Foreword

by
James Watson

When Henry called me recently and asked me if I would be willing to write the Foreword for a book that he was authoring, my first reaction was one of surprise. Henry and I had not talked for many years. I was surprised, but also deeply moved, that I could do something for a man whose ideas have brought profound change to the way in which I live.

My business dealings with Henry began some years ago when he gave several briefings at ADP, the company I work for, about how to handle and manage change and how to look at things from different perspectives. I was so impressed with what he had to say that I asked Henry to give some additional briefings to the organizations over which I had responsibilities. I was not only impressed with his message but with the way he presented his ideas, instantly drawing his audience into active participation. His message was always clear, easily understood and easily applied. His style was always entertaining, which helped to keep our attention focused, and studded with practical examples of how to apply his various principles. As usual Henry again did an outstanding job in presenting these ideas to my organization, so much so that I felt compelled to express my appreciation and gratitude in a letter to the editor of Success magazine, which published an article about Henry's methods. In the end of this letter I wrote, "Perhaps Oliver Wendell Holmes best expressed my experience with Dr. Ekstein when he said 'Man's mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions.'" I don't often write these types of letters but it was probably this letter that had caused Henry to call me about writing this Foreword.

What Henry did not know when he called me, however, was how our meeting and his management briefing had impacted my own life and career. It wasn't until our conversation on the phone, that Henry realized how much of his "lessons" I still remembered after so many years and how much I still used them to this day. I use and share many of Henry's lessons and ideas with others in order to help them see things from a different point of view, to try and help myself and others solve problems that for a time might seem insolvable. Putting things into the right perspective is not always easy,

however, some of Henry's "principles" and stories do help by giving you a framework for thinking clearly, and helping you discover new options. Recognizing what can and can't be done about a problem is often the difference between working towards a feasible solution and chasing an illusive answer. I learned from Henry, that rather than trying to deal with a problem try to eliminate it by applying the "Sexton's principle." Henry's ideas

are powerful and applying them will help you make better decisions in your business and personal life.

Each of us meets many different people in the course of our life, socially and in business. People come and go. A few, like Henry, make a lasting impression. While undoubtedly Henry is an extremely intelligent man, his message is not complicated or difficult to understand. His "principles" are easy to apply. Each one is simple and straightforward. It is practical and it can make a difference. He has a gift for making you think about familiar things in new ways in order for you to appreciate that changing your perspective about things can, in fact, change your life. Henry is a storyteller. He takes real life situations that have occurred to him or to people he knows and relates them to his "lessons" or "principles". He will, on occasion, throw in a proverb or two to make a point. His message is both entertaining and timeless. It is valid today and it will be equally valid a hundred years from now.

Finding ways to make sense of and deal with change is an integral part of life. Each year the rate and significance of those changes just accelerates. This year there will be more change than last year but less than the next year, and so on. Change often brings stress but, like dealing with change, dealing with stress is also part of life. Therefore, anything that helps us to better understand change and how to cope with it will ultimately help us to better manage stress, which, in turn, will help us lead happier and more productive lives.

Many organizations have recently embraced the idea that diversity is not only a social requirement but also a real asset. People of different ages, sexes, and cultures do not all think alike and thanks to these differences our perspectives are expanded, our minds broadened, which helps us cope with change. While there are many books dealing with the subject of change I think you will find this book uniquely different. For example, to a client whom a bank denied a loan he needed for buying machinery, Henry said,

"Why did you go to the bank for a loan? I will help you pick up money from your floor." In other words, he'll show you how to grow with what you already have, because Henry believes that even in best run companies there is plenty of waste that can be eliminated and the savings can be put to better use.

Henry's book and its message couldn't come at better time.

The above represents my views as an individual, not as a representative of my company.

James Watson

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Chapter 3

The Bull's Eye Principle

> The greatest pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do.
>
> — *Walter Bagehot*

The following story has a great lesson for anyone connected with management. It helped me develop my interactive consulting method, described in the second part of this chapter.

Tom and Jack had not seen each other for fifteen years. There was a lot that they had to say to one another to make up for lost time. Jack had become very wealthy and wanted to impress Tom with his new estate, so he invited him to come and see it. The estate was close to the airport, so they decided to walk. As they came closer, Tom saw a long brick wall surrounding the estate. On the wall, he noticed hundreds of targets, with a bullet right in the center of each bull's-eye.

