Course Learning Outcomes for Unit VI

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

7. Assess deeply held assumptions about oneself and other people.

Reading Assignment

In order to access the resources below, you must first log into the myWaldorf Student Portal and access the Business Source Complete database within the Waldorf Online Library.

Argyris, C. (1998). Empowerment: The emperor's new clothes. *Harvard Business Review, 76*(3), 98-105.

Brown, T. (2001). The empowerment myth. *Across the Board, 38*(2), 71-72.

Buckingham, M. (2005). Great managers understand their people. *Secured Lender, 61*(5), 60-65.

In order to access the resources below, you must first log into the myWaldorf Student Portal and access the Films on Demand database within the Waldorf Online Library.

- Google China Standoff* (48 minutes)

*If this video is no longer available through the Films on Demand database, instead watch the following video from the Films on Demand database: "China Inside Out: Building Relationships with the Next Superpower."

- Empowerment: Promoting Employee Initiative* (24 minutes)

*If this video is no longer available through the Films on Demand database, read the following article from the Business Source Complete database in the Waldorf Online Library instead:

Porter-O'Grady, T. (1998). The myths and reality of empowerment. *Nursing Management, 29*(10), 5.

[Click here](#) to download the Socio-Cognitive Systems Learning Model.

Unit Lesson

Welcome

Welcome to Unit VI! Earlier in this course, we discussed the values of a typical organization as well as the American macroculture. We discussed how the values people *espouse* tend to reflect the culture's ideals, or the values that tend to sound good to the culture. Individuals' *real* values—the values reflected by their behaviors—though, focus on self-centered desires and goals. People claim to have idealistic or politically correct values, values that people in the culture expect them to claim. But, beneath the surface, their values are primarily focused on the self. This is the hallmark of a Model I culture (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Friesenborg, 2015; Kitayama, Uchida, & Duffy, 2007).

In this unit, we will turn our attention to the alternative of the Model I culture: the Model II culture, the culture of a learning organization. For the remainder of the course, we will focus on Model II. We will discuss how to help individuals, teams, and organizations transform the ways they think and act, in order to develop as a learning organization.

Take a look at the socio-cognitive systems learning model that you printed previously. (Or, if you need another copy, a link is provided in the Unit VI readings section.) We are going to discuss Model II values, the box located in the lower-left portion of the diagram. Looking ahead, beginning in the next unit, we will focus on the Model II behaviors and outcomes and how these productive thought-behavior patterns are sustained through a process called double-loop learning. We will learn more in the next unit. In this unit, though, our focus will be exclusively on Model II values.

Model II Values: The Values of a Learning Organization

Understanding true self and other people: In a Model II culture, individuals want to understand their true selves and to understand other people. You may recall that with a Model I culture, people may espouse—or claim to value—understanding themselves and other people. Yet, their behaviors reveal real values that are self-centered and focused on the desires and goals of the self. They often do not even realize the contradiction that exists between what they say is important (i.e., their espoused values) and what they do (i.e., the Model I behaviors that reflect their real values focused on the self). While people often fail to recognize this contradiction in their own values and behaviors, they are quick to notice this contradiction between what other people say and do. This fuels the cycle of Model I behaviors and outcomes.

In contrast, Model II values are based on a longing for healthy relationships with other people and for wholeness within oneself (Friesenborg, 2015; Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2004, 2011). Let's take a look at an example. Before we consider how this impacts the culture of an organization, let's consider an example of Model II values within one's personal life.
:
Example: Imagine that Mike and Carrie, a young career-minded couple, were married and established their first home in a New York City suburb. They met in NYC, and both worked in the city. Their marriage had a Model II culture. They talked about whatever was on their minds. In their discussions, sometimes they disagreed, but they made sure to avoid blame, and they considered themselves a team. They focused on open discussion rather than seeking control within the relationship.

Each had long commutes into the city for their jobs, and each rode the subway. Mike had to be at work each day by 7:00 a.m., and sometimes, his hours varied. Carrie's work day started at 8:00 a.m., and her work day consistently ended at 5:00 p.m. when she began the long commute home. When they got married, they talked about whether they would ride the train together into the city each day for their commute. Mike and Carrie each considered their own preference, as well as the preference of each other. Through discussion, they decided that it would work better to travel separately, in order to afford Carrie an hour extra of sleep each morning. Both provided input into the decision, and both agreed with the decision. All was well.

