

Making a Difference

Strategies and Tools for Transforming your Organisation

Bruce Nixon

The essence of the book

The book is about global, organisational and personal transformation. It describes an approach to bringing about organisation transformation, leading change and learning, all at the same time. This approach, called Real Time Development, is based on the idea of not separating learning and changing; not using a didactic approach but instead helping people learn and make changes at the same time. It encourages people to trust their own creativity and wisdom and challenges too. Bruce believes that everyone in an organisation and its key stakeholders need to be involved for transformation to succeed.

It is written for leaders at all levels, including CEO's, directors, managers and internal and external consultants. It presents leading edge ideas in straightforward, accessible language. The book aims to be both inspiring and practical.

The book is in three parts: **Part one:** Seeing the big global picture; **Part two:** Principles, strategies and tools for transformation; **Part three:** Taking practical steps. It contains a Strategic Leadership Model, a well tried process for facilitating strategic change and learning.

Perhaps the following comments describe better than anything else what it is about.

At one level, the book is a practical text on organisation transformation for people in corporate leadership roles, OD or anyone trying to bring about change at whatever level:

ExxonMobil's Jim Hopwood says: *'a long overdue text book onReal Time Management Development.'*

Chris Green CEO of Virgin Trains: *'This inspiring and practical book deserves to be read widely by leaders at every level, especially those at the top.'*

Roger Harrison, veteran US OD practitioner and author: *'Presents leading edge ideas of "organisation transformation" for HRD professionals and internal consultants in a way that strikes just the right balance of vision with common sense and practicality. I am sure this book will touch the hearts and minds of many in our profession.'*

Roy Horn, University of Buckinghamshire, in People Management, says: *'"Making a Difference" has the power to do just that. This practical book is designed to facilitate change and transform a wide range of people in organisations. Human resource development practitioners will find a wealth of ideas and approaches to inform their professional practice. For development professionals, Making a Difference is a must-read.'*

At another level it is more radical and works at your unconscious:

‘It has the power to challenge and transform the reader all at the same time. It taps into the unconscious mind and helps one to see simple but very important values and morals, which have been overlooked not just in the workplace but in society in general.’ **Adisa Stephen-Ezeocha, revolutionary performance poet** and facilitator of schools workshops to develop the faculty of imagination, on which artistic, scientific and technical progress depends.

‘Bruce has a profound understanding of the human struggle to stay focused connected and productive in an environment that is changing so fast. Bruce offers a perspective for thinking about and managing complex systems that is values-based, practical and speaks to the human spirit.’ **Sandra Janoff, Consultant and Author, Co-Director of Searchnet, Philadelphia.**

‘Bruce Nixon’s “Making a Difference” deals with contemporary issues in managing and organising in a deep way without unnecessary accretion of jargon or academic obscurity. It is, in short, profoundly simple. This does not stop it being challenging, practical, grounded in participative theory and driven by values. It is a book I unhesitatingly recommend to students and to practitioners alike.’ **Dr David Megginson, Professor of HRD, Mentoring and Coaching Research Group, School of Business and Finance, Sheffield Hallam University.**

In many respects this is a spiritual book. It is a valuable contribution to a literature where tools and techniques predominate. OD consultants, whether internal or external, managers and practitioners of change will find much to reflect on and internalise in this book.’ **Leadership and Organisation Development Journal, David Coghlan, University of Dublin, Ireland.**

The Contents

PART ONE — SEEING THE BIG PICTURE

Ch 1 Global Forces — the situation we are in

Ch 2 Tomorrow’s Organisation — principles for surviving and thriving

Ch 3 Tomorrow’s Culture and Leadership

PART TWO — PRINCIPLES — STRATEGIES AND BASIC TOOLS

Ch 4 Principles and Tools for Transformation — a new vision for learning and development

Ch 5 Taking a Strategic Approach — developing your own vision and strategy

PART THREE — TAKING PRACTICAL STEPS

Ch 6 Real Time Management Development — improving performance; transforming the organisation; and learning, all at the same time

Ch 7 Using Real Time Management Development to Change the Culture of an Organisation — four case studies

Ch 8 Getting the Whole System into the Room — gaining the commitment of the whole workforce to change

Ch 9 Giving and Getting a Good Listening to — releasing individual potential

Ch 10 Transforming Teamwork — valuing diversity and fostering collaboration

Ch 11 Using Support Groups and Networking for Change
Ch 12 Developing Widespread Facilitation Skills
Ch 13 Using the External Consultant Wisely — a fruitful partnership
Ch 14 How to Avoid Avoiding — working with resistance
Ch 15 Ending — including how our own development is the key to it all

APPENDICES — TOOLS FOR TRANSFORMATION

- 1. Strategic Leadership Model**
- 2. Internal Consultant's Model**
- 3. Useful Questions Model**
- 4. Helping Model**
- 5. Consulting Model**
- 6. Support Group Agenda**
- 7. The Sunflower or Spider's Web**
- 8. Developing Your Network**

About the author

My purpose is to help leaders create better and more successful workplaces and to play my part in building a fair and sustainable world.