"Who managed to get the bullets in to the center every time?" asked Tom.

"I did," replied Jack modestly. "Then you must be an excellent marksman," said Tom. "How did you do it?"

"Simple," said Jack, "first I shot the bullet and then I drew the target."

At first glance this seems to be completely backwards. That is not what shooting is all about. In fact, what Jack did is to turn the problem upside down. A closer analysis will show, however, that the story is not as crazy as it seems.

Let's first rephrase the problem and ask, "What is the easiest way to get a dart or a bullet into the center of a target?" Surely, the answer is, "You shoot first and then draw the target around the dart or the bullet." Now our story sounds more reasonable. It suggests a good solution to the problem at hand. In fact, the best solutions to method improvements are often found when we tum problems upside down, sideways or backwards, perhaps because we do so many things backwards to begin with.

You may remember from your history studies the tale of the Gordian knot which was tied by King Gordius of Phrygia. An oracle revealed that whoever untied the knot and separated the two ropes would be the future master of Asia. Many warriors tried to separate the ropes, but could not untie the knot. Alexander the Great also tried his luck, but even he could not untie the knot. However, Alexander the Great was not a man to accept failure easily, so he turned things upside down and did them in a non-conventional way; he cut the knot with his sword and separated the two ropes. The oracle immediately predicted that he would be the master of Asia.

Trying to do things in an unconventional way often yields excellent results. You may remember the Biblical story of how King Solomon decided who was the rightful mother of a child claimed by each of two women as her own. When all investigations and persuasions failed, the King decided to bring a sword to cut the child in two and divide it between the women. One woman said, "Cut it, neither of us will have it alive." The other woman cried "No! Give her the child, but do not harm it." Immediately the King announced, "The latter one is the rightful mother."

Two examples of unconventional approaches come to mind from my own experience. One case has to do with the old method of producing windows before computers were used in manufacture.

I was working for a company that produced windows for homeowners. When a homeowner ordered windows for his house, the salesman measured the windows after closing the sale. He started from one end of the house and measured each window as he walked around the house. Some windows were large and some were small. To save time and work, the salesman wrote the window sizes on an order form that had six copies. The

six copies were for: (a) production scheduling (b) the saw operator (c) production of the insulated glass (d) production of windows on the assembly line (e) invoicing and (f) company records.

The glass came to the line, leaning on L shaped pallets, in descending size order with the largest pane leaning on the L pallet in the back and the smallest in the front, to prevent glass breakage. The vinyl to produce the sash arrived at the assembly line precut, sticking out of wooden boxes arranged in the order written on the salesman's measuring sheet. The assemblers were instructed to assemble the windows in the order they appeared on the production sheet, and to make a check mark on the sheet after each window was completed. When every window on the sheet had a check mark, the order was complete.

The system worked like this for many years, but had one drawback. The glass, which was arranged by size, often cracked because the assemblers had to pull the pane of glass from somewhere in the middle of the pallet, based on the order written on the production sheet.

Then someone noticed that the glass could only be accessed sequentially, like records of a sequential access file. Namely, you could not get to the pane in the middle of the pallet without handling all the smaller panes stored in front of it. It would always be easier and safer to take the pane of glass stored in the front of the pallet than any other pane. This would prevent the glass from breaking. The precut vinyl to produce the sash could be accessed randomly like records of a random access file. Namely, you could pull any piece of vinyl without disturbing the other pieces. It, therefore, made sense to turn the system upside down and produce the windows not in the order of the salesman's measuring sheet, but rather by increasing glass size. This way the assembler would always take the glass from the front of the pallet. In other words, instead of pulling the pane of glass that matched the order as written by the salesman, the assemblers would simply take the smallest pane of glass stored in front of the pallet and then pull the corresponding sash members. This saved a lot of glass breakage and was much easier and faster. The assemblers had to be retrained to check off the windows on the production sheet in the order of glass. At the end, they had to verify that all windows on the production sheet were checked off.

The following case study is even a better example of the bull's-eye principle. It saved about 80% of labor cost. It deals with fruit packing at a fruit packinghouse.

