of organizational psychology and the psychology of individuals at work. Most traditional human relations texts simply acknowledge the existence of psychology and its impact on interpersonal dynamics. I have, however, tried to give the reader some idea of the logic and compulsions that cause people to relate with others in the work environment.

Another unique aspect of this book is the treatment of the union as a "being" in human relations. Rather than treat unionism as another institutional input, I have tried to explain some of the more hidden pressures that workers experience and must relate to because of the existence of unionism and unionists.

Necessarily, this book also treats many of the problems considered timely as we enter the 1980s. The text considers social problems at work: problems of the aged and handicapped; problems of minorities and the underprivileged; problems of the "underclass" (those who don't seem to make it in our society as either middle or upper class). Exposing the problems and discussing realities of these groups in a frank, practical way will, I think, help the reader to solve these problems.

Perhaps the most enjoyable part of writing this book was preparing the chapter in which I predict where we are going. The reader must keep in mind that it was written in 1977–1978. Although it is pure speculation,

it was fun to guess about what is going to happen and how it will affect people's working relationships as we move into the 1980s.

A final unique aspect of this book in contrast to most textbooks on human relations is the chapter on how to get a job. I felt it was important that we talk not only about that wild world of work, but also about how one might land the job one wants. It is my sincere hope that the chapter on how to get a job will be carefully read by the student reader, whether or not he or she has a job. It has been my experience that a serious problem exists for many members of our working world—they underestimate their own skills and potentialities and often end up in jobs that are unpleasant or unhappy situations for them. Sometimes this is because they are desperately afraid that they can't get a better job, but I think that too often it is because they don't have a high opinion of their own talents. Therefore, I hope that even if nothing else is gained from reading this book, people who have undersold themselves—whether they are young workers just starting out or older workers who have ended up in dissatisfying jobs—can learn how to take measures to improve their work situation. I believe that working can be fun, and I believe that if one knows how to find the job one wants, one can experience the pleasures and delights of work.

Acknowledgments

I've found that writing this book has been fun, yet work, for me. I hope it has also been fun, albeit work, for the people who have assisted me in the production of this book. I was particularly blessed with some excellent secretarial help in preparing the manuscript. I would therefore like to give special recognition to Charlotte Buck, Karen Simmons, and Nancy Simmons for their contributions in typing and retyping this manuscript. The enthusiasm they demonstrated in doing this and many of the other tasks required of them made my work a pleasure. I just hope it was a pleasure for them, too.

There are others who have helped me in the preparation of this book. I'd like to give a special note of thanks to my wife Sally, who took my basic ideas and made them readable. Every writer needs help, and any writer who has the benefit of the kind of help she gave to me in working through and reworking the manuscript will know full well what I mean when I express my sincere and genuine appreciation for all she contributed—both the praise and the criticism.

I would also like to extend my personal thanks to the people who reviewed the manuscript in its preliminary stages: Nora Jo Sherman, Houston Community College; James M. Whitehouse, Bakersfield College; Wendell Ferguson, Richland College; Don Sandlin, East Los Angeles College; Jack Halloran, Santa Barbara City College. I feel that they contributed greatly in polishing the manuscript. I would like to extend personal thanks to Dr. Alan Filley of the University of Wisconsin at Madison for the help he gave me. Al has long been a personal friend and has contributed to

this book in many ways in which he really is not aware. He not only helped me collect material for some of the areas in which I was lacking, but he also contributed greatly to my general understanding of the area of interpersonal dynamics and human relationships.

Photos in this book are courtesy of Ronald L. Krenzle and/or Creative Visuals, Inc.

There are scores of other people who have helped me make this book what it is—perhaps not directly, but certainly indirectly. Former bosses and co-workers necessarily come to mind as do employees who have worked for me in the past. All have contributed to the overall understanding and ideas that I have of people in their working relationships. I hope, as a tribute to all those mentioned above, this book is considered worthwhile.

Lawrence L. Steinmetz

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