

However Necessary

Dov Seidman offers a lively, entertaining challenge, aimed at conventional attitudes about business behavior. The book *HOW: Why HOW We Do Anything Means Everything* (2007, 2011) is an elaborately constructed collection of about twelve interwoven essays. These are presented as chapters gathered into four general topic areas, directed toward knowing, thinking, behaving and achieving most beneficially in view of presently emerging <How-Mode> possibilities.

As an accomplished author, professional speaker and business management executive, Dov Seidman has a substantial educational background covering Philosophy and Jurisprudence. Naturally, his stance is fundamentally both lawyerly and philosophical. One recurring theme has to do with the fair limitations of legal principles and practices, especially in view of ultimate human potentials. An emphasis on common, shared, mutual dynamics contributes a kind of deliberately conscientious interpersonal awareness, proposed with respect to the most advantageous contemporary opportunities.

Throughout the <How-Mode> discussion, certain particular abstract concepts are uniformly conveyed through analogies. Such metaphors and likenesses are retained in the ongoing flow, re-appearing occasionally and approaching different expressions of application. These are interspersed with any number of relevant business examples, personal experiences and executive testimonials.

To thrive in the world to come, we must approach the way interpersonal HOWS work in our organizations in the same way as we did quality. We need to find more ways of building strong synapses between people, getting everyone aligned on a common TRIP, create environments in which more Waves can start, and develop approaches that transmit these values throughout our group endeavors.  
(HOW P. 213)

If taken out of context and presented without previous explanation, such pronouncements can seem strange and confusing. Who is this we? What constitutes a built-up strong synapse with my next door neighbor? Is TRIP alignment like tire alignment? Are these waves in response to environmental preservation and energy conservation? The pronouncements are clearly not literal statements of fact. The intentional meaning may be something suggested somewhere behind or beyond the actual wordage. The tone is often more conversation-speaker-like than it is writer-author-like. The trick is to try to suggest a purposefully intangible ideation in relation to realistic conditions and circumstances.

This specific style of analogical or metaphorical declaration may be surprisingly appropriate. One rudimentary premise emphasizes a notion that any actual product or service in the marketplace today can be easily replicated by other competitors. So, a more reliable, better sense of worth can be achieved through a kind of spirit of assurance, enduring somewhere behind or beyond the actual product or service itself, on behalf of receptive customers. A comment can be attributed to former General Electric CEO, Jack Welch: "There's no secret to the *what*. The secret is in *how*. They can know our model, but they cannot do it. They can't copy our *hows*." (HOW P. 51) It isn't about the literal word. It isn't about the actual thing. Instead, it is about the complete context or setting in which the word or thing will persist. So, the stylistic, rhetorical devices, which are used to articulate the ideas, are well correlated with the nature of the <How-Mode> concepts being presented.

Still, the agreement, between the sometimes elusive <How-Mode> terminology and the associated principles, doesn't always necessarily jive perfectly. For the most part, the engaging, entertaining delivery may overcome some of the more strict reservations, which some of the comparisons may logically raise. Reputation, for instance, isn't a singular collection of impressions. The same information about the same activity could be praised by some people and abhorred by other people. Certain subtle distinctions fall outside of the argument of the moment. Also, inconsistent words and deeds can come from the same source without clear conscious awareness. So, a coherent intentionality may be practiced more deliberately by someone who has grown to be more careful in this manner. It is true that some mention of contradiction in relation to belief occurs in one chapter on attentiveness, but the impulse does not carry on to the portion focused on reputation.

#### LRN Leadership Framework

Standing somewhat apart from the mainstream of discussion, the culminating final chapter proposes a distinctive, structured formulation. A graphic diagram of the Leadership Framework is to be found midway through the section. (HOW PP. 274-5)

The <How Mode> Leadership Framework might be explained as a centered and sixteen-faceted diamond form. The innermost center shows four essential values. In this case, these are Humility, Integrity, Passion and Truth. The next surrounding inner portion displays sixteen positive individual leadership attributes, while the outer portion displays sixteen directly related negative or non-leadership attributes. The attributes consist of specifically labeled and defined behaviors, which are each described subsequently within the chapter.

According to Dov Seidman, “This framework is not the only possible framework you could construct for this journey. . . . It represents the amalgamation of many of the thoughts and concepts I have picked up or developed over the years, and that apply well to our core activities.” (HOW P. 272) An endnote also cites *The Corporate Mystic* by Gay Hendricks and Kate Ludeman as one source of influence.