Bruce Nixon M.A. (Oxon), FCIPD, Council Member of the Association for Management Education and Development and its Sustainable Development Network, brings more than thirty years experience in a wide range of organisations in the UK, North America and the Caribbean, mainly in people management roles, later as an internal consultant. For the past fourteen years he has worked as an independent management consultant. His special interests are: whole system change; working with teams facing change; cross-cultural work; management development that transforms performance by focusing on real opportunities and issues; mentoring; training managers as facilitators and mentors; training consultants; shadow consulting and helping trainers become internal consultants. He has helped many people work through major transitions. He learns a lot from managers and his own journey, including periods of joy and, sometimes, anguish. His partner is American and two of his five children are Anglo-Americans.

More Reviews, Endorsements and Comments

- *'This inspiring and practical book deserves to be read widely by leaders at every level, especially those at the top. It is full of wisdom and common sense about how to lead strategic change, so essential in this era of rapid transformation and global competition.*

Amongst the best bits are Bruce's Strategic Leadership Model, and his uniquely practical approach to development, called Real Time Development. This rejects the idea of "class room teaching" and gets leaders working together on the real issues and opportunities facing their organisation; planning and bringing about change and learning, all at the same time. The ideas about "getting the whole system into the room" and how to involve people at all levels in strategic change are especially valuable and highly relevant today. There are many other useful approaches and insights.

It is unusually honest, easy and enjoyable to read, with hardly any jargon and creative in its approach.’ **Chris Green, CEO Virgin Trains, bringing UK the trains it deserves, formerly CEO of Network South East, ScotRail and British Rails's brilliant Intercity, a huge and highly successful advance at the time, which we have almost forgotten.**

- *‘We were engaged in a complete cultural change in a traditional British clearing bank. It is for others to judge how successful we were but it would certainly have been easier to achieve had the blue print which unfolded in this book been available at the time.’* **Lord Terry Thomas, Cheshire, UK, former MD of the Co-operative Bank.**
- *“ This book should be of particular interest to ... readers because of its strategic, long –term and global perspective, and its emphasis on the important role of the internal consultant in helping develop, enlighten and empower leadership.”* **Brian Burrows, Long Range Planning**
- *“Your book, Making a Difference, was a breath of fresh air, as it outlined in a straightforward way how one can transform an organization.”*
- *“Easy to read and multi-faceted in its appeal to all participants in organisations: from CEO and his management team, the human resources specialist, to the employees who wish to enhance their contribution to the organisation. A significant contribution to the literature and practice of organisational change in the global environment”* **Dr Keith Panton, C.D., Ph.D, former President and CEO of Alcan Jamaica, former Chairman of the National Commercial Bank of Jamaica and, first Executive-in-Residence at the University of the West Indies Mona Institute of Management.**
- *‘Bruce Nixon's “Making a Difference” deals with contemporary issues in managing and organising in a deep way without unnecessary accretion of jargon or academic obscurity. It is, in short, profoundly simple. This does not stop it being challenging, practical, grounded in participative theory and driven by values. It is a book I unhesitatingly recommend to students and to practitioners alike.’* **Dr David Megginson, Professor of HRD, Mentoring and Coaching Research Group, School of Business and Finance, Sheffield Hallam University.**
- *‘Presents leading edge ideas of “organisation transformation” for HRD professionals and internal consultants in a way that strikes just t the right balance of vision with common sense and practicality. I am sure this book will touch the hearts and minds of many in our profession’.* **Roger Harrison PhD, Seattle, USA, author of ‘Consultant’s Journey, A Dance of Work and Spirit,’ and ‘Collected Papers’ and pioneer practitioner in organisation development.**
- *‘ “Making a Difference” has the power to do just that. This practical book is designed to facilitate change and transform a wide range of people in organisations. Human resource development practitioners will find a wealth of ideas and approaches to inform their professional practice. For development professionals,*

Making a Difference is a must-read. **People Management, Roy Horn, University of Buckinghamshire, UK.**

