The International Journal of Coaching in Organizations

IJCO

The Coaching Library: Change and Resilience -Building a Theory of Organizational Coaching Effectiveness [A Meta-Dialogue and ReviewEvoked by Mike Jay's CPR for the Soul]

William Bergquist, PH.D.

This article first appeared in the *International Journal of Coaching in Organizations*, 2006, 4(4),52-63. It can only be reprinted and distributed with prior written permission from Professional Coaching Publications, Inc. (PCPI). Email John Lazar at john@ijco.info for such permission.

Journal information:
www.ijco.info

Purchases:
www.pcpionline.com

2006

ISSN 1553-3735

© Copyright 2006 PCPI.
All rights reserved worldwide.

Professional Coaching Publications, Inc.

THE COACHING LIBRARY

Change and Resilience: Building a Theory of Organizational Coaching Effectiveness

A Meta-Dialogue and Review Evoked by Mike Jay's *CPR for the Soul*

BY WILLIAM BERGQUIST, PH.D.

I told Mike Jay that I would like to review his new book, *CPR for the Soul*. I did this for two reasons. First, it gave me an opportunity (and excuse) to spend some time reading what he has written. As many readers of IJCO know, Mike Jay has contributed a brief article ("Musing") to every issue of this quarterly journal since the journal was first published four years ago. Each of his Musings has offered intriguing and provocative ideas that are of great value to practitioners and users of organizational coaching services. There is a second, broader reason for asking Mike if I could review his book. Mike and I both attended an international conference last August (2006) that was sponsored by the International Coach Federation and held in Vancouver, British Columbia (Canada). At this conference, one of our colleagues, Linda Page, offered a very important observation and accompanying recommendation. She noted that considerable attention has been devoted to the profession of coaching (both personal and organizational); however, scant attention has been given to the discipline of coaching. Dr. Page suggested that the field of coaching must be based on a firm disciplinary foundation (and, I would add, a firmly based and integrated interdisciplinary foundation). Without this foundation,

© Copyright 2006 PCPI. All rights reserved worldwide.

the profession of coaching is likely to be nothing more than the "fad" that Maher and Pomerantz (2003) warned us about back in 2003.

What constitutes a "discipline"? While there are many alternative (and often diverging) answers to this question, one can make a pretty strong case for the presence of four elements (foot pads, if you will) for the foundation: (1) high quality programs and schools that provide appropriate training and education, (2) ongoing research regarding both processes and outcomes (the "how" and "what" of the discipline), (3) integrative and pragmatic scholarship (that brings together and traces out implications of ideas and findings from many related fields), and (4) substantial theory that contributes directly to the specific understanding of and purposes served by the discipline.

The second reason that I asked Mike Jay if I could review his book concerns the third and fourth of these disciplinary elements. I firmly believe that Mike Jay has contributed in a significant manner to the field of coaching and may be contributing some of the "early" scholarship and theory-building that this field needs if it is to be a successful profession and if it is to be built on a strong disciplinary and interdisciplinary foundation. Mike Jay's work leads us into many different fields and points us (as any good guidebook does) to that which is of greatest value and validity in each of these fields. Mike Jay's work is not easy to read or understand—it is often richly theoretical and requires us to think in new and different ways. This is what a contributing theory is all about. We best honor this work by spending a bit of time trying to make sense of what has been said (or written) and to apply these new perspectives to our own work.

In keeping with this broader perspective on scholarship and theory, I will be attending primarily to the contributions made by Mike Jay in these two domains. While CPR of the Soul contains many useful exercises, worksheets and other related goodies to be added to an organizational coach's tool bag, I will call attention to what he has to say conceptually about the field of coaching. Specifically, I will be looking at two of Mike's concepts: change and resilience. In some ways, it is not fair to Mike Jay for me to focus on only two of his concepts (especially in isolation). You really need to work through Mike Jay's system to fully grasp what he is trying to convey. I will only comment at a "meta-level" on how Mike's work contributes to our understanding of change and resilience and the ways in which coaching can assist these challenging outcomes—and then offer a few comments on the wealth of material to be found in the appendices to Mike's book.