Since Dov Seidman acquired several advanced academic degrees in the study of Philosophy at UCLA and Oxford University, it might be expected that he would be well versed in various realms of ethics and morality. The exact assumptions enforcing the <How-Mode> leadership diamond aren’t covered in any detail. This may be a curious situation, since it might be demonstrated that a close conceptual precedent can be found with the moral discourse going back at least five hundred years, from the era of the Italian Renaissance. “The more I’ve traveled, the more I came to realize that the ideas in this book are universal.” (HOW P. xix) If these long standing historical realizations may have been somewhat forgotten or eclipsed recently, maybe it is high time for these kinds of ideas to become revitalized and refreshed once again.

Four selected aspects from the Leadership Framework may reinforce this assertion: “Seize Authority and Take Responsibility,” “Be Rigorous about the Truth of the Present,” “Be Passionate,” and “Be Principled.” Clearly a need for balance is implied, since an excessive emphasis on one factor could override or negate another. It is possible to be passionate without being principled. It is possible to be principled without being passionate. These four separate inclinations, as associated together, combine into one consolidated view of the traditional, classical virtue of Justice.

There are appropriate historical references to support this consolidated view of virtue, but there are also more modern references, indicating an ongoing, continuing cultural sensibility.

Recall for a moment, one well-known masterpiece by the famous artist, Pablo Picasso. Guernica was a village in Spain, which was the scene of a brutal fascist atrocity in 1937. The mural “Guernica” was painted as a demonstration of anguish and protest. A complete deconstruction of all of the figurative representations is too complex for this writing, but four selected aspects deserve consideration in this context. The robust horse idealizes how to “Seize Authority and Take Responsibility.” The female form extending a fragile candle idealizes how to “Be Rigorous about the Truth of the Present.” The crude bull idealizes how to “Be Passionate,” even to a degree of outrage. The fallen hero idealizes how to “Be Principled,” even to the point of self-sacrifice. As symbolized in this manner, the incident at Guernica is condemned as an abomination of Justice, and here, the predominant vital impulse of the woman with the candle best epitomizes the virtue of Justice.



The Enduring Virtue of Justice

Incidentally, the remaining three suffering female figures of the “Guernica” painting appear to be borrowed from a certain famous mural by Raphael, again going back to the Italian Renaissance. Earlier in his career, Picasso had seen the works of Raphael during a visit to Rome.

Of course, such allusions and interpretations can be questioned. However, a short pause for reflection should offer the realization that a relatively simple, easy to remember memory device, a mnemonic, now serves to assist retention of a collection of items otherwise difficult to retain.

The proposed Justice quadrant may be very relevant for what Dov Seidman is trying to accomplish, in consideration of his qualifications as an attorney with a Law degree from Harvard. Among the four chosen values at the center in his version, Truth and Passion readily fit with the scheme, as suggested. Furthermore, “Seize Authority and Take Responsibility” may seem to imply a sensible property of Integrity, related to solid, practical capability. Also, “Be Principled” may seem to address a philosophical property of Humility, with respect to fair balance in Justice. Otherwise, it can be further proposed that the twelve additional leadership attributes from Dov Seidman’s formal framework could be consolidated similarly, with three more quadrants emphasizing other traditional cardinal virtues: Temperance, Fortitude and Prudence.

Again, all of these determinations can be traced back at least five hundred years to a few of the Humanist scholars from the time of the Renaissance, in the circles of the prominent de’Medici, Sforza and Visconti ruling families. What was once the privileged propensity of an exclusive noble class is now freely offered for the benefit of anyone who desires to pay attention.

It shouldn't be expected that a typical business executive would be interested in any degree of historical or philosophical speculation. That is where the effort of inventing practical translations of essential cultural understandings can contribute a unique value.

#### Comprehensive Achievement, Self-Governance

Immediately preceding the explanation of the <How-Mode> Leadership Framework, two essay chapters are devoted to the theme of organizational culture, under a rubric of comprehensive performance, Self-Governance.

A structured, matrix diagram is to be found in the middle of the chapter, Doing Culture. (HOW PP. 228-9) There are four characteristic types of culture: Lawless Anarchy, Blind Obedience, Informed Acquiescence and Self-Governance. Then, taken against the four types crosswise, there are five dimensional aspects of cultural considerations: Knowing, Behaving, Relating, Recognizing and Pursuing. Without attempting to touch on all of the possible permutations and variations, a typical role situated within a Blind Obedience type of culture is Follower or Worker. Within an Informed Acquiescence type of culture, it is Manager or Regulator. Within a Self-Governance culture, it is an Engaged Leader role, which is intended to apply to everyone involved in the enterprise, rather than just the top members of a rigid hierarchy. Of course, there are many careful qualifications, regarding the way that the classifications may apply under different circumstances.

