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Special Article

Business Administration vs How the Human Body Works

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I have been inspired to write about the above topic by the following books on business administration and the Buddhist Philosophy on what we can learn of how our human body works. The books on business administration were published just a few years ago, so they are all quite up to date, reliable and most informative. These books are (1) *Rethinking the Future*, edited by Rowan Gibson from his interviews with many world renowned business administration gurus such as Steven Covey, Michael Porter, CK Prahalad, Peter Drucker, Philip Kotler, Warren Bennis, John Naisbitt and others; (2) *Reimagine* by Tom Peters, another well known business administration guru who wrote the best sellers “In search of excellence and thriving on chaos”; (3) *Why CEO fails?* by Godlat and Cairo, two business administration consultants; and (4) *The Buddhist Philosophy* which says...“We can learn lot of things from an object which is one half arm length wide (one sok, in Thai) and two arm lengths long (one wa, in Thai), which is our own body.”

In the book *Rethinking the Future*, edited by Rowan Gibson from his interviews with the administration gurus, the salient point from this book is that the world view of Newtonian Clockwork, certain world has changed from the world of deterministic, predictable and time reversible into the world of uncertainty of the chaos, self organization and complexity. This becomes the Deterministic, Unpredictable and Time Irreversible theory. The certain worldview of Newtonian Clockwork, traditionally used as the basis for conducting scientific research and human activities, has/had dominated the scientific minds and those of lay people for more than 300 years since the time of Sir Isaac Newton in the 17th century. This certain worldview is no longer valid (useless and unreliable).

Because the present worldview is chaotic and complex we can not afford to conduct business in any big corporation with top down order passing through the middle level of management and finally to the

peripheral working units, the big companies are too clumsy to respond to the rapidly changing situation. Hence we need change.

Change!! change you must, if you don't change you die, as some gurus are saying.

Other gurus say, "Beautifully Paved Road which you were accustomed to drive your expensive Ferrari at high speed ends here. There is no road ahead, no road sign. It's all darkness ahead. You need new vehicle, new driver with new mindset".

Charles Handy came to the rescue when he said, "although the world is chaotic and complex, we need not behave chaotically as we can organize people around us who have the same mindset and a sense of cohesion, we can then proceed along quite comfortably as the world's situation is not dictated by bad stars but by human activities".

Peter Drucker, the late super guru of the business administration said something very similar, "if you arrange your companies like a flotilla of many ships sailing along in a rough and turbulent sea with a sister ship and other small ships around her helping one another along, you can move on quite comfortably".

Hence the only certain future is to invent one.

So, all the business consultants seem to suggest and strongly recommend a new form of business organization, a network of small companies, each is being headed by core competence (expert) performing almost autonomously according to each one's expertise with the central coordinating and harmonizing small company headed by the leader. The leader is more than the manager (the manager acts according to rules and regulations of the company). The leader must lead. The leader must have vision and suitable paradigm as to what the whole companies are trying to achieve. The administrative ability of the leader will be measured by his ability to create and maintain high performing teams. He/she must be "leader among leaders" (Warren Bennis).

The organization concept of the new company is very much like the organization of the Federal State

with the Federal Government and other small states headed by Governors; OR the organization of university with the central coordinating Rector's Office and outlying Departments headed by Deans performing autonomously according to each department's expertise; OR in my way of thinking, the organization of our human body and how it works, as implicated by the Buddhist Philosophy. We will come to consider on how our body works later.

The second book I have in mind is Reimagine by Tom Peters concerned the attacks on America 9/11/2001 by terrorists headed by Mohammad Atta and his 21 colleagues using 4 hijacked American airliners. Two suicidal commercial jetliner destroyed the Twin Tower of WTC in New York. The third plane partially destroyed the Pentagon and the fourth one was trying to damage the WHITE HOUSE but did not succeed. Attacks on America caused thousands of innocent lives and the American "Macho Prestige".

Many people asked, "How could they have done this especially to the most powerful nation on earth in terms of military and economic might?".

Tom Peters, after having conducted extensive interviews with concerned authorities, had obtained the following information.

Attacks on America were carried out in a non-conventional way.