Two years later, Mike and Carrie were expecting a baby. Given their long commutes to work, they discussed whether to continue working in New York City or whether to move to either of their hometowns. Both Mike and Carrie wanted to make a change in order to carve out more time to spend with their baby and as a family. They both also wanted to be nearer to one set of grandparents. Mike's hometown was in the Los Angeles area. Carrie's hometown was Sioux Falls, South Dakota, a small city with a population of approximately 100,000 people. After extensive discussion, they decided to pursue careers in Sioux Falls because jobs would be plentiful, commutes would be short, and housing would be affordable. Carrie wanted to make sure that Mike was truly okay with this decision, since they would be moving close to her family rather than his. Mike thought about it at length. While he would have liked to be closer to his family, Sioux Falls offered short commutes and affordable housing, just what they needed for their young family. Plus, he decided that what he really wanted was for Carrie to be happy. He decided that what he really wanted was to move to Sioux Falls, and Carrie agreed.

Mike was fortunate to be offered a director-level position with the Wells Fargo branch located in Sioux Falls. He and Carrie discussed the job offer. They not only decided Mike would accept the position, but they also decided that the compensation was high enough that it afforded Carrie the opportunity to be a stay-at-home mom. Carrie was thrilled to be home with their new baby, and she decided to continue her career on a part-time, freelance basis. All was still well.

Mike and Carrie's marriage had a Model II culture. They both demonstrated Model II values. Both Mike and Carrie wanted to understand their true selves and understand each other. They talked with each about both day-to-day decisions and life-changing decisions. The culture of their marriage was healthy, and they were

excited to begin this new chapter in their lives. Their family—their marriage and their new baby—was the most important thing in both of their lives.

Even in healthy, Model II cultures, though, the self-centered values of Model I have a tendency to try to creep-in.

When Model I values creep in: Model II values recognize the human tendency toward Model I: the tendency for self-centered values to rule individuals' thoughts and behaviors, while that self-centered nature is veiled by espoused values that are politically correct and reflect cultural ideals. With Model I, people are blind to the contradiction between their espoused and real values.

With Model II, though, people recognize this human tendency, and they strive to unveil their real values. They reflect on their behaviors and on the values they espouse. They ask themselves, "Do my words and actions match? Are my behaviors aligned with what I say is important, what I say I value?" If not, Model I values have crept in. The individual's values have regressed toward self-centered values focused on the desires and goals of the self, which are often indifferent or in opposition to the well-being of other people (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Friesenborg, 2015; Kitayama et al., 2007; Palmer, 2004).

Model I values are destructive to human relationships, in contrast to Model II values, which are relational and promote wholeness for both oneself and other people. With Model II, there is no division between the values that a person espouses and the values that are reflected in his behaviors. There is nothing hidden. People with Model II values are still human, though; they are not perfect. While they value the health and wholeness of Model II, they are still tempted by the self-centered nature of Model I's real values. Those self-centered Model I values may creep into Model II cultures. That is why transformation from a Model I to a Model II culture is not just a one-time event. It is an ongoing lifestyle change (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Friesenborg, 2015; Kitayama et al., 2007; Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2004, 2011).

Let's return to our example with Mike and Carrie.

Example: During Mike's two years at Wells Fargo, he received two promotions, most recently to Vice President. Mike and Carrie's baby grew into a toddler, and they also added a second child to their young family. They appeared to have a perfect life, but all was not well beneath the surface.

Mike's promotion required long hours, and he rarely was able to make it home for dinner. During peak seasons, he left home at 6:00 a.m. and often stayed at the office until 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. Mike was happy, though. He received regular recognition from his peers as well as the president, acknowledging his excellent work. Mike was successful, and he was happy to provide the income to give Carrie what she had always wanted: to be a stay-at-home mom.

The problem was that Mike and Carrie had little time to talk anymore. By the time Mike got home each evening, both he and Carrie were exhausted. Carrie loved being a stay-at-home mom, but she was tired of enduring the kids' hectic meal time and bath time alone. Unbeknownst to Mike at first, Carrie had begun to resent him. Over time, however, Mike and Carrie each realized that they had drifted apart. Carrie continually complained about Mike to her best friend. Over time, Mike began to realize the change in their relationship, and he was distraught that Carrie had become cold toward him. Mike asked Carrie to take a weekend trip with him—just the two of them—but Carrie refused. She was going to make him realize what it was like to be neglected.

Model I traps had begun to creep in. A division had occurred between Mike and Carrie's espoused and real values:

Mike:
- Espoused values: Family: (a) spending time with Carrie and their young children and (b) making Carrie happy by affording her to be a stay-at-home mom
- Real values: Professional recognition, particularly by high-status people within the company; career success; and career advancement

- Evidence of division between espoused and real values: Mike's long hours left little time for his greatest espoused value: his family. Mike's long hours left little time to talk with Carrie, preventing him from being sure that their current family life was satisfying for her. Mike's behaviors reflected his real values, not his espoused values.

