The CHOICE Connection
Positive strategies. Practical solutions.

constructive CHOICES
Jean Strosinski, PhD, PCC, CPT

Quotable Quotes

"Management is about human beings. Its task is to make people capable of joint performance to make their strengths effective and their weaknesses irrelevant." ~ Peter Drucker

"You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can change yourself." ~ Jim Rohn

"It is my daily mood that makes the weather. I possess tremendous power to make life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration; I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis is escalated or de-escalated, and a person is humanized or de-humanized. If we treat people as they are, we make them worse. If we treat people as they ought to be, we help them become what they are capable of becoming." ~ J.W. Goethe

Dear Jean,

Whether we are a leader, an employee or even self-employed, we spend a large portion of our life working within a business, company or organization. Where we work has as much to do with

how we intellectually prepare ourselves to accomplish the work that is performed. I thought I would be a teacher my entire life. Some would say I actually have been teaching all my life, although not always in a formal school setting. Being a teacher was my dream from the age of 12 along with the love of learning. And while I have not been a teacher in a school as I dreamed, my work has always bordered on being an educator to others in organizations, in the Post Office and as an adjunct professor teaching undergraduate and graduate course for the last 25 years. It just wasn't the'teaching' dream I envisioned.

I have also experienced work in corporate America, in the government sector, and as a self-employed business owner. What a rich education for me. And what an eye opener as to theresponsibilities I share as an employee, a leader and a business owner. This month I will explore theresponsibilities of an organization or company, the leader and the employee--all aimed to support success that can be achieved by effective management of performance. As you read my thoughts below, consider where you play and work in an organization and where you as an individual can continue to make a difference in your work and influence the performance management arena in your work environment.

With Joy,
Jean

Performance Management - Our Responsibilities

The research and writing of these monthly newsletters contributes much to how I continue to see the world of work. I believed that as I started to write this month I would focus on systems in the organization, a recap ofthe leader's role and the support an individual needs fromthe organization to show up to be their best. However, I ran across concepts to include ethics, socially responsible, codes of conduct, engagement, frameworks and more - all touching the fringes of performance management.

My goal in the following paragraphs is to heighten our awareness as to what types of responsibilities lie within an organization and the people that perform its work. Depending on where you sit in the organization - owner, director, leader, employee, consultant, etc. consider where you truly can influence an impact, a change, or a choice.

I highlighted a book in the tools and resources section below that focuses on a reframing of an organization (see *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*). I have not read theentire book, so I am not giving an endorsement of its contents. My attempt is to entice the nonfiction readers in my audience to explore additional resources. If you know me well, I am a scattered reader of content in non-fiction. I pick and choose topics and content as I need them to design appropriate applications for my customers. I do have many non-fiction books on my shelves and yes, I have used them all at one time or another.

What appealed to me was the book's focus - how it addressed structural frames, human resource frames, political frames and symbolic frames. This language highlighted the responsibilities of multiple elements within an organization of work. The structural

frame is more than the organizational chart - it outlines the responsibilities of the organization/company to operationalize the business in an honest, ethical manner and establish appropriate codes of conduct. The structural frame also addresses the implementation of systems within an organization to achieve success and support theother frames that manage the organization's resources, strengthens leadership and accountability and establishes a culture representative of its goals and workforce.

And then there are the Leaders - those individuals (also employees) with additional responsibilities to align the organization and its employees. The leaders are responsible for an application of thesystems, holding the vision of the organization, and directly managing the performance of theworkforce. Not an easy task in organizations where the structure, ethics, codes, standards, processes and procedures are in question, unclear or where expectations are assumed and not verbalized. There are skills and talents that effective leaders possess - beyond those skills required to manage the day to day work. Management is made up of both leaders and managers. I count on my leaders to inspire and hold the mission and the vision of the organization's business consistently and steady. If I am that leader, I want the organization to be one that I believe in and allows me thefreedom to lead and when necessary, lead in a creative and possibly unorthodox manner. I want my managers to direct my work, support my performance and know me as an individual - what do I need that others might not - why I do what I do the way I do it. If I am the manager, I want to live in an organization where expectations are clear and strong, barriers are removed and I am allowed to manage the work and performance of my people - individually and collectively. My responsibilities are for follow through - to those above and below me while holding the accountability for me and others are also key.

The individual ... the worker ... the employee ... the talent of the organization, if hired appropriately and aligned in the right role, may be the key to the success or failure of the organization. I write 'may be' as I am realistic to know there are some organizations and leaders who get in their own way and are not fulfilling their responsibilities or meeting the expectations of their roles. If the right person is hired into a role, is knowledgeable, skilled and competent to perform the work, the contributions at this level in the workforce is invaluable. The challenges of an employee in an ever changing workforce are many. The individual has a responsibility to keep the lines of communication open and moving upward. They employee also is responsible to clarify needs as well as solutions and remain engaged even when the workplace, the management, leadership and the organization is floundering or less than ideal. I have been in situations where I loved the work, was a good fit at the start of my employment and then found the barriers too great to work with. I discovered in two work experiences I wasn't willing to continue to struggle - it was time to move on. I have also experienced work scenarios where there were/are continuous opportunities to remain engaged and change with theevolution of the work. In these instances the responsibilities are clear and someone has taken thetime to know my 'why' and provide clear expectations and ongoing communication.

