
TEMPERED RADICALS: HOW PEOPLE USE DIFFERENCE TO INSPIRE CHANGE AT WORK

BY: DEBRA E. MEYERSON

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Debra E. Meyerson writes a compelling book on the challenges and opportunities of leadership for those who find themselves both inside a traditional organizational structure yet committed to change. She shares the stories of persons she calls “tempered radicals,” and relates their experiences within organizations where strategy and diligence were necessary to effect change. Unlike other literature on leadership that focuses primarily on the role of a giant leader within an organization, this book encourages the work of each person in the art of making change. Meyerson structures the book around defining who tempered radicals are, how they work to make change, and what challenges they face in accomplishing these changes.

Meyerson defines tempered radicals as “organizational insiders” who are treated as outsiders because their values are “at odds with the dominant culture” (5). Meyerson’s analysis of how tempered radicals make change is powerful because of its use of data gathered in interviews with particular tempered radicals in their contexts. Tempered radicals, Meyerson believes, make a difference in existing organizations by practicing methods of leadership that provide opportunities for significant systemic change that are broad and long-lasting. There are necessary strategies, however, for how to develop and eventually implement these changes throughout an organization. Meyerson addresses these strategies.

Meyerson’s examination begins by attempting to understand the tempered radical. She first discusses the important role of self in determining the way in which a person goes about developing an agenda for change. Meyerson believes that persons are both very concretely their

“selves” and very susceptible to “social cues” from the outside, that the “selves” are both “stable” and “mutable,” and that tempered radicals live within this tension (13). Meyerson’s argument is that through action, the core self of a person is made real through tangible signs of the existence and importance of this self. She writes, “When people act in ways that outwardly express a valued part of their selves, they make that part of their selves “real”” (14). In this way, Meyerson describes the tempered radical by emphasizing the essential place of core values and identity in decision making, as well as the importance of acting on these values.

Meyerson describes a variety of helpful strategies used by tempered radicals to make a difference in their organizations. One way in which persons inspire change is quietly, or through often little noticed gestures or actions. In the chapter, “Resisting Quietly and Staying True to One’s Self,” Meyerson points out that these quiet efforts are often unnoticed or considered less important than the bold actions of others. Yet, in reality, they often help to set the necessary stage for bolder actions. She writes, “All types of efforts, including quiet forms of resistance, can *and often do* contribute to learning and adaptation, even though history’s depiction of social change does not give much credit to the role of these more mundane behind-the-scenes actions” (38). Meyerson divides these types of quiet resistance into three categories: psychological resistance, self-expressions as resistance, and behind-the-scenes resistance. Some examples involve psychological armoring for the battery of hostility that a tempered radical often faces, quiet self-expression through dress, office décor or language, and the behind-the-scenes sharing of information and resources to provide an opportunity for an innovative idea to take hold.

Another tactic for making a difference used by tempered radicals is the art of negotiation. Essential to negotiating with others, however, is understanding the difference between one’s own “non-negotiables” and “negotiables.” Understanding the non-negotiables to be those things that compromise one’s “core values or identity” will enable one to maneuver through negotiations with others (91). Knowing one’s obligations, priorities, and fears is a necessity when it

comes to making decisions about which battles to fight and how to fight them. Meyerson writes, “When it comes time to evaluate a course of action – what to do, how far to push, what to give up – this kind of self-knowledge is invaluable” (89).

Meyerson describes the importance of group formation when working toward change. Individuals of various positions within an organization are able to do much to make change, but groups are often the vehicles through which strategies of change occur. It is often within groups that persons who would normally not feel comfortable voicing their views or concerns come together in strength and with new possibilities for action. It is often within groups that creative energy brings about new and different answers to questions not formerly arrived at by the individuals themselves. It is also within groups that the power to negotiate can be leveraged in ways often not possible with individuals. Meyerson’s distinction here is helpful.

Meyerson emphasizes the role of small wins in effecting larger change. In the chapter, “Leveraging Small Wins,” she writes, “First and foremost, small wins are powerful because they are doable” (104). Small wins can both effect change as well as affect attitudes that may shift thinking and action toward larger wins in the future. Small steps can make real the possibility of larger change, can affect a wider vision, and can broaden a base of support to concern larger numbers of people. This is what Meyerson calls the bundling of several small wins to create something larger and more powerful. She writes, “The most effective way tempered radicals extend the impact of small wins is by making explicit their significance or bundling several of them together and retrospectively framing them as a coherent package or ‘program’ that serves the same ends. This gives individual small wins greater punch” (111).

Meyerson’s book offers powerful insights into how tempered radicals can be agents of change within larger, more traditional structures that often tend to resist such change. Persons at any level of organizational work will find in this book valuable tools for making a difference. Religious leaders in a variety of contexts, as well as any leader who seeks to

understand and produce change within an organization, will be compelled by this book and will find immediate ways to use its wisdom in the work of inspiring change.