CHANGE

There is a continuing blind spot in most models of organizational coaching and, more generally, organizational change. It is assumed that an organizational coach or consultant should convince her client that a specific model or theory of organizational effectiveness or leadership is "correct" and that her client should modify his behavior or the operations of his organization to bring this behavior or operation in closely approximation to the model or theory. I call this the Alpha Model of Change (i.e., modify actions to make them conform with theory). Mike Jay similarly writes about the pervasive and inadequate nature of this model of change:

> In conventional change systems, we focus on changing the person to fit the requirements of the design. I have suggested that this is inefficient and an example of antiquated design intervention, the one currently utilized in personal systems change throughout the world. (Jay, 2006, p. 42)

He suggests that: "Personal and organizational change efforts often do not work

and even when they do, they cost too much, or work too slowly." (Jay, 2006, p.35)

Mike speaks quite insightfully about ways in which the dominant Alpha model often fails:

> In a lot of cases, people go from one training and development program to another, each failing to change the person's resilience profile, or what we might call their design—flawed or incomplete as it might be. This is hard on the people, inefficient for the system and a waste of energy. Change is expensive and inefficient, as well as extremely disconcerting to the person who cannot learn as a result of having a resilience capability profile that is stable, yet out of alignment with demand conditions—the territory. (Jay, 2006, p. 29)

One of the most influential modes of Alpha change has been presented by Chris Argyris and Donald Schön (Argyris, 1970; Argyris and Schön, 1978; Argyris, Putnam and Smith, 1985; Schön, 1983). Both Mike Jay and I greatly admire the work of Argyris and Schön and support their distinction between espoused theory and theory-in-use (actual actions taken). Mike writes about carefully mapping our "talk" (espoused theory), our "walk" (theory-in-use) and our "intent" (action theory). (Jay, 2006, p. 28) Argyris and Schön have provided an invaluable service in encouraging organizational coaches and consultants to assist clients identify and clearly articulate both their theory and their actions. Mike and I, however, both suggest that because there is a discrepancy between an espoused theory and theory-in-use does not mean that one should automatically seek to bring the theory-in-use (action taken) into alignment with the espoused theory. At times, one might want to bring the espoused theory into alignment with the "real world" and with the actions we are actually taking.

This later perspective (which I call the Beta Model of Change) is labeled as a theory or design strategy of "non-change" by Mike Jay. Mike's CPR system "does not require the person to change their fundamental core attributes." Rather, his system "provides additional alignment, support and action, either synchronously or asynchronously" (Jay, 2006, p. 30) that complements a client's core attributes. "I am saying you don't have to change, but you do have to have the conversation! We are NOT in the change business; we are in the design business!" (Jay, 2006, p. 31) He suggests that we move from a perspective of trying hard to be the person "we want to be" (seeking out the ideal—espoused theory) to trying hard to be the person "we can be" (building on the theory-in-use). "To alleviate suffering, we take the resources that are currently being employed . . . and utilize them in an 'I can be everything I can be' paradigm . . . Although, seemingly a subtle shift in thinking or feeling, it is a monumental leap in action and the application of resources!" (Jay, 2006, p. 33)

In recent years we have seen this Beta Model of Change effectively engaged through appreciative inquiry (Srivastra, Cooperrider, et al., 1990; Watkins, Magruder and Mohr, 2001; Whitney and Cooperrider, 2006; Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, 2003) and the closely related strategy called "an appreciative perspective" (Bergquist, 2004; Bergquist, Merritt and Phillips, 2004). These strategies of organizational consultation and coaching: (1) focus on strengths rather than deficits, (2) attend primarily to learning gained from past successes rather than past failures, and (3) direct a client toward a future that is energized and directed by these past successes and by a client's distinctive strengths. Mike Jay certainly takes an appreciative stance when he helps a client build on her own unique strengths and sources of

resilience when creating effective life designs—rather than focusing on strategies for changing a client: "Instead of trying to be anything you want to be [Alpha], be everything you can be [Beta] and know your strengths." (Jay, 2006, p. 35) Like his colleagues in the appreciative inquiry and appreciative perspective schools of thought, Mike Jay is advocating an appreciative use of the resources that a client already has available to herself: "It is up to those in the intervention to support us in identifying those gifts and applying those gifts in a manner than promotes a resilient design in sustainable ways—NOT WORKING on our weaknesses!" (Jay, 2006, p. 34)

