

PROLOGUE

How to Use this Book

The Value of Unification: “Whenever a large number of facts accumulate concerning any branch of knowledge, the human mind feels the need for some unifying concept with which to correlate them. Such integration is not only artistically satisfying, by bringing harmony into what appeared to be discord; it is also practically useful. It helps one see a large field from a single point of view. When surveyed from a great elevation, some details in the landscape become hazy, or even invisible; yet it is only from there that we can see the field as a whole, in order to ascertain where the more detailed exploration of the ground would be most helpful for its further development.”

Hans Selye, M.D., *The Stress of Life*

Overview

For all time researchers and authors from the fields of psychology, economics, business management, community development, sociology, ethics, philosophy, leadership training, education, politics, ecological preservation and many other fields have contributed their perspectives, case studies, and anecdotal information for public review, reflection and learning. This writer has sought to discover the overriding themes, subtle interconnections, and best practices advocated by these experts and to “take their measure” based upon 40+ years of life and work experience as a student, husband, father, specialist, educator, manager, consultant and citizen. It is not an exaggeration to say that over the last 15 years more than 600 books and articles have been reviewed, highlighted and outlined to obtain nuggets of wisdom and thoughtful sentiments that could be meaningfully integrated into an authentic perspective and compelling Learnership storyline. *Only a tiny portion of other authors’ excellent work has been included for reference and analysis in order that project remain manageable. All the references deserve more in-depth consideration, and readers of this book are encouraged to selectively purchase for their own libraries those references that are most meaningful to their own personal development.*

The conceptualization of Learnership is presented, herein, as a new and unique formulation of respected theories and practices from many gurus of personal, organizational and community development. The writing process includes this author’s fascination with progressive human development; a skeptical analysis concerning widely accepted, but unsubstantiated beliefs and perspectives; and a commitment to the articulation of a meta-cognitive mind-frame that enables all of us to “get our minds around” our responsibilities and opportunities.

The final result is a document of one person’s reflection and synthesis on what is worth learning, knowing, and doing in a well managed life and career. What is unusual, however, is that rather than being an artifact at the end of a person’s own lifelong journey, the book is presented as a knowledge architecture and tool for the author and others’ personal self-assessment as we plan and execute the rest of our lives. An overarching vision has been to follow Aristotle’s “mean between the extremes” admonition in most matters. Occasionally however, some out-of-the-

mainstream perspectives and situational insights are included in an attempt to break through social groupthink and stimulate original thinking and lively conversation. One place for that thinking and conversation will be The American Learnership Forum.org web site planned for development in the near future.

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This book is a wide-ranging inquiry into, and synthesis of, subjects and perspectives across the personal, organizational, and community areas of our social existence. A philosophical and architectural structure is offered as a method for balancing the human aspiration for holistic integration and personhood with the daily obligation to live a focused, often differentiated, lifestyle. Depending on the needs and interests of readers, a number of approaches may be used to gain benefit from the material presented.

For some readers (those who value order and predictability) reading the book from beginning to end will provide the structure necessary for understanding the planning and development of the foundational principles and architecture. Additionally, they will gain detailed insight into the personal, organizational, and community content and context selectively chosen to create the sense of integration and wholeness many seek.

Another group of readers (those who seek real-time, instrumental perspectives leading to the solutions for on-going issues and problems) will probably scan the book's prologue and table of contents and then jump to those chapters of immediate interest in their lives and/or careers. This way the book serves as a reference tool that can be visited again and again as its content serves as a useful guide to action. They should, however, take time to read chapter one.

And another group of readers (those interested in overarching "theories of everything") might want to peruse the *Theories of (Almost) Everything* summaries at the end of chapter 10. Starting here enables the reader to appreciate that this book on learnership functions well as a holistic Practitioner's Guide in the pursuit of self-fulfillment, high performance, and the common good.

Still another group of readers (those who love to mind-wrestle with visual models and diagrams) will choose to breeze through the written content and spend most of their time intuiting the meaning and absorbing the sentiment of more than 40 figures and illustrations. These folks will appreciate knowing that almost all the figures were developed before the book was actually written!

Hopefully, some readers might even choose to take up the fundamental challenge of this writing project and approach the book's content as an opportunity for self-assessment. These readers will read most, if not all the book, for the purpose of self-reflection and personal improvement. For them there are questions for *personal reflection* at the end of each chapter, and the epilogue contains a Learnership Journal for Life and Career Self-Reflection and Renewal that can be used as a personal notepad for recording the reader's own reflections and learning as a prelude to developing his or her own Life and Career Action Plan. Mid-life/career transition people are in this category of readers and they should enjoy chapter 11 written especially for them.

