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Notable Books

**THE NEXT FORM OF DEMOCRACY: How Expert Rule is
Giving Way to Shared Governance...and Why Politics Will Never
Be the Same**

**By Matt Leighninger
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**THE REAL WEALTH OF NATIONS: Creating a Caring
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LIVING INTO LEADERSHIP: A Journey of Ethics

**By Bowen H. "Buzz" McCoy
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MADE TO STICK: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die

**By Chip Heath & Dan Heath
Reviewed by Judith Samuelson**

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THE NEXT FORM OF DEMOCRACY: How Expert Rule Is Giving Way to Shared Governance ... and Why Politics Will Never Be the Same

Matt Leighninger

296 pages (Vanderbilt University Press, 2006)

Reviewed by Mike Rotkin

This book describes a shift in American public life: a move away from rule by experts and elected representatives, and toward the direct involvement of citizens in the decisions that affect their communities. Although there is certainly room for debate about the extent, significance, and future of this phenomenon, Matt Leighninger, the executive director of the Deliberative Democracy Consortium, makes a compelling case that something new is, in fact, transforming the way in which decisions are made by local governments and school boards, and sometimes even at the state and national levels.

We are all familiar with the frustration involved in the typical public hearing. Individuals and community group representatives step up on the podium and share their responses to a proposed action – in under five minutes each. There is rarely a chance for dialogue. The participants wonder whether officials are listening. Even with governmental bodies that have reputations for being responsive to “citizen input,” when controversial or unpopular proposals are on the table, open hostility and impatience are inevitable. This maddening process remains the most typical course for decision making in our country.

The problem is exacerbated by the growing tendency of public bodies to see their communities not as collections of *citizens*, but rather as individual *consumers*. They don’t engage citizens as

potentially active decision makers, but instead seek to meet their needs as consumers of high-quality services. The author describes this trend as consistent with the oft-noted depoliticization of American life, reflected in the steady decline in party affiliation, in electoral participation, and in participation in unions and service and recreational clubs.

Leighninger argues, however, that a countervailing tendency is developing in “shared governance.” Although most of his case histories provide positive examples of what shared governance can accomplish, he’s not afraid to share stories about limited successes or failures. Herein lies the strength of his book. Leighninger provides sufficient information for readers to draw their own conclusions about the significance of the transformation. In his vision, experiments in shared governance can and should move beyond short-term, single-goal efforts, toward the institutionalization of increased citizen control of the decision-making process.

Another strength of this book is Leighninger’s excellent analysis of the issues that citizen empowerment efforts need to address if they are to be successful in recruiting mass participation and actually effect solutions to community problems. His insights should prove useful to citizen activists attempting to create organizations capable of empowering average citizens in the public decision-making process.

Leighninger is careful to distinguish the new movement for shared governance from earlier models intended to empower citizens. For example, the shared governance efforts he discusses need not adhere to the confrontational

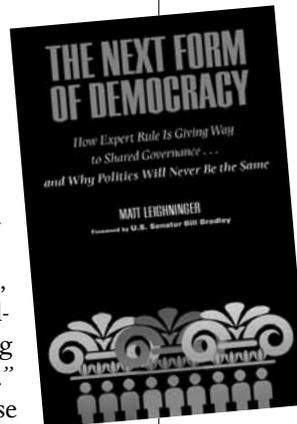
model pioneered by Saul Alinsky in the Back of the Yards neighborhood in 1930s Chicago, in which have-nots are enlisted in zero-sum games against the establishment. Increasingly, Leighninger writes, all neighborhoods – rich and poor – will benefit from more citizen involvement.

In the end, the book may be overoptimistic in its interpretation of the extent and significance of this movement. At one point, the author waxes poetic about the revolution signified by San Jose, Calif.,

providing each of a number of neighborhood councils with direct control over \$50,000 for community improvements. Each of those neighborhoods is more or less the size of a small city, and nobody would be impressed if, say, Santa Cruz, a town of 58,000, announced that the collective neighborhood organizations rather than the elected City Council would get \$50,000 to spend on their priorities. The number of citizens involved in Leighninger’s examples is less than one tenth of 1 percent of the population of this country.

More critically, the book never really does examine how we can realistically hope to engage citizens in sustained efforts at shared governance in a society that systematically narrows the realm of democratic decision making, one that alienates students from the process of their own education and workers from the control of their work. Modern society is pushing us in the opposite direction, creating increasingly anomic communities in which citizens are driven apart by the economic necessity of relocating to new neighborhoods or regions to seek work.

