

OD is back, thanks to Gervase Bushe and Bob Marshak. After decades when the term was almost a dirty word, to be replaced by any and every other type of organizational change that was fashionable at the time, Bushe and Marshak have conceptualized OD in a way that is both novel and integrates crucial foundational principles of OD as they have evolved over time. It is the first truly “new” approach to OD in many years.

The dialogic mindset that Bushe and Marshak articulate in this edited book builds on multiple theoretical developments in recent decades, including social constructionism, discourse and narrative, positive organizational studies, and complexity theory. It integrates these to contribute to a conceptual foundation that addresses how members of a setting interact in ways that foster true improvements there. The claims it makes are not, however solely “theoretical”. The book is based on considerable successful practice.

Further, their book is practical, showing many steps consultants may take to accomplish successful dialog - based change. It includes several chapters that flesh out important issues such as how to contract with clients, how to frame great questions, and how to work with multiple sets of constituents from a dialogic perspective.

The book benefits from the fact that many of its chapter authors are recognized experts in the topics being discussed. In some cases these chapter authors have helped to create the scholarly foundations of a dialogic mindset; in other cases they have developed the practices that embody such a mindset.

This book is more than welcome. It will be central to the scholarship and practice of OD for years to come.

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