The packinghouse had to meet specifications of the retail stores. When the fruit was delivered, the merchants required that it be neatly arranged in the crate. When the merchant displayed the newly opened crate, the fruit had to be arranged in straight rows. Once the crate was opened, and the customers began taking the fruit out, the arrangement was not important since the first customer would disturb the order anyway, trying to get to the fruit at the bottom, which he thought might be nicer. It was the first impression that counted.

Faced with these demands, the workers were required to diligently arrange the fruit in the crate neatly layer by layer, sometimes eight or nine layers deep, depending on the size of the fruit. When the crate was full, it moved on a conveyor to be closed, by nailing the upper lid on top of the crate.

This was a labor-intensive and time-consuming operation because every fruit in the crate was handled manually. Then someone thought of a crazy idea. His reasoning was simple. If all we need is to present the upper layer neatly when the box is opened, why bother to arrange the whole box neatly?

To accomplish this, the operation was turned literally upside down. The crates came to the line with nailed tops but without bottoms. Before filling it with fruit, the top of the crate was marked "This side up." Next, the crate was turned upside down and filled with fruit with the top of the crate resting on the table and the open bottom facing up. The first layer of fruit was arranged neatly because it rested on the side of the crate that was marked "This side up." After neatly arranging the first layer, the fruit was thrown into the crate haphazardly or even directly from a sack. Care was taken to pack the fruit tightly so that the layer resting on the cover would not move. Then the bottom of the crate was nailed on and the crate was again turned upside down with the top facing up ready for shipment.

Another example of turning problems upside down is the interactive consulting method I developed. I used to work for a conventional consulting company. We would go to a client's plant, analyze the operation, the systems and the procedures. We would take them apart and put them together the best way we could think of. Then we would put all our findings into an impressive report of about 200 pages. The report was leather-bound

with golden lettering on the cover. It was a testimony to the many hours that we spent in the client's company and justification of our high fees. It was also a sign that we had completed the assignment and had earned our fee.

We would give enough copies to the president, for all managers. Usually, the president and top managers would read the report. A month later I would visit the company, to answer questions and ask if they needed help with any other projects. I usually found that most managers did not read the report in depth. Many made sure that the recommendations would not be implemented. In the end, the report would collect dust on a shelf. I began to ask myself, "What are we doing wrong?"

Ironically, the consulting company did well. However, I was interested in tangible results not just in collection of fees. Unfortunately, I found out the hard way, that after submitting the report, I had no control over what companies did with it.

After some years in the consulting business, I became so frustrated that I decided to quit and go into operations. Two years later, I was promoted to the position of vice-president in a Fortune 500 division. We were growing enormously, and I could not do everything myself, so I hired consultants to help me. These were reputable people known for their sharp minds.

They analyzed the operations, systems and procedures, and put them together the best way they knew how, summarizing everything in a thick report, leather bound with golden lettering. The engineer who wrote the report proudly signed his name on it, and gave me ten copies of the report to distribute to my managers.

When I gave the report to the managers, the same thing happened as when I was a consultant. Now though, circumstances were reversed. The resistance to the report was very strong. The managers did not attack the consultants directly, because they came to us highly recommended. Instead, they would say that the consultants were smart people but could not learn the small details of the operation in the limited time they were here. Their recommendations might be good for other places, but here they would not work.

I always wondered why managers had such a strong resistance to the consultants' recommendations. What were the consultants doing wrong?

One day a manager of mine quit. I was a little surprised and I invited him for an exit interview over a cup of coffee. I wanted to learn from him whether perhaps I did

something wrong that prompted him to quit. I do not like to make the same mistake twice if I can help it.

As we talked, I tried to learn from him why the managers and supervisors were so opposed to the consultants' recommendations. He did not say it in so many words, but I understood from him that the consultant and the old-timer manager viewed the consulting report from different perspectives. To the consultant the report was a blueprint for implementation. It often included an implementation schedule: what to do on Monday what to do on Tuesday and so on. Ideally, if someone followed the recommendations, he could not fail.

To the old-timer the report was something quite different. Far from being a blueprint for implementation, the report was simply a monument to the wisdom of the consultant. "Did you see those beautiful charts? Did you understand the complex multicolor graphs and mathematical equations? He must be a smart fellow. He spent only six months here and found all the problems and solutions. I have been here twenty years, and I could not even find the problems. What will the president think of me? If the consultant's solutions should work, heaven forbid, the president will think that I must be a moron. Will he fire me? Will he demote me? Maybe he will freeze me in my present position and present salary for life? I must do something in a hurry before it is too late."