In addition to the Alpha and Beta models, there is a Gamma Model of Change. This model focuses on the discrepancy or tension that exists between our espoused theory and our theory-in-use. The Gamma model is all about personal and organizational learning that is generated by this discrepancy or tension. This state of dis-ease (Kurt Lewin's stage of unfreezing, see Lippitt, Watson and Westley, 1958) provides the motivation for reexamining assumptions, perspectives and tacitly held beliefs, and for trying out new behaviors. Mike Jay explores this third model of change when he suggests that we need a "backdrop, or something to create tension or focus, to learn [his CPR model]. . . . So, you pick a backdrop or . . . tension in any domain (personal, professional, business and network) or across multiple domains and create a puzzle for the soul to resolve." (Jay, 2006, p. 219) Mike points specifically to this source of tension as a pull between two points that are attractive. I would suggest that this is precisely the nature of the tension that exists between an espoused theory and a theory-in-use. Both are attractive—the espoused theory because it "sounds good" or "would make me look successful" and the theory-in-use because "I'm comfortable with it" or because "it is doable (I'm less likely to fail)."

I think that both Mike Jay and I would agree that the key to any effective use of the Gamma Model when we are coaching is to counter this tension (and allow a client to remain in this tension) by providing comparable support and encouragement (what some coaching practitioners and therapists would call a "container" or "chalice" for their client's anxiety or performance apprehension). (Bion, 1974; Eisler, 1987; Menzies Lyth, 1988) Much as William Bridges (1980) reminds us that we must remain in the "neutral zone" for a sufficient period of time to engage successfully in a life or career transition, so we must remain in the Gamma zone of tension for a sufficient period of time to extract the learning from the new perspectives and actions that are generated within (or motivated by) this state of tension.

Finally, there is a fourth perspective on personal and organizational change—what I call the Delta Model of Change. From this fourth perspective, both the espoused theory and theory-in-use are abandoned in favor of a major transformative shift in how we view the world. We change both our theory and our actions. This fourth model is obviously the most ambitious—and ultimately (in a postmodern world of complexity, unpredictability and turbulence) the one which we frequently must embrace, even if reluctantly. (cf. Mezirow, 1981; Mezirow, 1997; Mezirow, 2000) To understand how one can successfully engage Delta change, one can turn to a second major theme in Mike Jay's book, namely, the nature of resilience and adaptability.

RESILIENCE

I would turn to Mike Jay's definition of resilience when seeking out a strategy that enables one to face a Delta change in both theory and action. According to Mike,

"RESILIENCE IS THE DIFFERENTIATED POWER to persist when things do not work out at first, the capability to navigate ambiguity and uncertainty, the motivation to transcend common problems and barriers and to collaboratively anticipate the future in sustainable ways." (Jay, 2006, p. 49) These are all ingredients of a Delta change. Resilience is an important (though often elusive) concept: "resilience will be emergent in a variety of unique and unpredictable ways through the ability to innovate and adapt your own, as well as the constellation you create with others experiencing life-conditions over time." (Jay, 2006, p. 20)

Mike Jay uses the example of a blizzard in describing the complex and multi-level nature of resilience:

> At some levels, surviving a blizzard would be resilient. [Beta Change]
> At another level, saving others in the storm might be deemed resilient. [Beta Change]
> At yet another level, providing generators to people without power because of a blizzard might be termed resilient. [Alpha Change]
> At yet another level, creating blizzard warning systems might be resilient, and so on. [Gamma Change]
> At still another level, blizzards might be valued for the renewing effect they have on the landscape; it is all a matter of differentiating your perspective, your context before conditions [demands] are mapped. [Delta Change]