Carrie:
- Espoused values: Family: (a) spending time with Mike and their young children and (b) making Mike happy
- Real values: Personal validation and getting back at Mike for neglecting her
- Evidence of division between espoused and real values: While Carrie spent lots of time with their kids as a stay-at-home mom, she spent little time with Mike. Even when he asked her to go away for the weekend with him, she refused. She was no longer focused on making Mike happy; she was more focused at getting back at him for the loneliness she had experienced.

That is not the end of the story, though. Mike persisted. He made arrangements with Carrie's parents to keep the kids for the weekend. He confessed to Carrie how sorry he was, and he convinced her to go with him for the weekend. This would give them a chance for a much-needed talk. This talk would enable them to sort through the problem by acknowledging the contradiction between their espoused and real values. By talking with each other, they could test their deep, underlying assumptions.

Acknowledging and testing assumptions: In order to understand our true selves and to understand other people, we need to acknowledge that we have assumptions and then test those assumptions. Those may be assumptions we have about ourselves and about other people (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Friesenborg, 2015; Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2004, 2011).

Example: Mike and Carrie spent the weekend with long walks and dinners that provided an opportunity for a series of long talks. They both wanted to move past the funk they were in and restore their relationship. Mike began by apologizing for his changing priorities. He now realized that he was spending little time with their young children, and he had neglected to support Carrie and to be present in their family. Carrie talked about the effect that Mike's long hours had had, not only on her, but also on their kids, who lacked precious time with their father. Carrie confessed that this had left her feeling resentful, that she was hurt, and she was resorting to wanting Mike to see how it felt. She confessed that she and her best friend had mudslinging conversations about Mike. Both Mike and Carrie felt terrible. They realized that they had let each other down. They had also lost sight of their greatest values: spending time with their young family and seeking to make each other happy.

Mike and Carrie took the first step toward restoring their Model II values: understanding their true selves and understanding each other by acknowledging and testing their assumptions. The next step is for them to continue that conversation and to jointly decide how to make a change to help prevent those Model I values from creeping in again.

They need to decide together which changes they will need to make as a family in order to support their move toward restoring their Model II values. Does Mike need to take a different job, one with fewer demands and responsibilities? If Mike's job change would provide less compensation, would Carrie be willing to take a job? Would she need to work full-time, or could she work part-time? Is that in the best interest of their kids? What about daycare? There are no easy, clear-cut answers. This is something that Mike and Carrie will need to decide, ensuring that they have honest, open discussions—understanding their true selves and each other— as they make those decisions. With this approach, Mike and Carrie demonstrate that the culture of their young family—the culture of their marriage—is a learning culture.

Conclusion

The focus of Unit VI is on Model II values. We discussed how a Model II culture is focused on achieving wholeness and a healthy relationship by seeking to understand one's true self and to understand other people. That occurs by acknowledging and testing deep, underlying assumptions, particularly those that create a division between espoused and real values.

The example of Mike and Carrie, and the culture of their family, was threaded throughout this unit lesson. To understand a learning culture, it is often helpful to begin with an example that relates to one's personal life before delving into the example of an organization. In this unit's assignments, we will apply Model II values to

work-related scenarios. In this way, you will learn the Model II values that play an essential role in the culture of learning organizations.

<div align="center">References</div>

Argyris, C. (2000). *Flawed advice and the management trap.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Argyris, C. (2004). *Reasons and rationalizations: The limits to organizational knowledge.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Argyris, C. (2010). *Organizational traps: Leadership, culture, organizational design.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Argyris, C., & Schön, D. A. (1996). *Organizational learning II: Theory, method, and practice.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Friesenborg, L. (2015). *The culture of learning organizations: Understanding Argyris' theory through a socio-cognitive systems learning model.* Forest City, IA: Brennan-Mitchell.

Kitayama, S., Duffy, S., & Uchida, Y. (2007). Self as cultural mode of being. In S. Kitayama & D. Cohen (Eds.), *Handbook of cultural psychology* (pp. 136-174). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Mezirow, J. (2003). Transformative learning as discourse. *Journal of Transformative Education, 1*(1), 58-63.

Palmer, P. J. (2004). *A hidden wholeness: The journey toward an undivided life.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Palmer, P. J. (2011). *Healing the heart of democracy: The courage to create a politics worthy of the human spirit.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Suggested Reading

Friesenborg, L. (2015). *The culture of learning organizations: Understanding Argyris' theory through a socio-cognitive systems learning model.* Forest City, IA: Brennan-Mitchell.

Palmer, P. J. (2000). *Let your life speak: Listening for the voice of vocation.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

The following e-books are available through the Waldorf Online Library:

Ernst, C., & Martin, A. (2006). *Critical reflections: How groups can learn from success and failure.* Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.

Joiner, B., & Josephs, S. (2007). *Leadership agility: Five levels of mastery for anticipating and initiating change.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Martin, D. (2012). *OtherWise: The wisdom you need to succeed in a diverse and divisive world.* New York, NY: AMACOM.