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PRIMAL LEADERSHIP: REALIZING THE POWER OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

BY: DANIEL GOLEMAN, RICHARD BOYATZIS, AND ANNIE MCKEE

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Primal Leadership was written for the purpose of articulating and advancing a new concept of leadership. The authors suggest that the “fundamental task of leaders. . . is to prime good feeling in those they lead, (because) the primal job of leadership is emotional” (ix).

This is a very provocative study for theological education, because it challenges the paradigm of leadership development inherent in most curricula. What follows is a summary of basic points, using the authors’ own words and close paraphrases, in order to make clear the logic of their conclusions.

I. Primal Leadership and Emotional Intelligence

The glue that holds people together in a team, and that commits people to an organization, is the emotional resonance they feel with and for each other (20). The key to making primal leadership work to everyone’s advantage lies in the leadership competencies of *emotional intelligence*... (6). These competencies are (see pages 39 and 254ff):

- 1) PERSONAL COMPETENCE: Managing ourselves
 - a. **Self Awareness** – includes Emotional Self-awareness, Accurate Self-assessment, and Self-confidence
 - b. **Self-Management** – includes Emotional Self-control, Transparency, Adaptability, Achievement, Initiative, and Optimism.
- 2) SOCIAL COMPETENCE: Managing relationships
 - a. **Social Awareness** – includes Empathy, Organizational Awareness, and Service
 - b. **Relationship Management** – includes Inspirational Leadership, Influence, Developing Others, Change Catalyst, Conflict Management, and Teamwork and Collaboration.

II. Leaders are Made Not Born

Emotional intelligence involves circuitry that runs between the brain's executive centers in the prefrontal lobes and the brain's limbic system, which governs feeling, impulses, and drives. Skills based in the limbic areas, research shows, are best learned through motivation, extended practice, and feedback. The neo-cortex grasps concepts quickly, placing them within an expanding network of associations and comprehension (102).

The limbic brain, on the other hand, is a much slower learner—particularly when the challenge is to relearn deeply ingrained habits. This difference matters immensely when trying to improve leadership skills and habits that are learned early in life. Reeducating the emotional brain for leadership learning, therefore, requires a different model from what works for the thinking brain: it needs lots of practice and repetition (103).

The crux of leadership development that works is *self-directed learning*: intentionally developing or strengthening an aspect of who you are or who you want to be, or both (109). Self directed learning involves five discoveries, each representing a discontinuity. This kind of learning is recursive: the steps do not unfold in a smooth, orderly way, but rather follow a sequence, with each step demanding different amounts of time and effort (109).

III. The Five Discoveries Motivating Learning for Leadership

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| <i>The first discovery:</i> | My ideal self—Who do I want to be? |
| <i>The second discovery:</i> | My real self—Who am I? What are my strengths and gaps? |
| <i>The third discovery:</i> | My learning agenda—How can I build on my strengths while reducing my gaps? |
| <i>The fourth discovery:</i> | Experimenting with and practicing new behaviors, thoughts, and feelings to the point of mastery. |
| <i>The fifth discovery:</i> | Developing supportive and trusting relationships that make change possible. |

Ideally, the progression occurs through a discontinuity—a moment of discovery—that provokes not just awareness, but also a sense of urgency (111-112).

In order to discover the key personal capabilities that contributed to outstanding leadership, the authors analyzed nearly five-hundred competence models in government, business, and not-for-profit organizations (including a religious institution). They were interested in the role that three categories of capabilities played in good leadership: technical skills, cognitive abilities, and emotional intelligence. What they discovered is stunning: “our rule of thumb holds that EI (emotional intelligence) contributes 80 to 90 percent of the competencies that distinguish outstanding from average leaders—and sometimes more” (251). My guess is that most professional graduate schools, including theological schools, assume just the reverse of this.

Primal Leadership has thirty-seven pages of notes documenting claims with many references to empirical research studies. The book also has narrative accounts of personal change and transformation from the use of the five discoveries self-motivating learning process, and follows with accounts of organizational change in the second half of the book.

This study is a provocative challenge for theological educators interested in preparing leaders for the church in general and for congregations in particular. A couple of questions come to mind:

- 1) Are we prepared to envision and experiment with alternatives for M.Div. curricula that seriously grapple with the results of research suggesting that only 10 to 20 percent of good leadership involves technical skills (knowledge of Bible, theology, church history, etc.) and cognitive abilities (native thinking capacity), while 80 to 90 percent of effective leadership draws on learned emotional intelligence?

- 2) If emotional intelligence is learned slowly through communities of trust involving opportunities for practice and feedback, what changes will theological educators need to make in curricula to help future pastors learn effective leadership?