Nonetheless, this book does offer a glimmer of light in what has become a



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very dark and long tunnel. Many of us who have been engaged in public life, either as public officials or employees, or as citizen activists attempting to empower communities, will have a great deal to learn from this thoughtful assessment. And those of us committed to the democratic experiment can hardly afford to dismiss the potential that exists in shared governance. Indeed, we might benefit from applying what we learn to our own democratic community efforts.

Mike Rotkin is a lecturer and the director of field studies in the community studies department at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He has been mayor of Santa Cruz four times and is currently serving his sixth term on the Santa Cruz City Council.

THE REAL WEALTH OF NATIONS: Creating a Caring Economics

Riane Eisler

250 pages (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2007)

Reviewed by Mal Warwick

According to a seemingly trustworthy person whose name I've long since forgotten, the amount of new human knowledge that we generate in one year is equal to the sum total of all knowledge generated throughout time. Whether or not you believe the assertion would depend, I suppose, on what you call "knowledge."

These days, humanity produces incalculably large amounts of data. But, as the information technologists have taught us, data is not information. And

information – whatever that really is – can rarely be equated with knowledge.

In a world of splintering specialties, where a physician may focus entirely on the pituitary gland, and anthropologists are labeled cultural, physical, social, industrial, or paleo, we have largely lost sight of knowledge, and its ultimate expression: wisdom.

I won't presume to define *knowledge* and *wisdom*. But, like the Supreme Court justice who can't define pornography, I know wisdom when I see it. I found it in abundance in the latest book by interdisciplinary scholar Riane Eisler.

The Real Wealth of Nations tackles the dismal science of economics and proves conclusively that it deserves that description. Eisler wrestles conventional

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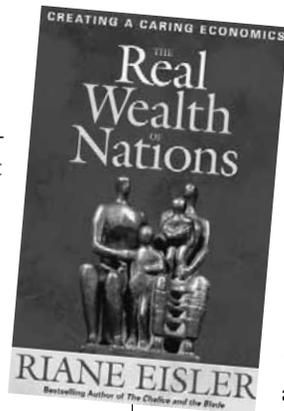
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“wisdom” to the ground, challenging the assumptions that have supported the practice of business and economic policy for the last two centuries, since Adam Smith’s original *Wealth of Nations*. In contrast, Eisler prescribes a “caring economics” that assumes the obvious: people really matter. As she argues, “the real wealth of nations consists of the contributions of people and our natural environment.”

If you learned economics as I did, you may dimly recall talk of capital, which was paramount, and the widgets that lots of capital permits us to produce. We were assumed to be excited about the prospect of turning out lots of widgets. After all, making lots of widgets is the only way to make big profits, which in turn allows us to accumulate lots more capital, and later, produce more widgets. It was never clear to me where people fit into this scheme, except as “labor,” which is little more than a commodity like iron, coal, or oil.

Eisler’s “caring economics” draws upon two themes that are emerging among the critics of contemporary economic theory and practice. On one hand, her approach owes a great deal to advocates of full-cost pricing – among them environmentalist and entrepreneur Paul Hawken and European business leader Stephan Schmidheiny – who recognize that natural capital is fundamental to our economic well-being, and that the destruction of the environment imposes great costs on society. Like these visionaries, Eisler wants to factor such value and costs into a rational economic theory.

On the other hand, Eisler pulls from other feminist thinkers who have long argued that caregiving – or, as it is traditionally mislabeled, “women’s work” – is the foundation upon which all eco-

nomics activity rests. Caregiving and the “productive work” of traditional economics should be given equal weight. Eisler’s contribution is to weave the environmental and feminist values into a cohesive approach – an economic theory that comes as close to

the Native American ideal as contemporary society can manage: Every action must be considered in terms of its impact on the next seven generations.

The Real Wealth of Nations sets forth “six foundations for a caring economic system”: (1) a “full-spectrum economic map” that encompasses the household, unpaid, natural, and illegal economies, as well as the traditional market and government economies; (2) a set of cultural beliefs and institutions that shifts the reigning social paradigm from domination to partnership; (3) caring economic rules, policies, and practices for business and government that meet basic human needs, direct technological developments to life-sustaining applications, and consider effects on future generations; (4) inclusive and accurate economic indicators that reject benchmarks like the GDP, which grows larger with every massive oil spill and every bullet used in war; (5) relationships between economic and social structures that don’t result in the concentration of economic assets and power at the top; and (6) an evolving economic theory of what Eisler calls “partnerism”: human interaction that goes beyond capitalism and socialism to recognize the essential economic value of caring for ourselves, others, and nature.

