

An Everyone Culture:

Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organization

Book's Argument: Kegan and Lahey claim that culture is strategy. They argue that the single biggest loss of resources organizations suffer every day is people doing a second job no one is paying them for. This second job entails spending time and energy covering up weaknesses, managing other people's impressions of them, showing themselves to their best advantage, playing politics, and hiding their inadequacies, uncertainties, and limitations. Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organization (DDO) is a way to eliminate this second job.



Key Takeaways: A DDO provides a new model of people development to unleash their potential and support each other's flourishing by creating a safe and demanding enough culture that everyone comes out of hiding. A DDO intentionally, continuously, and sustainably nourishes a culture that puts business and individual development – and the way each one supports the other – front and center for everyone, every day. It realizes that homegrown, robust, daily practices best develop human capabilities by enabling a cultural incubator to act as a continuous force on behalf of people overcoming their limitations and blind spots and improving their mastery of increasingly challenging work.

Happiness is a process of human flourishing that includes experience of loss, pain, and suffering. For Brene Brown, one must value the experience of their vulnerability and run toward it in order to take part in this process. A couple of DDOs have their own mantras to get at this:

Next Jump *Better Me + Better You = Better Us*

Bridgewater *Pain + Reflection (in a safe environment) = Progress*

Culture is: 1) day-in and day-out confirmation of the goodwill and good intentions that stand behind all the operations of the culture, and especially the difficult communication about oneself; and 2) unshakable trustworthiness at the top, the knowledge that one's leaders congruently walk their own talk. For a DDO culture, human development and profit are each recognized as a part of a single whole, each dependent on, and supporting of, the other. Hence, a DDO provides the structure for seamless integration of two pursuits as if they were a single goal: business excellence and the growth of people into more capable versions of themselves through the work of the business. The three plateaus in adult mental development are as follows:

| Socialized mind | | Self-authoring mind | | Self-transforming mind |
|---|----|---|----|--|
| What I think to send will be strongly influenced by what I believe others want to hear [63] | -> | What I send is more likely to be a function of what I deem others need to or ought to hear to best further the agenda or mission of my design [65-66] | -> | Stand back from own filter and look at it, not only through it...both values, and is wary of, any one stance, analysis, or agenda [68] |

Acknowledging this, three dimensions of a DDO assist in developing individuals to move through one plateau to the next and are called Edge, Home, and Groove. Edge, or aspirations, are real and sustained dialogue. Home, or community, provides a place where individuals are deeply valued as human beings. Groove, or practices, constantly holds individuals accountable. The DDO result is continuous closing of the single biggest gap in normal organizational life: the gap between who we are at work and who we really are.

Best Quote: “You have to have a set of principles, you have to have a touchstone to ground truth, you have to have practices, and you have to have someone to hit you upside the head every so often to remind you...” – Merrick Furst, Georgia Tech's Flashpoint (FP) Director and Founder

Why it's important: A DDO is deliberately constructed to make an organization and its people each other's greatest resource for development. This is accomplished by “building your home” and entails being: 1) safe whereby individuals experience enhancement of their place in the organization; 2) dependable such that individuals can count on practices and the ethos behind them to be a regular, daily experience of how things are done; and 3) collectively ascribed to so there are uncoerced agreements to operate in a certain way (i.e., individuals do so because they want to). The idea is to let others in to our fuller humanity, as we are as hard at work on ourselves as we are on the performance of our business and the reliability of our cultures. Happiness should be seen as a process that includes the pain of struggling well and laboring toward a new life. Happiness is “a guide to becoming the persons we are meant to be.”

Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey (2016)