The four types of organizational culture can be represented as a spectrum, increasing in merit:

Cultures in general tend to fall into four basic *types*. These lie along a spectrum that, not coincidentally also mirrors the historical development of organizational complexity and societal maturity, from the most simple to the most complex and rational. (HOW P. 220)

This is quite an expansive claim, seeming to imply a kind of natural evolution or natural emergence of higher and better organizational development. This is a big idea deserving real elucidation, more than just a matter-of-fact sidelight. It might be assumed that any detailed historical justification would not be interesting to an audience of business people. Still, the point is too essential to pass with no further explanation whatsoever. The premise may not be completely obvious to everyone.

A number of actual, real world examples demonstrate the best principles of values-based Self- Governance.

The GE Aircraft Engine Assembly plant in Durham, North Carolina, operates as a trust-based, seemingly unmanaged environment, with a dramatically superior record of excellence and efficiency, producing over 400 large and complex machines per year. All of the work is accomplished through small teams of technicians, where everything is decided by the consensus of the participants themselves. Team representatives join in councils to coordinate issues of human resources, materials and training.

Sewell Automotive Companies operates a successful group of dealerships in Dallas and other cities inside Texas. It is a family-owned business with a 100 year old legacy. There are few rules, but there three important common values: "Act Professionally in Everything You Do, Be Genuinely Caring, and Maintain the Highest Ethical Standards." Check out the records on glassdoor dot com. Automobile service work is performed by dedicated teams with frontline technicians empowered to make fair decisions on a situational basis, in keeping with the guiding principles.

Johnson & Johnson is a large American multinational business. For over 100 years the company has upheld several primary principles, eventually established with a one page Credo in about 1942. The first responsibility is to the people who use the products and services. The second responsibility is to the employees. The third responsibility is to the community and the environment. The fourth responsibility is to the stockholders. If the first three principles are well honored, the fourth responsibility is also well provided. The Credo has become a living and enduring social document of agreement, which is still reinforced in practice on a day to day basis.

Methodist Hospital System in Houston, Texas, provides an example of an outstanding effort to induce new principles in an existing enterprise. The employees cooperated in sessions to develop a vision statement, a belief statement and a new mission statement, based on integrating spiritual values in the workplace. Nurses are enabled to accept accountability for necessary actions, undertaken without higher approvals. Everyone is expected continually to ask questions and to receive respectful answers. Appropriate challenges to leadership decisions are encouraged. Employee satisfaction levels have increased and turnover rates have dropped. Vacancy rates have lowered substantially. The company has received high recognition from the industry and the media.

There is a distinction to be drawn between regulatory compliance and behavior based on shared values. Within the past ten years, the United States Department of Justice has revisited guidelines for enforcing proper business conduct. "A corporation is directed by its management and management is responsible for a corporate culture in which criminal behavior is either discouraged or tacitly encouraged." (HOW P. 243) Previously, it was considered adequate if a company maintained due-diligence with respect to internal malfeasance. The new standards extend beyond only a need for making up rules, to touch on a need for achieving real respect for ethical awareness.

## Intentional Behavior

The next preceding, reverse order section emphasizes social aspects of information transparency, trust and reputation. A story is told about a sudden crisis, affecting a well-regarded brand name, when knowledge about a product defect became rapidly conveyed throughout the Internet, as an *issue contagion*. Established business practices regarding marketing, advertising and public relations are increasingly inadequate in view of the rapidly moving and changing dynamics of interconnectivity, interdependency and information accessibility.

It was commonly accepted, in the near recent past, that specific conventional indications could be held to convey reasonable impressions about a product or about a person. Control of appearances could be maintained, or manipulated, just through focus on the limited means available to assert desirable descriptions. But now, a business company model, like a guarded fortress, is giving way against a different business marketplace ecosystem, not unlike a rapidly-growing rainforest. Impressions and indications have become harder and harder to uphold, as so much information and as so many alternate choices are so readily available. A consistent, reliable, immediate assurance of quality is valued over and above any packaged, constructed, controlled, externalized representations.

In the near recent past, a legal response to a challenge has often been to deny, to fight, and to invoke counter accusations in preparation for a confrontation in court. This exclusionary approach can create more problems than it solves.