The truth is that an intelligent president does not expect his staff to design a better system using quantifying methods and other modern engineering techniques. He would be pleased if his people were able to work with the consultant and could learn the new methods to run their departments more effectively. However, the old-timer does not know that, and when it comes to his job security he cannot take any chances. The self-preservation instinct instantly kicks in. This is the strongest instinct we have and it overrides all other considerations. In any event, the old-timer does not stand to gain anything from the consultant's work, so why take unnecessary risks?

I could also see that the supervisors and managers had an unwritten covenant to help each other. Every one of them was afraid that if the outside consultant were to succeed in one department, management would then ask him to work in another department, and eventually in his department. Therefore, they all concluded that the sooner the consultant would be out the door the better for everybody.

Ironically though, I found that the better the recommendations, the stronger the resistance of managers and supervisors. If the recommendations were bad and would fail miserably, everyone would be glad to implement them. They would then be able to say to the president: "We told you so. There was no need for an outside consultant. After many years of experience, we know the business better than any outsider."

That cup of coffee I had with the manager taught me a great deal. I understood for the first time why consultants, even the best ones, fail in implementation. There seems to be a competition between the consultant and the old-timer. They both want the credit for any improvements. The consultant has the report to show off his good ideas. This makes the old-timer feel inadequate. The old-timer thinks that if the consultant's recommendations are good and he wins, than he, the old-timer looks inadequate and, therefore loses. In this battle between the consultant and managers, it is easy to predict who will win. The consultant would like to succeed, but to him it is not a matter of life or death. He collects his fee when he submits his report. To him the success of implementation is only a secondary matter. He can always blame poor management for lack of implementation. The old-timer looks at things differently. To him winning is a matter of survival, or so he thinks. He must win in order to maintain his job, his livelihood. If he should lose, he may be laid-off. In that case, he would be devastated. His wife and children may lose the respect for him as a breadwinner. His whole world would crumble. His self-preservation instinct is mobilized to ensure that he wins and the consultant whom he views as his enemy loses. In any situation like this, the instinct of self-preservation will prevail.

The other problem is that the recommendations of consultants do not always work out well. This is to be expected. Even best laid plans can fail in implementation, especially if there are many people who want them to fail. However, the truth is that the old-timer often knows what needs to be done better than the consultant does. Many consultants are afraid to admit it, fearing that the client will think that he does not need them. Even worse, the consultant sometimes takes ideas from an old-timer and presents the ideas as his own. Nothing infuriates an old-timer more than stealing credit from him.

I said to myself, there must be a better way. The consultants are doing it all backwards. The process must be turned upside down to alleviate the following problems:

- The old timer's resistance to change

- The old-timer's fear of losing his job because he thinks that he is competing with the consultant and one of them must lose
- The old-timer's view of the consultant as an enemy who endangers his job.
- The consultant's inadequate knowledge of the details of a particular operation

I started to experiment with different methods. I also kept in mind that many improvements were not being implemented because they were "not invented here." I finally designed the interactive consulting method to fulfill the following requirements:

- The old-timer should view the consultant as a friend who may help him get promoted.
- People who will have to live with the improvements must be the ones who invent them. The interactive consultant may help them invent the improvements, but they must know and understand all the details involved. This will eliminate the fear of the unknown, which causes the resistance to change.
- The credit for the improvements must go to the people who invent them and help implement them. Their bosses and peers should recognize their contribution. Thus the employees, proud of their achievements, will embrace the changes with enthusiasm rather than with resentment.
- Whenever feasible, the employees who invent or help implement the improvements should get some remuneration like a promotion, an increase in wages, a bonus or the like. This will answer their natural question of "What's in it for me?" and help them embrace the changes with enthusiasm.
- The consultant must treat all employees, supervisors and managers with respect. He must give them the feeling that they know more about their department than he does, and that he is willing to learn from them. Thus they will not be afraid that the consultant will outshine them.
- The employees who have to live with the improvements must feel that the project is their own. If the project succeeds, it is their success. If the project fails, it is their failure. The consultant is here only to help them succeed.