- *Making a Difference inspired me about a new way of writing assignment - simple, easy and free way of writing and your passion about working for and with people. I felt it was like reading a novel or story, not a professional book. I finished it in two days. I felt that I wanted to copy the book and paste it as my words in the assignment! You really said it all for me. I felt this is the kind of learning I want that depends on the "no rules." I believe that with people there are no rules; there is no right or wrong and that's what you proved in your book. The Real Time Management Development model is really simple and I don't even see it as model. I see it as normal flow of steps that need to be followed and the most effective way. I fell in love with your work because it is honest and it is from the heart, your heart, not the models and theories. I also see your love, care and passion for people, which we share. I felt, if I ever want to write a book, it is not going to be more than you wrote – just my unique contribution. I really consider it one of the most effective books that I have read so far. I hope my words are really useful to all the readers around the world and help them to think differently and, most important, take serious actions.* **Mohamed Dessouky, Egypt, Masters in HRD, Middlesex University Business School.**
- *'An excellent book which I can thoroughly recommend to those who want to help organizations and the people in them to develop effectively'* **Effective Consulting, Eric Mitchell, Consultant**
- *'Light years ahead of most people on this side of the Atlantic.'* **Dr John Clements, MD, Cambridge, Creative Mentors Ltd.**
- *'Very readable, and most importantly, it is highly realistic in its approach, facing up to the very difficult issues that have to be worked through if lasting organisational transformation is to be achieved. Has the advantage for the British reader of being set in the industrial culture of the UK. This makes it more relevant than much of the US literature. Bruce's contribution stands comparison with the best.'* **Philip Sadler CBE, Berkhamsted, a Director of the Centre for Tomorrow's Company, former CEO of Ashridge Management College.**
- *'I am enjoying reading your book; it has a lot of good common sense stories that for some reason seem to be lacking in our business environment.'* **Italian Director, based in Spain, of a European civil engineering and property company.**
- *'Bruce Nixon has a profound understanding of the human struggle to stay focused connected and productive in an environment that is changing so fast. Bruce offers a perspective for thinking about and managing complex systems that is values-based, practical and speaks to the human spirit.'* **Sandra Janoff, Philadelphia, Consultant and Author, Co-Director of Searchnet.**
- *'This is a generous, honest, practical, challenging, exciting and optimistic book. Generous in that Bruce invites us to borrow the tools and copy the methods he has developed through much hard work and experimentation. The honest discussion of*

difficulties as well as successes adds considerably to the book's credibility and usefulness. Bruce challenges us all by showing that we can make a real difference if we chose to make the effort and take the risk. The book is optimistic in the best sense of the word. It is based on a belief that progress and improvement are possible, but is entirely realistic about the problems to be faced. A key conclusion is that the developer's first priority must be her or his own development. He also reminds us of the well-known but much ignored truth that most conventional training is a waste of time and money.

It provides a long overdue text book on what Bruce calls Real Time Management Development the use of facilitated workshops to train people in new ways of working while addressing real current problems. This book will be a valuable guide and source book to anyone concerned with the development and performance of people, whether trainer, developer or manager.' **“Organisations and People”, UK, Jim Hopwood, Safety, Health, Environment Planning and Special Programmes Manager, ExxonMobil Chemicals Europe.**

- *'More than simply an inspirational work. Provides ideas, structures, processes and practical tools for "real time" organizational development, moving away from the traditional didactic paradigm which separates learning and doing, to a new one which entwines these two activities.'* **OD Practitioner, US OD Network, LeeAnn Stone, Teacher, Lecturer and Corporate Trainer, California, USA.**
- *'“Making a Difference” spoke to me on as human level that not many books on the topic do’.* **LeeAnn Stone, California, USA, Teacher, Lecturer and Corporate Trainer.**
- *'I love your book.'* **Alison Lewis, Oxfam, previously, PricewaterhouseCoopers.**
- *'The sections on management development are outstanding, describing ways of working that will develop managers' skills, improve their work and change the organisation all at the same time.'* **Tim Moulds, London, Associate Director, Christian Aid and board member of the Jubilee 2000 Coalition to reduce Third World debt.**
- *'Raises important questions about the way people in companies are developed — or not. Why, for example, do most organisations discourage individual initiative and encourage division and conflict? This book has both passion and practical management experience behind it. Primarily for human resource practitioners, but could help CEO's to lead a more committed, creative business.'* **The Director, Carol Kennedy, London.**
- *A wealth of practical advice and tools to help all of us make the right choices.* **Dr David Wheeler, Erivan K Haub Professor in Business and Sustainability, Schulich School of Business, York University, Canada, (formerly Executive Director of Social and Environmental Policy, The Body Shop International**
- *'We know transformation is taking place. We know it can be painful and scary. Bruce provides an excellent point of departure. For all those embarking on the*

journey his book will be a useful companion.’ **Harrison Owen, Maryland, Consultant and Author who stumbled on Open Space Technology.**