Given the condition of many old-line denominations and congregations, and the need for competent and innovative leadership, the questions that emerge from the research reported in *Primal Leadership* merit vigorous conversations as well as focused experiments in leadership development for the church. Are seminaries, theological schools, and denominations up to this challenge?

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THE NEXT CHRISTENDOM: THE COMING OF GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

BY: PHILIP JENKINS

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We are living in revolutionary times, according to Philip Jenkins. In his recent book, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, Jenkins contends that during the past fifty years the critical centers of the Christian world have moved decisively to Africa, to Latin America, and to Asia. The era of Western Christianity has passed within our lifetimes, and the day of Southern Christianity is dawning. The fact of change is undeniable: it has happened and it will continue to happen (3).

Jenkins is not the first to recognize this change. He readily acknowledges that Dana L. Robert, Harry Cox, Andrew Walls, and others have been working this territory for years. However, Jenkins' work differs from the others in approach and scope. The notes on the book jacket claim that this "is the first book to take full measure of the changing face of the Christian faith." While it is possible that Jenkins may not be the first to write a full length book on this subject, this one is certainly worth reading by anyone interested in the past, present, and future of Christianity.

Jenkins' major concern is that the West is not participating in these revolutionary times. He believes Christianity is changing in ways that are going unnoticed by many Westerners, including theologians, academics, and the media. Perhaps more importantly, he is concerned about the misinformation in the West that Christianity is declining and that Islam is the faith of the future globally. This has major implications for Christian leaders in the West.

Jenkins bravely, or as he claims, foolishly, steps into this void. This book is focused on identifying the reality of Christianity in the world today using demographic data. Jenkins makes the case that Christianity will experience tremendous expansion in the 21st century. However, the majority of the growth will not occur in the West but in the

global South – Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Jenkins writes that “Christianity is doing very well indeed in the global South – not just surviving but expanding” (2). In particular, rapid growth is occurring in non-traditional denominations that adapt Christian beliefs to local traditions (7).

Throughout the book, Jenkins adeptly integrates demographic data into the narrative. Fortunately, the data does not become burdensome or overwhelming. Though he notes that historical demography is not an exact science, he effectively utilizes available data for making his case. But, Jenkins’ objective here is not to simply inform. This book is a call to action. Western Christianity’s gravest challenge is not Islam. It is the Christian Third world. The real question is how all of Christianity will respond. What is the future of global Christianity? What are the implications?

The shift in global Christianity must be acknowledged and understood by all Christians. In particular, religious leaders must anticipate the impact of this change and develop a proactive approach for informing and training future leaders. This is a book for pastors, congregations, and denominations. This book should be read by faculty and students in colleges, as well seminaries. It would be a great selection for a book club, educational small group, or adult forum class.

Jenkins begins his study by returning to the roots of Christianity. In chapters two through four, Jenkins carefully rewrites global Christian history from a non-Western perspective. He adeptly summarizes and critiques two thousand years of history in sixty-four pages with no apologies to Stephen Neill or Kenneth Scott Latourette. His perspective is refreshing and honest. His choices highlight peoples and places often overlooked by other historians. One interesting example is the Nestorians. Traditionally, the Nestorians have been marginalized as heretics but here their role in the expansion of Christianity to Central Asia and China is rightly acknowledged.

Jenkins treatment of the missionary era provides another opportunity for the West to reconsider how history has been written and perceived. For many in the West, missions were at worst “ruthless, racist, colonial expansion” (40). At best, missions “manifested ignorant paternalism” (41). Despite these concerns, Jenkins believes that Christian missionaries left a

rich, global heritage. Christianity was effectively embraced and spread by the indigenous peoples. After many years of struggle and persistence, these communities are gaining momentum across the global South and are sharing the gospel around the world – even to the West.

It is important to understand that these communities of faith are not Western clones. Christians in the global South are among the poorest people on earth. Their beliefs and practices are far more conservative and traditional than in the West. They firmly believe in faith healing and exorcisms. They read the Bible from a unique perspective. In Latin America, they are very devoted to the Virgin Mary.

Jenkins cautions against using traditional Western terms and definitions to describe the global South. For example, the Western understanding of “Pentecostal” simply does not apply in the global South. Pentecostals can be found within Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions as well as independent congregations. Protestant growth in Latin America and Korea has been primarily Pentecostal (71). Pentecostal and independent churches are flourishing in the urban areas with the fastest population growth.

The influence of the global South on Christianity will continue to increase and should not be underestimated by the West. The question that remains unanswered is, “How will the West respond?” Jenkins does not attempt to make a prediction which may disappoint some readers. It is important to remember that he is a historian, not a fortune teller. He has written a fine book about the past and the present. He intends for the information presented here to be used by those who will take action. He knows that history will take its course. Then he will write the sequel.