- Whenever possible, reports should be written **after** the improvements are implemented and should include only items that work.

The last point requires some explanation. Many consultants' problems stem from the fact that their recommendations do not work. This could be the result of their lack of knowledge of the operation, bad relations with managers and employees who want the consultant to fail, or other reasons. The only way to make sure that the report includes only what works is to reverse the order. First implement the improvements and then include in the report only the items that work. You might say that this is like first shooting and then drawing the target around the bullet—you can never miss. Well, you are right, it is an application of the bull's eye principle. If you think that this not fair, consider the following question: What is the point of writing a report with recommendations that might not work?

When the report is written **after** the improvements are working, it is a completely different type of report. It is not a blueprint for implementation as the conventional consultant's report, but rather a summary of what was implemented and a means of giving credit where it is due, because the names of the participating employees appear on the cover of the report.

This may seem like putting the carriage in front of the horse, but it works like a charm. It has a few important advantages. First, no one can claim that the recommendations in the report will not work. They are already working, sometimes for two or three months. Secondly, there is no one left to resist the report because the managers and employees who would usually resist it are among the authors who recommended the improvements.

In the beginning, the managers may resist the interactive consultant's approach. They may suspect that he is just another consultant who tries to gain their trust and later talk them into something that is bad for them. However, with a little skill their resistance fades away, as evident from the following case.

The company had about 250 employees. The president of the company introduced me to a group of twenty managers and supervisors. I asked each participant for his name and how long he had been working for the company. Some had been there for twenty

years, many had been there over ten years; only two had been with the company less than a year.

“I’ve been here less than ten minutes,” I said to them. “If anyone knows what to do here, it cannot be me, it has to be you.”

There was quiet in the room. Every one was surprised. Soon however, the instinct of survival got the better of them. They still remembered how hard they had struggled to get the previous consultant out two years ago.

Jack said, “You mean to say that you do not know what to do here; you do not know the answers?”

“You heard me correctly. I do not know the answers. How could I? I have been here only ten minutes. If I am lucky, I will stay here for a few months. How do you expect me to know what you have learned in ten or twenty years?”

Phillip chimed in, “But if you do not know what to do here, if you do not know the answers, how are you going to help us?”

“I do not know the answers, but I do know the questions. If I will ask you the right questions, you will come up with the right answers.”

“But if we already know the answers why do we need you to ask the questions. Why do we need you at all?”

I was taken aback by this logic. It took me a second or two to regain my composure.

I said to Phillip, “When was it the last time that you saw a man running down the street screaming ‘I have a wonderful answer. Who has a question?’ It never happens, because people do not give answers unless someone first asks a question. You will see how it all works in a week or two.”

“You mean to say that you will ask the questions, we will give the answers and then you will take our ideas and put them into your report as your own, as the other consultant did two years ago?”

“No,” I said. “I do not write reports, I do not make recommendations and I do not tell people what to do. The projects will be yours. If there will be reports, they will be yours. Your name will be on the cover. You will get all the credit. If you succeed, you will all shine like stars. If you fail, the yolk will be on your faces. Do not worry though; I

will help you succeed. I want you all to shine like stars. As the company grows there will be promotions, there will be pay increases, and I want you to get them."

Some were convinced but most of them were skeptical. They thought that this was another ploy to gain their trust. Fortunately, one of the supervisors was willing to try, so I started with him. His name was Peter. He suggested that we start with Tom, whose job was to assemble locks.

I asked Tom how long he had worked on this particular operation. He told me that he had been doing it for over five years. I remarked that if he had been doing it for five years, then whatever he was doing had to be good. I asked him to show me what he was doing.

The operation was simple. He took part A and B and assembled them into a subassembly C. Then he created subassembly F from parts D and E. Subassemblies C and F were assembled into the finished product, packed in a box and put on a pallet across the aisle. Actually, the operation was more complex, but we will omit some details for the sake of simplicity. I asked Tom why he did it in this particular way. He answered that the people in the company always did it this way. Besides, this was how they trained him when he first started this job.

I asked Tom if he ever thought of another method of assembling the lock. He said that he never had. I said to him, "You know this operation better than anyone in this company, even better than the president. If anybody can improve this operation, it can only be you. You are a smart man. Here is what you can do: think of three other ways to do this operation. They do not have to be necessarily better than the present way, just different. To succeed you must concentrate on this problem. Who knows you may even invent a better way.