Under the right conditions, trust enables risk, which leads to innovation, which creates progress.

One impressive outcome, in a world of rapid responsiveness, is the apparent strength of a direct apology, when something happens to go wrong. An admission of concern can play better against the reality of some deficiency in upholding full necessary standards. "To apologize is inherently a dangerous act, but one with latent power. To apologize is to accept responsibility, this we all know, but it is also to cede power to the wronged party. You place in their hands the decision to forgive you or not. Apologizing requires willful vulnerability." (HOW P. 145) So, vulnerability can indicate strength. It becomes paradoxical. An outright acknowledgement of an area of weakness opens an invitation for other people to accept and to adjust, in keeping with beneficial mutual accommodations.

External measures of success can seem coincidental, while pursuit of genuine significance ultimately accompanies the most genuine success, another paradox.

## Deliberate Thoughtfulness

The next preceding, reverse order section discusses strengths, shoulds and sciences, in three chapter essays.

Contributions from the fields of Cognitive Neuroscience and Evolutionary Anthropology represent initiatives to anchor general statements about interpersonal interactions, in keeping with recent scientific research. Specific discoveries from Paul Zak at Claremont Graduate University, and Felix Warneken and Michael Tomasello at the Max Planck Institute, help to reinforce the necessity of innate human cooperation throughout natural, normal social and cultural experiences. “We are at some level, it seems, hardwired to seek connections with others, to build biological networks to achieve greater personal gain.” (HOW P. 71) The ability to keep up a personal individual belief system, while simultaneously holding contradictory factual knowledge, also characterizes some particular feature within the complex equation of being human.

Rules are to be known and obeyed. Values are to be cherished. Borders or boundaries are to be upheld in consideration of what is, and is not, generally permissible activity. But, what should happen, for the best optimal outcomes, goes above and beyond any attempts to define and administer restrictions for all possible circumstances. Dov Seidman, as Lawyer and Philosopher, underlines another basic logical premise. Any possible external rule is only a stand-in substitute or an approximation proxy for actual desired behavior.

We began in small tribes, and as our tribes grew in size and interrelationships became more complex, they began to invent rules to guide, manage, and sometimes coerce each other. Rules became codified in the form of laws, like the tax code, designed by a cadre of leaders and held up as the structure of civil society. (HOW PP. 83-4)

Two case situations are brought up in order to illustrate two distinctly different approaches to coping with rules and responsibilities.

Under East German communism, Olympic athletes were required by the government to use performance enhancing steroids to win competitions. Later a group of former athletes attempted to receive some form of restitution for progressive medical problems and expenses, after the East German government had collapsed. The pharmaceutical company, making the drugs, would not accept liability for the damages. That stance could be considered as a valid option in keeping with applicable laws, without regard to the personal human suffering caused by the bad circumstances.



In contrast, about ten years ago the University of Michigan Hospitals and Health System, in Ann Arbor, decided to try to confront growing problems with malpractice litigation in a different way. Doctors were encouraged always to admit possible mistakes promptly and to say, "I'm sorry," especially in situations not involving catastrophic consequences. As a result, the actual costs for medical malpractice claims and lawsuits dropped by 50 percent. Although it may seem counter intuitive to many people, the more compassionate solution can also represent the best business decision.

Distraction, cognitive dissonance and friction make for undesirable divergence from intended business results. Better consonant assimilation becomes the more positive possibility in recognition of less desirable alternatives.

### Tacit Knowledge

Finally, continuing in reverse order, the first main section introduces the symbolic analogy of a wave movement to reinforce what Dov Seidman believes to be the ideal impulse to promote organizational progress. The wave becomes a kind of intangible abstraction, a kind of phenomenon to be witnessed in many different dimensions of experience. One view of a wave is a cheerleading exercise in a sports stadium, as groups of sports fans stand and extend their arms in a gesture that moves progressively from area to area, after starting at an initial source. One view of a wave is a biological impulse transmitted between individual living cells within the human nervous system. One view of a wave is a new innovation which can be recognized as useful in a business setting, subsequently spreading throughout an enterprise or an industry.

Culture lies in the synapses between individual units of a system, whether that can be neurons in the brain, individuals in a group, or units in a conglomerate. Now that we understand something about the general types of culture at work in most business endeavors today, and the various dimensions that define how these cultures function, what do we do with that knowledge? (HOW P. 241)

The crucial pattern involves the discrete individual entities, the gaps or spaces between those individual entities, and the communication within group clusters having a shared purpose. The common theme would almost seem to be more like a poetic reflection, rather than a scientific statement of fact.