In this example, we see not only the four models of change in operation, but also quite different assumptions regarding the extent to which (and the manner in which) we have some control over the world in which we live. Mike Jay seeks to systematize this multi-level concept of resilience by turning to social cognitive theory (and specifically the theories of Albert Bandura). We tend to perceive our world and the role we play in this world based on three assumptions about "agency" (influence): (1) external locus of control, (2) internal locus of control, and (3) something that Bandura calls a "proxy" locus of control. We embrace an external locus of control when we assume that virtually everything that is important in our life comes from outside our own immediate control. Mike Jay identifies one form of resilience as coming from this external locus. He calls this event-based resilience. "Event-based resilience," according to Jay, "is the reason why some of us achieve resilience during portions of our lives or during particular events. . . . Each of us has particular gifts that when aligned with particular conditions match up well. It is that moment, event, or series of events not directly in alignment with our natural or nurtured capability that gives us trouble." (Jay, 2006, p. 21)

An *internal locus of control* is dominant when we assume that virtually everything of importance can be influenced by our own decisions and actions. Mike Jay links this internal locus to something he calls path-based resilience. (Jay, 2006, p. 26) In contrasting event-based and path-based resilience, Mike Jay observes:

> Event-based resilience is an important form of resilience, but is less effective than what I call path-driven resilience. In contrast to event-based resilience, which in large part depends on successfully reducing the tensions of each event or set of conditions using our inductive bias, natural gifts or disposition, path-driven resilience uses success AND failure to create resolution of tensions over time. (Jay, 2006, p. 21)

Finally, we come to proxy-based locus on control. This third, rarely discussed, focus of control is based on the assumption that one can "influence others who have the resources, knowledge, and means to act on their behalf to secure the outcomes they desire" (Mike Jay's quote of Albert Bandura). (Jay, 2006, p. 33)

Based on this assumption, one is dependent on other people to change the world in which one lives (as in the case of external locus); however, one doesn't feel completely at the mercy of other people or the fates, because these other people (or fates) can be influenced, propitiated (bribed with gifts, offerings, etc.) or at least encouraged to be collaborative (in terms of meeting the interests of both parties).

This proxy locus of control exemplifies an important concept offered by Mike Jay. He suggests that we are likely to shift down to a more basic level when confronted with challenges or crises so that we might assume an internal locus of control. We gain something of an internal locus when we can indirectly (proxy) influence the world. Similarly, during a blizzard, we probably can't engage in many higher levels of internalized control. We can't readily obtain a generator (Alpha change) nor can we set up a warning system (Gamma change). We certainly are unlikely to entertain the positive effects of the blizzard (Delta change). We can, however, direct our full attention and engage our considerable resources in seeking to survive the blizzard (Beta change). In attempting to survive the blizzard, we show great resilience (even if at a lower level); furthermore, we are likely to embrace a critical (though highly constrained) assumption about locus of control: we take personal responsibility for surviving the blizzard. We don't give up, nor do we wait for someone else to save us or wait for the weather gods to stop the blizzard. We must take action--this is an internal locus of control—if we are to survive the blizzard.

FROM THEORY TO APPLICATION

These differentiations made by Mike Jay with regard to models of change and levels of resilience are critical to effective organizational coaching. When coaching with an organizational leader—particularly one who is "in trouble"—it is often very appropriate to focus on Alpha change. There is a particular manner in which an organization wants its leaders to lead, or this particular client has recently gone through an expensive training program and the organization wants her to make use of the skills and knowledge she has acquired. Coaches are often commissioned (and paid) to assist their clients to make full use of a specific set of theories, models or practices that they themselves espouse or the organization espouses.

Beta change is certainly a unique way for many organizational coaches to begin conducting their business, given the dominance of a deficit model of organizational coaching (often embedded in Alpha change initiatives). An appreciative approach to coaching is directly aligned with Beta change. The coach "catches" her client "when her client is "doing it right," rather than focusing on the moments of failure or non-achievement of Alpha-based goals. An appreciative perspective is also engaged when we encourage our clients to focus on and learn from past successes and when they frame their ongoing dialogue around future potentials and emerging opportunities. An appreciative perspective, however, is not the only Beta strategy to use. Mike Jay offers many valuable suggestions in CPR for the Soul that are aligned with an appreciative perspective, but move well beyond appreciation in the coach's reframing of her client's challenges around design strategies that make full use of the client's current strengths and capacities.