However, this is not important. Just think of something different. I will be here next week and we will see what we can do."

When I came next week Tom called me proudly to his workbench and explained to me the three different methods he thought of. One was even slightly better than the present method. Now we had four ways to perform the operation, including the present one.

We were ready to roll. I explained to Tom and to Peter his supervisor, the pairing of options method. “Let us call the four methods we have **A**, **B**, **C**, and **D**. We will work on one pair at a time. Take **A** and **B**. Think what are the good and bad features of **A**. Then think what are the good and bad features of **B**. Take a sheet of paper and draw four columns. A good and bad column for method **A** and a good and bad column for method **B**. List the good and bad features of **A** and **B** on the sheet. I will come here next week and review the sheet with you. You have done an excellent job till now, so I am sure that you will do well in listing the features.”

When I came next week I found that Tom and Peter listed the good and bad features of **A** and **B**. By asking a few questions, I helped them discover additional features and better define the features they had listed. I asked Tom to create a method **E** for next week, by combining as many good features as possible of **A** and **B**, and eliminating as many bad features as possible.

Sure enough, next week Tom presented me with method **E**. By definition, method **E** was better than **A** and **B**. I said to Tom “You did such a great job with method **A** and **B** that you will have no difficulty doing the same for **C** and **D.** In three weeks, we had method **F** that by definition was better than **C** and **D**. Finally; I helped Tom do the same with the improved pair **E** and **F**, which yielded option **G**, which we called the “Good option.” I could see that Tom and Peter were quite pleased.

Please keep in mind that option **G** was not necessarily the best option available. There may have been better options that we did not think of. At the very least though, we knew that **G** was not the worst option. We knew that, by definition, there were at least six options worse than **G**. This is something that we could not have said about the previous method. It could have been from the bottom of the barrel.

We decided to implement method **G** and see how it worked. To allay Tom’s fear of failure we agreed that if the method did not work we would not tell anyone about it. We would simply think of something else that did work, and only then would we let everyone know. This made it a no risk proposition.

In the beginning the new method did not work well. There were bugs to iron out and changes to make in the way the parts were delivered and placed on the bench. We also had to redesign the bench. Even though the new method did not work well, Tom did not

give up. He wanted to show that his new method was better than the old one. After four weeks, the new method was completely debugged and fully operational.

The savings were impressive. There were 34% savings in labor and a 25% improvement in quality. Tom also claimed that he was less tired in the evening. I asked Tom and Peter whether the president and vice president knew what they had accomplished. They said that they probably did not. I stressed that it was important that they knew what a good job Peter and Tom did in improving the operation. After all, there would be wage increases and promotions in the future.

"What shall I do?" asked Tom. "I cannot barge to the president's office and toot my horn."

"This will not be necessary," I answered. "Write a brief report on what you have done, and I will make sure that everyone gets a copy."

First Tom said that he had no time to write reports. Then he admitted that he was not sure he knew how to write one.

"No problem," I said. "I have the time, and I know how to write reports. Let me write a draft for you. Cross out what you do not like and add what I have missed. Remember it is your report." Tom agreed. I have never encountered anyone who refused such a generous risk-free offer with everything to gain and nothing to lose.

A week later, I handed Tom the draft with his name and Peter's name as authors on the cover. They made minor corrections and added that it was not fair for them to take all the credit. After all, I had helped them. They suggested that I put my name on the cover too. I put my name under theirs.

I made twenty copies of the report and gave a copy to every executive and manager in the company. I also went to the president and vice president and suggested that they visit Tom's new operation and give him the proverbial pat on the back for a job well done, something that Tom and Peter earned. They did so. I asked the president when Tom was due for a yearly review. He called personnel and said that Tom was due for a review in five months.

I suggested to the president that in view of Tom's accomplishments, he should get a wage increase now and the next review would be a year from now. The same should be done for Peter. The president agreed.

I made sure that the company newspaper reporter interviewed Tom and Peter for an article. I supplied the newspaper with color pictures of Tom performing the various operations, with Peter looking on. Tom and Peter became celebrities overnight and everyone knew who they were and what they had accomplished.