Yes, most of this territory has been covered by others. But Eisler’s art – her wisdom – lies in her ability to integrate learning from many disciplines and translate her vision of the future into

vivid prose that awakens our sense of possibility. It’s no accident that such an insightful synthesis has come from a social scientist who is unrestricted by the boundaries of a single discipline. Eisler’s venture into the realms of economics, sociology, history, political science, and other fields underlines the value of interdisciplinary inquiry in an era when so many of our best minds are peering obsessively into the minute. If the world is to be saved, salvation will come from people like Eisler, who have made it their business to think outside the proverbial box. Let’s hope Eisler’s wisdom finds its way into the decision-making circles in government and business before it’s too late.

Mal Warwick is the former chair of the business organization Social Venture Network. His most recent book is Values-Driven Business: How to Change the World, Make Money, and Have Fun (Berrett-Koehler, 2006), co-authored with Ben Cohen.

LIVING INTO LEADERSHIP: A Journey in Ethics

Bowen H. “Buzz” McCoy

232 pages (Stanford University Press, 2007)

Reviewed by N. Craig Smith

Socrates believed that an unexamined life is not worth living. *Living Into Leadership* is Bowen McCoy’s examination of his 27 years at investment bank Morgan Stanley. Although McCoy hails from the business world, his insightful exploration of ethics would be of value to leaders in all sectors – private, public, and nonprofit – and to anyone seeking that elusive balance between work and personal life.

McCoy’s central anecdote is a story that he first penned in 1983, “The Parable of the Sadhu,” in which he and his climbing partner, Stephen, cross paths

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with an Indian holy man at 15,000 feet in the Himalayas. The pilgrim is nearly naked and suffering from hypothermia. Stephen and some Swedish climbers dress him in clothes from their packs, but McCoy, concerned about getting over the pass before the sun melts the snow, keeps hiking. Later, when Stephen catches up, he asks McCoy, “How do you feel about contributing to the death of a fellow man?” Stephen insists that they should have waited until they were sure the sadhu could survive the walk to the village – and if not, carried him there.

This is a powerful tale for leaders who face difficult decisions with significant consequences, and who must make those decisions under time pressure, often with imperfect information. It demonstrates how easy it is to overlook ethical questions, especially when there is a superordinate goal at stake, like completing a once in a lifetime trek. It highlights the importance of knowing the limits of individual and organizational responsibility. Every climbing party that passed the sadhu had done something to help, but nobody had taken ultimate responsibility for his fate. And finally, the parable illustrates the frequent ambiguity of ethical questions, especially when cultural differences are involved: Why had the sadhu not taken the lower, safer route? Could he have been seeking death as a path to holiness?

Living Into Leadership is a highly readable account of the challenges McCoy faced time and again throughout his career – the types of situations that make you wonder, *What would I do?* With candor, McCoy tells us what he did, even when it was the wrong thing to do, like when he poorly briefed a

young associate who then used deception to extract crucial information from the owner of a ski resort. He also describes the ethical dilemmas experienced elsewhere in Morgan Stanley, such as how the firm responded to criminal acts perpetrated by its own employees, and how it dealt with fairness issues among young, old, and retired partners during a voluntary recapitalization when the company went public.

In the last third of the book, McCoy delves into ethical trade-offs and changes in business norms over time. Here he loses momentum and occasionally becomes platitudinous. But overall, the guidance McCoy offers, and the advice that he draws from a wide range of thinkers – from Dietrich Bonhoeffer to Peter Drucker – make this book a compelling read for those who believe in examining their lives.

N. Craig Smith is a senior fellow in marketing and ethics at the London Business School, where he teaches the required MBA course in business ethics.