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**THE POWER OF FULL ENGAGEMENT: MANAGING ENERGY,
NOT TIME, IS THE KEY TO HIGH PERFORMANCE AND
PERSONAL RENEWAL**

BY: JIM LOEHR AND TONY SCHWARTZ

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How well are you showing up for your life? What are the quantity and quality of your energies (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual) with which you engage your relationships and projects? If you are interested in assessing your answers to these questions, or corporate life where you work, you will find a highly useful perspective in this book. If you are also interested in doing something as a result of your assessment, you'll find powerful strategies for change.

Performance psychologist Jim Loehr and his business partner Tony Schwartz have written an excellent book that compellingly re-directs the mountain of literature on time management. They make the case that energy is a more fundamental resource in our lives than time. Putting in time or showing up tells us little about our ability to engage. To engage our lives well, we need energy. Loehr has adapted his work with elite athletes to create The Corporate Athlete Training System© to meet the (in his estimate, more demanding) energy needs of business leaders and professionals.

Now, realizing that some readers of this review may react with negative energy to the athletic metaphor, I ask for your patience. This is a serious book, free of gimmicks, written in dialogue with fields such as emotional intelligence and with authors such as Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey (*How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001). The authors also use religious language such as "spirit" and "Sabbath" in ways that will catch your attention. The practice of "full engagement" involves the following four principles:

- “Principle 1: Full engagement requires drawing on four separate but related sources of energy: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.
- Principle 2: Because energy diminishes both with overuse and with underuse, we must balance energy expenditure with intermittent energy renewal.
- Principle 3: To build capacity we must push beyond our normal limits, training in the same systematic way that elite athletes do.
- Principle 4: Positive energy rituals—highly specific routines for managing energy—are the key to full engagement and sustained high performance” (18).

The authors’ basic diagnosis is that their clients tend to live without respecting the oscillating rhythm of energy expenditure and recovery, to under-train themselves spiritually and physically while depleting their emotional and mental energies. Usually, they are more knowledgeable of what to do, than how they actually follow through. Since the audience addressed is comprised of persons who should steward the energies of their organizations, it follows that the authors’ client organizations also reflect poor energy habits.

The treatment plan, *The Corporate Athlete Training System*,[©] involves three steps: define purpose (because spiritual energy is the chief motivation in life); face the truth (accurate assessment, including from one’s co-workers); take specific action (in both one-time events and creating rituals). The latter two steps are particularly well-presented. The assessment tools for facing the truth reflect insights from work on emotional intelligence. The strategy of creating rituals to inhabit new behaviors seems wise. One of the insights that informs the need to create rituals (by which the authors mean habits) is that choosing is an energy intensive activity. Embedding choices in habitual action frees one’s energy and attention to meet unusual demands.

For the intended audiences (the authors’ clients include managers, executives, business owners, administrators, educators, and clergy—professionals with discretion regarding

how they structure their day), the book has many strengths. It is a fresh, different approach from time management, although it is complementary to Stephen Covey's principle-centered approach (e.g., *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989). Their approach values public virtues (such as integrity, compassion, connecting with a purpose larger than one's own interest), and relationships. The principles are simple to grasp and profound in their implications for daily living. The authors' attempt to advance a holistic approach creates a very interesting bibliography for a business book. Their theoretical framework is both thoughtful and practical. For example, in pp. 44-45, they write about "defense spending:" individuals and organizations running so close to empty that they use their remaining energy to defend themselves from any further demands. This seems to be a familiar condition in theological education.

If this book were to be used in a Christian seminary classroom, there are a number of interesting issues and questions that could be engaged. The book is aimed at a secular audience, but is one that is open to a secular spirituality (Laura Nash and Scotty McLennan in *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001, describe the popularity of this approach). In fact, Loehr and Schwartz claim priority for their generic definition in a way that undercuts religious particularity (110). A class may want to debate this claim, as well as to understand its appeal. The authors describe what strength and flexibility mean for each of the energy "muscle" groups. Spiritual flexibility means tolerance of others' views as long as those views "don't bring harm to others" (11). What do we, as Christians, mean by "spiritual strength"? What is the correlation between the Corporate Athlete method, and ascetic spiritual exercises? How would a specifically Christian response to the question the authors raise about "the chief end of human beings" (not their language) change, if at all, their concern to help people perform engagingly?

How well are you able to engage your life? With the strengths and limitations of a book written for a secular audience, Loehr and Schwartz do an excellent job of addressing this question. I can imagine leaders in a

congregation or a school asking and answering this question better as a result of engaging this book. I can also imagine the benefits of extending this question further down a path they suggest, adapting an energy assessment to the institutions in which we live, along with building energy recovery rituals into our corporate lives.

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