A week later, the president called me to his office and said, "I almost fell off my chair yesterday because of you."

I asked, "Why? What did I do wrong?"

"Nothing," said the president. "Charlie, the manager of the inventory control department, evidently saw what happened to Tom and Peter and asked me to send you to help him as well. I could not believe my ears. I have had consultants here before. The managers and supervisors could not wait for them to leave. For a manager to ask the president to send him a consultant is unbelievable. I never heard of such a thing."

I explained to the president that this often happens in my interactive consulting method. This method helps employees develop better solutions, gives them credit for their input, and helps them be rewarded for their contribution. From the employee's point of view this is a risk-free proposition. He can only win.

I worked with Charlie on inventory control, and I helped him implement my "Inventory Cardiogram" method which was featured in Inc., Success and many other magazines. Charlie improved his management skills considerably and was ready for his next promotion. He became a vice president of the company. Materials management was only one of his departments. He kept me busy with various projects in the company for many years.

You can use the interactive consulting method even if you are not a consultant. As a manager, you can use it to implement changes more easily. Part of managing is helping your people think of new ideas. You will be surprised how interactive consulting can make your job easier.

Even if you are not a consultant or manager you can use the interactive consulting approach. If you are a salesman you can use it with your customers. Help them solve their problems. Do not tell them what to do, ask them. Let them give the answer. You can also use this method when dealing with your spouse or children. Help them think of better

ways of doing things, give credit where due and be generous with praise and thanks for their ideas, just as you should do with your employees.

Employees are starved for praise and credit. If they do something right they seldom hear a word of praise. It is taken for granted. After all this is what they are paid for. However if they do something wrong they soon hear about it; everybody criticizes them. Sometimes they are demoted or even laid-off. The result is that employees hear more bad things about their performance than good things. That is exactly where interactive consulting can help you improve the situation and make everyone feel good about you and about himself. You may need a little practice to become good at it, but it is worth the effort.

You can start by giving credit to everyone who deserves it and thank everyone who does a good job for you. This happens about ten times a day. You may think that everyone should do a good job, because that is what he is paid to do, but look at it from the employee's perspective. The employee knows that he works for you to make money, but he also knows that he could make the same money working for somebody else. You owe him thanks for choosing to work for you. If you do not give him enough credit and a good feeling about himself, he will sooner or later look for a job somewhere else.

With a little practice, you will find many applications for interactive consulting in whatever you do. It will make you feel better and make your life easier.

I have been using my interactive consulting method for twenty-five years for businesses of all sizes, from small businesses to Fortune 500 companies. I have used interactive consulting in a wide variety of environments, including office operations, customer service, marketing and sales promotion, strategic planning and manufacturing. Interactive consulting has proven effective in a variety of businesses and industries, at all levels of management from presidents of companies down to supervisors and employees. I've never had a project that was not successful. I asked myself "How was this possible? Nothing is perfect. Was it just sheer luck that I was successful for twenty-five years? Will I fail next time?" Then it dawned on me that if you work with my interactive method and you know what you are doing it is nearly impossible to fail. In order for me to fail, all managers and supervisors who work on projects with me would also have to fail. They would never let this happen; their instinct of survival would not let them. Ironically, the

same instinct of survival that causes the conventional consultant to fail, assures my success.

You can also look at it from a different perspective. Under the prevalent consulting approach, the old timer believes that if the consultant's recommendations are good and the project succeeds, the consultant will look like a smart fellow and be a winner, but he, the old timer, who could not find the solutions or even the problems, will look incompetent and, therefore, be a loser. On the other hand, if the consultant's recommendations are bad or if the project fails, the old timer, who says that consultants are waste of money, perceives himself as a winner and the consultant as a loser. It is a "win-lose" situation, in which one party must lose for the other to win. Hence, the old timer has every incentive to make sure that the project fails and he "wins."

Under my interactive consulting method, if the project is successful, the old timer is a hero and both he and the consultant are winners. It is a "win-win" situation. If the project fails, they both lose. Therefore, the old timer has every incentive to make sure that the project succeeds. Thus, my interactive consulting method is probably as foolproof as can be.

The bull's eye principal is very powerful. I used it many times to turn problems upside down with excellent results. Perhaps the reason the bull's eye principle is so successful is that, as we noted before, we do so many things backwards to begin with.