Lastly, all readers should be sure to locate and examine the Learnership Integrated Systems Architecture (LISA) illustration completed and presented at Interlude 3 immediately after Chapter 6. This one model represents the culmination of the essential aspects of the Learnership Philosophy and Architecture. The model highlights selected characteristics and linkages among the five Reasoning Competencies and four Social Systems Development domains that constitute the Learnership concept. The LISA model is meant to be the primary reminder and holistic reference tool used by learnership practitioners as they strive to establish and demonstrate lives and careers focused on the lifelong learnership goals of personal self-fulfillment, organizational high performance, the community common good, and societal human enlightenment.

Observations and Recognition

A Total Knowledge Management (TKM) core. A theme that is pervasive throughout this book is that so much success in life revolves around the amount of knowledge—and the use of that knowledge—by individuals, organizations and communities. The five learnership practitioner competencies, six universal knowledge spheres, and four learnership social systems for human development that make up the Learnership Integrated Systems Architecture (LISA) are fundamentally arenas within which knowledge should be carefully managed. In fact, an alternate title or subtitle for this book could have been: *Total Knowledge Management for Developing and Applying a Lifetime of Knowledge*.

Metacognitive breadth versus depth. The book is a meta-cognitive inquiry into the best practices of adult personal, social, and career development. It is an attempt to define a social systems architecture that tames chaos and reduces stress while encouraging creative expression and innovative activity. While effort is made to explore the deeper aspects of numerous, and sometimes disparate personal and societal issues and activities, even greater energy is invested in discovering ways to integrate socio-economic principles, preferences, goals, and technological drivers into an overarching framework.

The use of references. The author's approach has been to conduct book reviews and perform commentary and analysis on a wide-range of topics within the context of the emerging discipline of learnership. This approach has been aided by other writers' intellectual property that has been duly recognized. The intent has been to give full and appropriate credit to everyone who's reasoning and explanations have contributed to this author's education, and to even suggest that readers occasionally purchase a particular reference for their own libraries. The nature of the writing process has been to create a collage of ideas, a buffet table of perspectives to be sampled, so that the reader's own thinking and decision-making might become better developed and applied more effectively. It is important to note that because a reference is quoted in part does not necessarily mean that everything that the referenced author thinks or presents in other areas of their reference are germane or fully accepted for use here concerning the topic under discussion.

Anti-aging brain training. The author and readers of the book are considered to be subjects in an experiment on *holistic learning through immersion*. We are part of an experiment in which whole brain stimulation occurring through an immersion into a plethora of interrelated subjects and perspectives alternately frustrates, and then illuminates, our mental processing and sense of

order. The approach is to provide enough new information to stimulate interest and establish a learning opportunity, but not so much to belabor the topic at the expense of the larger, whole life integration objective. Hundreds of perspectives, models, frameworks and other “think pieces” are included to assist you the reader in making a self-assessment of what you think, feel, and plan to do to craft and fulfill your personal and professional life. The book objective is to create holistic learning by stimulating cognitive association and emotional sensation. Everyone desiring to stay mentally sharp and relevant through their lifetime can benefit from participating in learnership thinking and dialogue—it’s a bit more interesting than doing crossword puzzles or Sudoku. The book:

1. Is to be experienced as well as read
2. Is told in pictures (right brain) and writing (left brain)
3. Is both frustrating and inspirational
4. Answers some questions, but raises others
5. Stimulates personal reflection as well as social dialogue
6. Can be overwhelming, but also insufficient
7. Includes stark reality as well as colorful social images
8. Validates our need for stability, but cries out for immediate change
9. Celebrates similarities as well as differences
10. Asks us to do more, but also to do less
11. Helps us deal with loss, and to rejoice in accomplishment
12. Exhausts, as well exhilarates, our personal energy
13. Stretches our cognition, and appeals to our emotions
14. Sums up our life, but encourages our life journey
15. Revives memories from long ago, and constructs dreams of things to come
16. Explores intricacies, while desiring simplicity
17. Represents everything important to know, but realizes how little is understood
18. Offers possibilities amid uncertainty and risk

The use of “Author’s Notes”. In addition to the author’s written material and perspective, there are many [Author’s notes:] throughout the book. These notes are additional commentary and reader guides to book structure and context intended to punctuate selected topics and illustrations.

Reader benefits and results. This book is intended to appeal to readers longing to participate in thoughtful commentary on contemporary personal and societal issues (social dialogue), those seeking insight on new avenues for life and career renewal (personal renewal), and those wishing to better manage their minds amid the chaos and complexity in their everyday lives (holistic reasoning and knowledge management). The learnership philosophy, architecture, and competencies present a powerful process for thinking, learning, knowing, leading, and goal seeking that enables synergistic social systems development and performance.