The organization of the American Armed Forces was formed along the old pattern recommended since the time of Napoleon. This has to be reorganized into small units with 5-10 combating troops equipped with information. Some people were talking about one man army. Other people say, the fighting units should "float like a butterfly and sting like a bee" (Mohammad Ali's favourite remark).

It is far, far better to have small high performing fighting units with superb communication and information than to have rows and rows of military tanks to protect America.

Most important was the finding that CIA, FBI, and local authorities including the police were not well

coordinated in their activities.

With regards to the organization of businesses, Tom Peters came to the same conclusion as the business administration gurus' recommendation saying, "...new wars, new businesses, need new organization, we are all in the lawless arena."

Some time after attacks on America (9/11/2001) the American Congress appointed a committee to find out, "What went wrong?". The committee has since published a report called "Investigation". I have an opportunity to read a summary of the report in the Bangkok Post revealing that Mohammad Atta and his colleagues had taken training in flying jet plane in Florida and lived in the southern part of America for nearly a year. These people were suspected as potential terrorists by CIA, FBI, local police and even the airport attendants, but they didn't pass on the information to one another for fear of being regarded as "OVERSTEPPING" their normal activities. Each party considered itself as EXPERT in its own field.

The danger of having EXPERTS with the so-called academic excellence is that they become "EGOCENTRIC", not bowing to other people's opinions. So the important and vital information becomes compartmentalized.

The danger of Egocentricity has then brought me to the third book, "Why CEO fails" by Godlat and Cairo, two consultants from a well known business firm. They have conducted extensive research on the subject among the business companies of many countries. Their published report revealed that the failure of CEOs was due to some of the 11 abnormal behaviour. I am not going to recite all of the abnormal behaviour but I will mention some as examples. These abnormal behaviour are arrogance, melodrama, volatility, excessive caution, habitual distrust etc.

When I mentioned some of these abnormal behaviour please do not get me wrong and get me into trouble as I am not referring to anyone in particular.

Now let's turn to see and learn how our human body works.

I remember early on in my medical career the

following information.

Milieu Interior... by Claud Bernard of the 19th Century who said, "our body is in dynamic equilibrium... Milieu Interior".

Homeostasis...the term coined by Walter Cannon, the American Physiologist.

Henderson and Hasselbach of the "Fluid and Electrolyte Fame". It was one of these two great men who said that the working of human body could be used to explain what went on in the outside world. Milieu Exterior (my own conception)...bio-organisms could adjust themselves appropriately to the changing and hostile environment, and the Buddhist Philosophy which says one can learn lots of things from what's going on in our body.

Our body consists of many organ systems...CNS, AS, CVE, RS, KUB, reproductive systems, haemopoetic, musculo-skeletal, endocrine, immune, etc. All are experts in their own rights meaning that one system cannot replace the function of any other, but they are all coordinating their functions in a well harmonizing way. There are a lot of feedback loops, both positive and negative, no egocentricity.

Neurology, endocrinology and immunity, traditionally considered as separate systems, are now found to work harmoniously as a "Psycho Somatic Network" as proposed by Professor Candace E. Pert and her co-workers of the National Institute of Mental Health in Maryland, USA.

These three systems use common chemical messengers "PEPTIDES" which are 70 in number and being produced everywhere in the body although some peptides, such as those that concern with emotional intelligence, may be produced more at the mid brain level. These important findings by Professor Pert led me to make some analogy as follows:-

Neurology (CNS with special sense organs, acting as CIA) is taking care of outside dangers.

Immunology (T-cells, B-cells and immuno-proteins, acting as FBI) is taking care of inside dangers.

Endocrinology (Ductless Glands with Hormones), is acting as local authority and police looking after the welfare of the population.

The above metaphor (analogy) makes one realize why attacks on America 9/11/2001 was possible.

AFTERWORD

This is not meant to be a summary as this article is to be followed by another article on economy vs metabolism which I hope, will appear in due course.

I would like to point out what may be learned from this article, "the working of the human body appears to be highly efficient". It has stood the test of time since modern man appeared on earth thousands of years ago. Had it been otherwise you and I would never have a chance to be conversing with one another at this moment. WHO DARES TO CHALLENGE THIS STATEMENT.

And "HOW THE HUMAN BODY WORKS" - SHOULD BE THE BEST BIOLOGICAL Model for How to Conduct Business Administration.