What about Gamma change? Using Gamma strategies, we may become "learning" coaches and the providers of "containers" and "sanctuaries" for our clients. All of the strategies regarding organizational learning that have been offered by Chris Argyris, Don Schön and Peter Senge are very appropriate here (Argyris and Schön, 1978; Senge, 1990). The role of the coach is to provide the safe container

for a client, so that the client can remain in this uncomfortable, unfrozen place of learning, rather than escape into old patterns of behavior or outmoded assumptions about the world and one's place in the world. As Mike Jay indicates, CPR for the soul takes place when we acknowledge the extraordinary amount of freedom we have to make choices—and when we acknowledge that with this freedom comes tension. Coaching clients often want to escape from this freedom, but can be successfully supported by organizational coaches to remain open to the opportunities that freedom offers (especially when this freedom comes with the client's acknowledgement of her own strengths).

It is when we turn to Delta change that I think Mike Jay has the most to teach us—and where his description of and discussion about the nature of resilience come to the fore. While I would suggest that one read Mike Jay's book to get a full and vibrant sense of what he means by resilience, I believe that three major strategies regarding resilience can be extracted from his book. First, resilience is not just an attitude or ability to remain emotionally flexible ("bouncing back after a fall"); as Mike Jay uses this term, it refers to cognitive (and affective) agility—the capacity to move between different levels of conceptualization when facing a difficult problem. Clearly, an effective organizational coach can help her client reframe and reconceptualize a problem—moving to different levels in assessing and taking action regarding the "blizzards" in the client's life and organization.

Second, resilience comes from our attention to many different dimensions of our life. Mike Jay identifies eight dimensions. They are (with my own label for each dimension): (1) fitness (physical dimension), (2) inclusion of other people (interpersonal dimension), (3) power (organizational dimension), (4) accountability (values dimension), (5) authority (systems dimension), (6) responsibility (strategic dimension), (7) adaptability (pattern recognition dimension), and synergy (global dimension). (Jay, 2006, pp. 56-69) The job performed by an effective coach might readily be conceived as assisting an organizational client to achieve resilience in each of these eight dimensions. Mike Jay specifically suggests that a coach can assist his clients in "mapping" out these eight dimensions and offers several tools to assist a coach in this valuable mapping exercise. (Jay, 2006, pp. 72-83)

Third, Mike Jay reminds us that "resilience is not an event; it is a path . . . which at times can be rocky." (Jay, 2006, p. 93) We know that Delta change is a major challenge for anyone—client or coach. In finding resilience, we must be patient and reliant on our distinctive strengths and those moments of success that may at times seem to elude us. Mike offers us a ten step process (Jay, 2006, p. 93) for moving toward resilience, but acknowledges that these ten steps "are not the ONLY steps." (Jay, 2006, p. 93) I would personally suggest that the most important function served by organizational coaches is to provide a safe setting and be witness to the struggles in which their courageous clients engage as they seek to transform both their theory and their practice (Delta change)—often required if organizational clients are to lead effectively in a postmodern world of great complexity, unpredictability and turbulence. (Kanter, 1984; Bergquist, 1993; Bergquist and Mura, 2005; Drucker, 1999; Heifetz, 1994; Wheatley, 1999)

APPENDICES

While I think that Mike Jay's analyses of change and resilience are of great value to the theoretical foundation of organizational coaching, I recognize that the appendices to CPR of the Soul may be of even greater value to some coaching practitioners. The simulation worksheets on pages 232-236 may be worth the total price of the book. Mike Jay offers three extra treats in the appendices. He

provides the Reiss Profile (sixteen basic desires) in an exploration of happiness that links this profile to Mike Jay's own work ("Resilience Matrix"). A second treat is the "The Orders of Mind" which is based on the work of Robert Kegan. While Kegan's work is difficult, I believe that his developmental model is essential to the theoretical framework being constructed by any organizational coach. The third treat is Mike Jay's description of David Bohm's dialogical technique. Dialogue has become a widely used tool of communication in recent years and should be at least understood (if not used) by any organizational coach who wishes to engage her client in a supportive, yet challenging manner.