MADE TO STICK: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die

Chip Heath & Dan Heath

304 pages (Random House, 2007)

Reviewed by Judith Samuelson

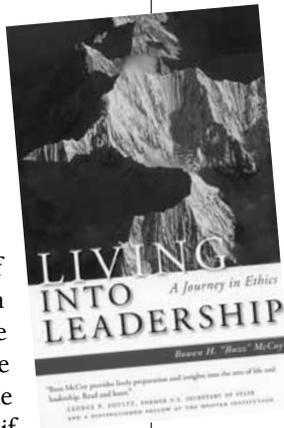
Here at the Aspen Institute, we don't really like simple ideas. Decades of work in poverty alleviation, human rights, school reform, and climate change have taught us that the worlds we inhabit, and the goals that we set for ourselves, are anything *but* simple. Simplicity is the antithesis of effective. It ignores

the need for comprehensive solutions. It's the opposite of complexity, and managing complexity is the mantra of the global age. Simplicity leaves me pining for a matrix. So when *Made to Stick* co-author Dan Heath arrived at the institute's Maryland campus to teach us how to simplify our ideas, he had his work cut out for him.

The first slide of his presentation was a field of black with a sentence in white, save one or two carefully chosen words in tangerine. It was sublime in its minimalism. The rest of the slides were similar, with an occasional word in cerulean blue or dazzling yellow. Despite the subzero wind blowing off the Wye River estuary, I felt like spring had arrived! Dan put us to work immediately, challenging us to move away from our white boards and wonk speak. Maybe there was hope for me and my ideas yet.

Dan, a consultant at Duke Corporate Education, wrote *Made to Stick* with his brother Chip, a professor at the Stanford Graduate School of Business. And their book is sticking, to thousands of reader-apostles who have pushed it on to *The New York Times* Best Seller List. The Heath brothers have taught me that if anyone is going to “get” my idea – need it, buy it, fund it, use it – I need to radically shorten my elevator pitch. No more pretending that every building's a skyscraper. I can live in a world of complexity, and my theory of change can and should mirror the system I am working to change, but I'd better talk about it in a way that leaves my target wanting more, not less. Just because I have a theory of change doesn't mean I have to wear it on my sleeve.

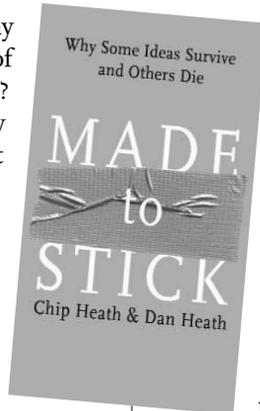
The Heath brothers became interested in “sticky ideas” individually. At Stanford, Chip was researching why bad and even false ideas, like urban



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legends, take root. (How many of you think the Great Wall of China is visible from space? Think again.) Dan was busy co-founding a company that explores new forms of education and what makes great teachers great.

To help readers create a “sticky” message – an idea that is understood and remembered, and that creates a lasting impact – the Heaths developed the mnemonic SUCCESS: *Simplify* the message, which is sort of like boiling the Ten Commandments down to the Golden Rule. Root the message in something *Unexpected*, to grab your audience’s atten-



tion. Use *Concrete* evidence. Be *Credible*. (Ask yourself, Will anyone believe me?) Tug at *Emotions* to make people care. And use *Stories* that prove change is possible. Is this as easy as it sounds? Of course not. Is it worth doing? Yes.

The authors repeatedly warn about the Curse of Knowledge. The more you know, the more challenging it

is to develop and communicate a sticky message. This rings true for many nonprofits I know. The brothers offer amusing examples from prominent NGO Web sites that are long on information and statistics and “message,”

but lack anything remotely sticky. Their examples of good practice, however, are inspiring. The book has me waking in the wee hours to consider how to boil my layered, complex, theoretical, and practical work on transforming business education, and mainlining ethics and sustainability in MBA classrooms and business decisions, yadda, yadda, yadda, into a message that will open coffers in private foundations near and far. That would really be SUCCESS.

Judith Samuelson is the executive director of the Aspen Institute’s Business and Society Program. She has traveled a career path through government, business, and social investing.

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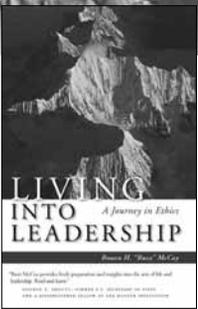
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Living into Leadership

A Journey in Ethics



BOWEN H. "BUZZ" MCCOY
Seeking inspiration from an eclectic range of sources, such as Dante, Kant, and Peter Drucker, and drawing from his own career as a successful investment banker, Buzz McCoy examines how business leaders—and those who aspire to be business leaders—can flourish in a corporate environment without shedding personal values or compromising integrity.

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