For a number of reasons, which are both historical and practical, information is moving faster. Human interconnectivity and interdependency are increasing. "The tapestry of human behavior is so varied, so rich and so global that it presents a rare opportunity, *the opportunity to outbehave the competition.* (HOW P. 52)

Technology has brought both new possibilities, but also some peculiar distortions affecting intended interactions. For example, remote speaking or hearing can become fragmented without availability of visual clues. Digital Informational traces can linger in unwanted fashion over an unbounded Internet, indefinitely.

A new affirmative values-based attitude is now more necessary for achievement. Both a committed effort and a deliberate choice are needed to discover the most suitable means to proceed, beyond the non-choice to repeat expected comfortable activities based on the past. The possible positive outcomes make the journey worthwhile.

### In the Now

Dov Seidman started the Legal Resource Network, Inc., (LRN) in about 1994, after a short time working with a large law firm in Los Angeles. The Internet was a new phenomenon, destined to have a great impact on commercial interexchange in many ways. LRN was originally envisioned as a means to provide specialized legal expertise for corporate legal departments, through a new kind of coalition different from a traditional law firm. That initial focus has been augmented to emphasize compliance, governance and business culture. During the past several decades, numbers of prominent business scandals and dangerous business miscalculations have continually upset the economy in damaging ways. "The key to long-term sustained success does not lie in breaking all the rules; it lies in transforming the rules and harnessing the power of values." (HOW P. 91) At first the LRN message was often deferred to a general counselor, a chief ethics officer, a chief risk officer or an external relations officer. Proper behavior was often perceived as a defensive reaction to a problem. But, as time has gone by, it has become increasingly clear that proactive anticipation emphasizing essential values can also contribute meaningfully toward differentiation and competitive advantage. More business directors and chief executive officers are ready to consider the impact of organizational culture in assuring better ongoing outstanding excellence.

A central tenant of Confucian thought, for example, is that laws control the lesser man, but right conduct controls the greater man. If you substitute *company* for *man*, Confucius becomes a contemporary-sounding theorist of organizational management. (HOW P. xx)

Going outside the general confines of the <How-Mode> message as it is delivered by Dov Seidman, other complementary developments have been appearing in other areas of inquiry as well. The practice of mental health in the United States has usually been understood strictly in terms of clinical practice, where therapies could be offered in reaction to deficiencies or problems, in the manner of a medical illness.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) has long maintained an established collection of therapeutic standards, The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM). However, within the past several years, a few highly accomplished leaders within the mental health community have also ventured further to promote a separate positive counterpart. Martin Seligman and Christopher Peterson, as well as a number of other prominent figures like Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, have cooperated to create a new collection of positive standards, *Character Strengths and Virtues* (CSV). The new effort has been undertaken under the auspices of the American Psychological Association (APA), particularly supported by a group of professionals emphasizing what has come to be known as Positive Psychology. The most essential, overarching qualities are identified to include Wisdom, Courage, Justice, Temperance, Humanity and Transcendence. These categorizations again resonate well with the time honored Cardinal Virtues, which extend broadly throughout the entire history of human civilization: Temperance, Courage (Strength), Justice and Prudence. The exact values and principles that Dov Seidman wishes to encourage would also seem to be in close agreement with *Character Strengths and Virtues*.

In the near recent past, the question of morality or well-being has been considered to be a strictly personal matter, beyond the responsibility of proper business discourse. Yet it is becoming more evident that appropriate understandings and resources are available to treat group and corporate interactions in an increasingly more deliberate, informed manner. “We can identify, quantify, and systematize the dimensions of culture as never before, allowing us a unique opportunity to unleash its power and efficiency.” (HOW P. 243)

Another related field of knowledge, where new realizations are becoming increasingly more subtle and sophisticated, is the area of Depth Psychology. Specific interrelated capabilities of personal perception and personal consciousness have been known and studied for many decades. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) has been used to help identify characteristic individual preferences for quite a long time. But further additional work has been done more recently to explore the maturation of individual choice and capability over an extended period of time. Not surprisingly, the traditional virtues of Temperance, Strength, Justice and Prudence can be demonstrated to correlate well with the understandings and techniques emerging also through the literature of Depth Psychology, providing yet more added range and scope. Important realizations are available to contribute to Self-Governance, as emphasized by Dov Seidman, and also to contribute to better, more cohesive Cognitive Diversity in relation to organizational group coherence and endurance.

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