REFERENCES

Argyris, C., and Schön. D. (1978). Organizational learning. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Argyris, C., Putnam, R., and Smith, D. M. (1985). Action science: Concepts, methods, and skills for research and intervention. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Argyris, C., and Schön, D. (1978). Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bergquist, W. H. (2004). Creating the appreciative organization. Sacramento, CA: Pacific Soundings Press.

Bergquist, W.H., Merritt, K., and Phillips, S. (2004). Executive coaching: An appreciative perspective. (Rev. ed.). Sacramento, CA: Pacific Soundings Press.

Bergquist, W. H. (1993). The postmodern organization: Mastering the art of irreversible change. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Bergquist, W. H. and Mura, A. (2005). Ten themes and variations for postmodern leaders and their coaches. Sacramento, CA: Pacific Soundings Press.

Bion, W. (1974). Experience in groups. New York: Ballantine.

Bridges, W. (1980). Transitions. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Drucker, P. F. (1999). Management challenges for the 21st century. New York : HarperBusiness.

Eisler, R. (1987). The chalice and the blade. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco.

Heifetz, R. A. (1994). Leadership without easy answers. Cambridge: Belknap Press.

Jay, M. (2006). CPR for the soul: Creating personal resilience by design. Mike Jay Leadership University Press.

Kanter, R. M. (1984). The change masters. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Lippitt, R., Watson, J., and Westley, B. (1958). Dynamics of planned change. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Maher, S., and Pomerantz, S. (2003). The future of executive coaching: Analysis from a market lifecycle approach. International Journal of Coaching in Organizations, 1(2), 3-11.

Menzies Lyth, I. (1988). The functioning of social systems as a defense against anxiety. Containing anxiety in institutions. London: Free Associations, 43-85.

Mezirow, J. (2000). Learning to think like an adult: Core concepts of transformation theory. In J. Mezirow and Associates (Eds.), Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on theory in progress. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (1981). A critical theory of adult learning and education. Adult Education, 32, 3-24.

Mezirow, J. (1997, Summer). Transformative learning: Theory to practice. New directions for adult and continuing education. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Schön, D. A. (1983). The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action. New York: Basic Books.

Senge, P. (1990). The fifth discipline. New York: Doubleday.

Srivastra, S., Cooperrider, D. L., et al. (1990). Appreciative management and leadership: The power of positive thought and action in organizations. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Watkins, J.M., and Mohr, B.J. (2001). Appreciative inquiry: Change at the speed of imagination. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

Wheatley, M.J. (1999). Leadership and the mew science: Discovering order in a chaotic world. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Whitney, D., and Cooperrider, D.L. (2005). The appreciative inquiry summit: An emerging methodology for whole system positive change. Retrieved July 29, 2005, from http://www.all-in-one-spirit.de/lit/appinq/appinq05.htm.

Whitney, D., and Trosten-Bloom, A. (2003). The power of appreciative inquiry ; A practical guide to positive change. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

William Bergquist, Ph.D.

Phone: 207-833-5124
Email: whbergquist@aol.com

William Bergquist serves not only as Co-Executive Editor of IJCO, but also as a graduate school president (The Professional School of Psychology) and Dean of the Symposia being conducted by the International Consortium for Coaching in Organizations (ICCO). Having published more than 40 books, Bergquist is pleased to announce that a third edition of his Executive Coaching: An Appreciative Approach is about to be published. Its new title, Organizational Coaching: An Appreciative Approach, reflects its broadening perspective, as well as its continuing focus on appreciation as a foundation of effective coaching processes.

A Response from the author of
CPR for the SOUL: Coaching Personal Resilience by Design

BY MIKE JAY

As I approach this meta-analysis, I'm doing so with respect to my relationship with IJCO, so I wanted to put a disclaimer on this that, more than anything, I'll muse rather than try to mirror the principles of academic writing, so forgive me at the outset.

I found Bill's ideas interesting and agree that the book itself and the models contained, both in the book proper and in the appendix, are designed to stimulate the reader to develop their own ideas about how reality works.

