

# Book Review of Gestalt Approaches with Organizations

by James Morris, DM

*Gestalt Approaches with Organizations* by Margherita Spagnuolo Lobb and Frans Meulmeester was an absolutely excellent read and presents new ideas that differ from many other approaches to Organizational Development. The book is divided into four parts; each can be read or studied independently. The four sections are:

Part I - Fundamentals of Gestalt approaches to organizations

Part II - Organizational Development and coaching

Part III - How to work with critical issues in organizations

Part IV - Gender and cultural issues

Gestalt is applied psychotherapy to the work force including the professionals with two key aspects. The first aspect is the social activity which leads to some criticism of the society. For this aspect the people can evolve a more confident spirit and be more productive by self-regulation. The evolution of self-regulation may make the organization happier and more productive while eliminating the overhead management regulation. Since the organization evolves due to the people in the organization, a positive impact is then introduced to the society as a whole.

Concept two is the Gestalt phenomenological approach to Gestalt therapy. Unlike many Organizational Development approaches to fix something that does not work, such as production, Organizational Development Professionals often want to look at what is broken and fix that alone. In Gestalt the idea is to focus not on what is broken, but to develop an integrated approach to the whole organization. This concept allows supply chains and anything that is involved with the process to be included. This approach allows the organization to evolve which creates a positive environment and hence leads to better productivity and happier human beings in the organization.

Organizational evolution is a major part of Gestalt. The author's point of views is that taboos and certain laws limit the continual evolution of humans. In my opinion it is the laws and taboos that keep an orderly society. The book really takes a liberal approach. The authors believe that we all can evolve to some harmonious state and society can be in harmony. I disagree with this because many societies have tried to make the perfect harmonious society but have failed. Examples are Cuba, the Soviet Union, China, and recently Venezuela. Humans vary in every aspect: religions, culture, food, etc. In order to be harmonious, we would have to occupy the same point in space and time. Since we do not, I believe this is the weakness of the book.

Despite this weakness, if we take the Gestalt approach and apply it to the Organizational Development world, a very effective tool may be created to help organizations to evolve. The overall book is an excellent conceptual read. It should be used along with other books in schools to educate students who want to become practitioners. This book could be used in every level of higher education, though it may conflict with many presently accepted practices. This is an area where there is room for Organizational Development evolution. I would recommend this book for every instructor in the social sciences.

Excellent book, excellent read.