The organization, the leader, the employee - one does not exist without the other in the support of productive and effective work. The performance of each of these elements can be measured and reframed. It does take time and a maintenance plan to integrate all -
 the systems, the people, theculture, and the work.

Tools and Resources
FROM THE BOOKSHELF

[Make Work Great](#) (2010) by Ed Muzio. "One person can really make a difference - learn how to be that one WHO WILL make the organization the best it can be."

[Reframing Organizations, Artistry, Choice and Leadership (5th Ed)](#), by Lee G. Bolman & Terrence E. Deal (2013). Four frames of an organization - structural frame, human resource frame, political frame and the symbolic frame.

[Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices (Classics in Organization and Management Series)](#)by Peter F. Drucker (2007)

[Workarounds that Work: How to Conquer Anything that Stands in Your Way at Work](#) by Russell Bishop & David Allen (2011). "Break through barriers to get things done. What's more frustrating than knowing how to do your job, working hard, making tough decisions . . . and not getting results because some system, procedure, bureaucratic detail, or difficult personality gets in the way?"

[Coaching at Work: Powering your Team with Awareness, Responsibility and Trust](#) by Matt Somers & John Whitmore (2007). A Coaching Model - How to coach, how to apply coaching and how to implement coaching.

THE INTERNET CONNECTIONS

[A Guide to Developing Your Organization's Code of Ethics](#)- Society of Human Resource Management (2001)

[Ethical Leadership and Developing a Code of Conduct for Organizations](#), International Federation of Accountants (2013) Key Questions for assessing your approach to ethical leadership.

 [22 Great Examples of Socially Responsible Businesses](#), Nicole Taylor, July 2015

[Organizational Responsibilities](#), Bianca Bumpres

[WorkHuman.com Conference Info](#), May 9-11 2016, Why You Should Attend

[International Society for Performance Improvement Conference Program](#), April 10-12 2016 Workforce performance takes on new significance in our economic future. Performance Improvement (PI), initially called Human Performance Technology (HPT), is the systematic approach to improving productivity and competence - the key to global competitiveness. Although training and education are critical to increasing competitiveness, meeting the educational challenge is only part of the answer. An effective human resource system requires a focus on performance aligned with an outstanding learning system. To improve performance, we must manage the human performance improvement system. That system must be the core of an organization's human resource efforts if it is to maintain its competitiveness in the long run.

Reflection

Consider your role(s) in your work ...
Are you the organization?

Are you the leader or a manger aspiring to be a leader?
Are you the employee?
Are you all 3 - the self-employed business owner?

For any and all of your roles, list your responsibilities.
What are they?
Who do these responsibilities impact - when they are met and when they are not?

What responsibility (ies) are missing from your list(s)?
What communication and to whom must you plan for and then schedule?
What structures for additional support are missing and needed?
What, if anything, is getting in the way of the organization, the leaders, and/or the employees?
What is getting in your way?

One significant change to enhance performance to a level where the organization, the leaders and theemployees excel ... what is the change you can influence?
What must you all do to initiate and live that change starting today?

Choose To

List your responsibilities for your role ...
communicate the expectations associated with these responsibilities ... communicate the expectations you are meeting and what you are not ... strengthen your engagement ... consider what you can do differently ... strengthen your follow-up ... strengthen your structures ... envision the future ... identify the changes that need to happen ... take one step forward ... then, take that second step.

March Joyful Observances

Sing with Your Child Month
Employee Spirit Month
International Ideas Month
Irish-American Heritage Month
National Ethics Awareness Month

National Write A Letter of Appreciation Week (March 1-7)
National Pet Sitters Week (March 1-7)
Universal Women's Week (March 8-14)
American Chocolate Week (March 15-21)
International Listening Weekend (March 26-28)
National Week of the Ocean (March 29- April 4)

Daughters & Sons Day (March 6)
Oreo Cookie Day (March 6)
Girl Scout Birthday Day(March 12)
Clients Day (March 19)
International Day of Happiness (March 20)

Administrivia

My Constructive Choices Audience...
* Professionals wanting to be at choice in their career and daily work,
* New managers (and aspiring leaders) transitioning to establish a leadership role in their communities,
* Individuals wanting to sort through the choices, build a more fulfilling life, live their voices, and...
* Coaches who choose to step out, show up, and say - YES, it IS all about YOU!