In regards to alpha, beta, gamma, and delta change—an interesting approach—my preference is to use single, double, triple, and fourth loop learning. I wrote

extensively about this in the OD Journal back in 2003. The article is available here: www.executive-coaching-club.com/mjay .

I think the real key difference in CPR and all the alphas, betas, etc. is that CPR is an emergent system. It requires a cross-paradigmatic approach, which preserves the ideas in alpha (single loop behavior modification, without corresponding shifts in governing variables), beta (double loop learning, where governing variables are reframed), gamma (triple loop learning, where the identity behind the governing variables is shifted into a third space), or delta—as Bill shifted out of a single frame into multiple frames (fourth loop learning is what happens when two systems are brought into perspective with each other—creating a perspective on the perspective).

A cross-paradigmatic approach creates a new field of work, which is where I'm headed with the CPR/Resilience System.

Why is it so different—so difficult to understand?

In large part, it flies in the face of everything we have learned. Since before the 50s, we've been convinced that people come into the world with a blank slate to be written upon by nurture. This means that anyone can learn anything. I suspect in large part this was a knee-jerk reaction in the beginning away from eugenics, which held the world still with the atrocities pronounced in its formula.

Time heals all wounds and perhaps it's now time to reconsider finding the baby that was thrown out into the street.

The Monarch butterfly learns where it was born (its roots) and it passes this knowledge via genetics on to its offspring (from generation to generation). This was one of the key animals that tipped scientists off, that knowledge can be passed genetically.

I've forgotten where the original quote stems from, but essentially, as Matt Ridley noted in Nature Via Nurture—genetics AND mimetics are equally related to growth, development and change.

For the past 20 years I've been working with people in coaching, in the first half using the blank slate and in the second half, moving away from the blank slate methods. Here's why. Essentially I found that what changes in people is largely a result of the content, context, and conditions they find themselves in, but they adhere "fairly narrowly" to a distinct core where their inborn ends reside.

More recently, Dr. Steven Reiss at The Ohio State University developed the "Reiss Profile of Motivational Sensitivity" and wrote about it in a book called Who Am I? in 2000. Reiss found that there are primal connections to his 16 desires and that they are inborn. Over time, here's what I've realized. Can we change? Definitely. Do we change? Sure. Should we bank on being able to change a lot? No. Not away from this motivational-hardwired core set of desires.

To make the long story short, what I've discovered and have some degree of confidence in as related to most developmental theorists currently emerging—Kegan, Commons, Fischer to name several—is that development is tough stuff. Jaques indicated some do, some don't in Human Capability (1994).

The CPR formula is a generic approach to allowing people to be who they are, not having to undergo the blank slate methods of being worked on, or having to continuously work on themselves.

The human race—literally—in the US for perfection is an exceedingly low payoff proposition. It is now infecting other nations and societies, intending to bring them the same amount of happiness we have? Yikes!

So, I developed CPR in studying resilience over time. I realized that the key indicator of resilience in a complex, ambiguous, and uncertain world was the ability to "reach out." Yet, you can't and won't reach out, if you "are supposed to be getting it right." It flies in the face of human psychology to ask for help in America. A societal standard of "knowing it all" pervades every person, business and organization.

In the model I put forward, I ask people to "begin with the end in mind"; or assume you don't have to change. If someone said to you, "you don't have to change," what would you do? In most cases, people have no idea, because they can't get past the reframe. However, if you could, what would you do? That's the conversation you have to have…and as I state in the book, "change comes from that." Whether its alpha, beta, gamma, delta, or a combination is not important because what drives what is important are your core values.

When people are confronted with the inability to change, most of us just keep trying harder, or like those without the "naturally hardy personality" they withdraw, failing to reach out for help, support, resources, advice, etc.

On a side note, what plagues the profession of coaching today is not coaching, but the fact that people don't want to reach out, and when they do (as in the current state of coaching which involves large doses of mothering, teaching and telling) they don't want to be told what to do.

Let's face it. All of us know what we are supposed to be doing, so why aren't we doing it? It is as Pfeffer states, "a knowing-doing gap." Yet, for all we know, we still don't change, why?