- *‘The reality of transforming our organisations is very far from the nine day wonder that so many management writers would have us believe. In Bruce Nixon we meet someone who understands this from two perspectives: from the “inside” as a manager whose job was to lead change and from the “outside” as a consultant supporting and inspiring managers in their change work. In reading “Making A Difference” we find Bruce’s practical wisdom and learning from many years of experience interwoven with his deep belief in the power of human beings to bring about changes which will be sustainable, humane and enriching of themselves, their organisations and, ultimately, the planet’* **Bridget Farrands, International OD Consultant, Oxfordshire, England.**
- *“These are the fruits of reflective practice in action at its best. In ‘Making a Difference’, he distils his learning and experience with processes such as Action Learning, Open Space Technology, Future Search and many other development initiatives into his own, ‘Real time Management Development’, approach. This he generously shares with his readers, from a basic empowerment model through a whole series of practical steps that he develops over the book’s fifteen chapters. The text is highly readable and supported throughout the book by numerous bullet point summaries, which lend themselves to notes and overheads. Similarly he has included a number of case studies that illustrate both successful and less successful applications of the approaches that he describes.”* **Industrial and Commercial Training, Graham Robinson, December 1999**
- *‘A wonderful book. A great synthesis of models and everything to do with really good internal consultancy.’* **Geoff Mead, UK, National Police Training College.**
- *‘Almost ten years ago I attempted introducing alternative ideas into the workplace, with the purpose of increasing vitality, maintaining health and having a positive effect on productivity and profit. It was hard work getting someone to listen! Bruce has found ways of making this happen. It is very interesting how he has melded alternative ideas with business ideas in a n acceptable and powerful format.’* **Mike Richards, Hertfordshire, Business Health Consultant and Tai Chi Teacher.**
- *‘Covers the most import steps that team members can take to solve the very difficult issues involved in the process of change, including communication difficulties and misunderstandings due to cultural differences.* **Yuji Fujiwara, Japan, former MD, Sanyo Energy(UK).**
- *‘As well as models and methods, here are stories of heroism and failure, accounts of much pleasure and some pain, occasional innocence, plenty of goodwill but never any put downs, cynicism or world weariness.’* **Mike Pedler, PhD, Yorkshire, writer, researcher and consultant. Author of ‘Action Learning in Practice’, ‘The Learning Company, A Strategy for Sustainable Development’ and ‘Perfect plc?: The purpose and practice of organisational learning?’**

- *'A practical and inspirational book'* **Neslyn Watson Druee MBE, Kingston, UK, Leader, Consultant and Developer in Health Care and the Midwifery and Nursing Professions. Secretary to the International Federation of Black Women Business Owners — European Chapter.**
- *'Easy to read; straightforward style; entertaining; rang many bells for me; useful appendices; practical; specific; no waffle.'* **Gina Lawrie, London, YKW Consultants and Nonviolent Communication Trainer.**
- *'I continually revisit your book and find it very inspiring in the work I do'.* **Mark Doughty, London, Coaching and Mentoring to release the potential and talent of people with disabilities.**
- *'Here is an impressive new book that readers will find has its essence within the human condition. Valuable to managers at all levels.'* **Dr Chai Patel, London, Chief Executive, Westminster Health Care.**
- *'So heart warming to read a book that has put together, in such a down-to-earth and jargon-free way, what's happening in the world out there, and just how simple it is to transform things — people themselves willing! If people apply the insights you give, it will truly make a world of difference.'* *'Speaking to my heart...wonderful...saying everything I believe in.'* **Cherry Campbell, London, Training and Development Consultant.**
- *'Highly readable, there is no doubt that it can be used by corporations, student organisations and informal groups alike.'* **Beth-Sarah Panton, PhD in Performance Studies, New York University.**
- *'A wonderful collection of models, concepts and principles that feed your mind, your heart and your work.'* **Geoffrey Bellman, Seattle, Consultant and Author of: Your Signature Path, Getting Things Done When You Are Not In Charge and The Consultant's Calling.**
- *'Poetry in motion, it has the power to challenge and transform the reader all at the same time. It taps into the unconscious mind of the reader and helps one to see simple but very important values and morals, which have been overlooked not just in the workplace but in society in general.'* **Adisa Stephen - Ezeocha, Dais Productions, London, Revolutionary Performance Poet and Facilitator of Workshops in educational institutions, to develop the faculty of imagination on which artistic, scientific and technical progress depend.**
- *'In many respects this is a spiritual book. It emerges out of the author's reflected experiences and focuses on transformational values. In these terms, it is a valuable contribution to a literature where tools and techniques predominate. OD consultants, whether internal or external, managers and practitioners of change will find much to reflect on and internalise in this book.'* **Leadership and Organisation Development Journal, David Coghlan, University of Dublin, Ireland.**

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