And that, my friends, is why I wrote the book. The ONLY way to survive and thrive (be resilient) in today's organization is to either be damned lucky (fat chance), or have the ability to discover who you are, disclose that with a high degree of clarity to those around you, and accept yourself. (This is the engagement model I put forward in the book.) Until you unconditionally accept yourself and others (that you and they are not likely to change much—behavior modification helps, but it's not the answer in organizations that will be resilient in 2010), you won't be resilient enough to be one of the ones who gets to evolve. Catch my drift?

1. Pretend you can't, won't, or don't change.
2. Know your own ends (what's important).
3. Don't confuse this with your competence (just because you're good at something doesn't mean you like to keep doing it over and over).
4. Know what to say yes to, and what to say no to.
5. Ask for what you need, don't try to change yourself.

While this is a simpler formula than what I painted in the CPR Model (for professional coaches), it will work. Now, if what you do is simple, and you are one

of those people whose end is "change" then go for it. Work on changing yourself until the cows come home. Yet, if you are like most people in organizations, relationships and society, then change is something that is not going to be your best foot forward, in my view. In fact, you will resist change, as change is fear, and a loss of the connection to internal consistency (I'm good enough) required by your ego to be resilient.

And by the way, I did an internal study of about 50 coaches who were actually given a coach during their training for free to use as they wished, and only 1/3 actually selected a coach (even though it was free) and only 1/3 of those actually completed a 13 week engagement! I have seen this pattern repeated over the years. Coaches don't want to be coached. Which means, in the current state of coaching, it's a whole lot better to get paid to tell someone else to change than to change yourself. I don't know what kind of statement that makes on coaching—as I sense it could easily be generalized by facts on the ground to the industry in this manner. If there are 10,000 coaches and all of them have coaches and all of those have coaches, than the current number of coaches for coaches would be in short supply and we would have a booming industry by sheer numbers. Yet, when I talk to coaches, they don't have coaches, and more especially, those coaches who have become the gurus of coaching, don't have coaches! What does that say about the industry and people in general? I suspect it says that nobody really likes to change anything other than other people.

And that's the premise I took for CPR—DON'T CHANGE.

The very second you get this concept, you will be in a different "field" and on your way towards the society of the 21st Century, which will be (if we have one) a society of collaboration, and not as many think . . . change. It is impossible for the inner human being (doing, having and becoming) to match the outer world of exponential complexity. Inside out change is a myth. If you're interested in creating durable competitive advantage, then learn who you are, what to say yes and no to, and how to be very specific in your requirements of reality . . . and close the gap—NOT WITH CHANGE—but with collaboration.

Now, that's how to become a resilient, person, place, or thing.

Mike Jay

Phone: 928-752-4613
Email: generate@msn.com

Mike Jay has been an active Business and Executive Coach since 1988. Mike founded BCoach, LLC, a virtual coaching network in 1999; and Leadership University, a global leadership development forum in 2003. Mike currently speaks and writes on business, leadership and coaching systems that generate personal and organizational effectiveness.

IJCO | The International Journal of Coaching in Organizations

Resource Center for Professional Coaching in Organizations

The International Journal of Coaching in Organizations (IJCO) is the signature publication of Professional Coaching Publications, Inc. (PCPI). In addition to this internationally acclaimed journal, PCPI publishes books on topics of interest to those in the coaching community, whether practitioner, decision maker, or end user. You can count on PCPI, Inc. to provide content that pushes the envelope — bringing theory, research and application together in ways that inform, engage and provoke. Visit the PCPI website, www.pcpionline.com, to view and purchase our growing line of products.

If you have administrative questions, please refer them to our IJCO Office Manager, at officemanager@ijco.info. For advertising, marketing and operations inquiries, please refer them to John Lazar, IJCO Co-Executive Editor, at john@ijco.info. Please submit unsolicited manuscripts for peer review consideration to the IJCO office manager at officemanager@ijco.info.

Visit Both Our Sites at Your Convenience

Journal information:
www.ijco.info

Purchases:
www.pcpionline.com

Professional Coaching Publications, Inc.