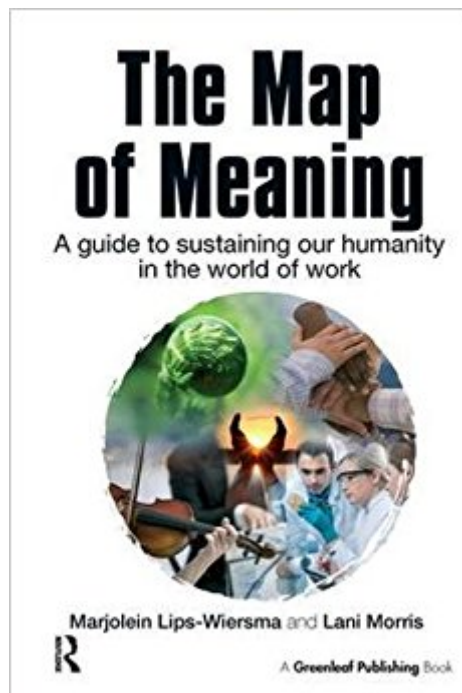




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The Map Of Meaning: A Guide To Sustaining Our Humanity In The World Of Work



Synopsis

This book introduces a "Map of Meaning" called the Holistic Development Model, which provides a clear, simple and profound framework of the dimensions and process of living and working meaningfully. Like all reliable maps this one has been carefully tested. It is based on over 15 years' research into the insights and practice of ordinary people. Although the authors borrow from the work of philosophers, psychologists and sociologists to provide evidence and context for their ideas, the main contribution of this book is that it describes how ordinary human beings wrestle with, and give answers to, the questions of "What is meaningful work and a meaningful life?" This innate human knowledge is captured in a practical model that makes understanding and working with issues of meaning clear and accessible to everyone. At an individual level this book helps people to define and stay in contact with what is most important to them as they grapple with the real problems of daily life and suggests how they can stay in charge of keeping the human search for meaning alive, especially in the face of the challenges that exist in organizational life. The authors recognize that in the current economic context a simple map of meaning is essential, precisely because organizational life has become so intensely directed towards a singular economic goal. They argue that it is vital that people have a simple and powerful way to reclaim the significance of meaning in their working lives. There are numerous studies that show conclusively that meaningful work, or its absence, influences some important outcomes in organizational life such as motivation, absenteeism, work behaviour, engagement, job satisfaction, empowerment, stress and performance. But people's humanity and search for meaning, so often compromised at work, is not something that can be mechanised by the latest self-help or managerial technique. It is not something that can be picked up and dropped as convenient. The authors argue that being human is not a fad. Being human is enduring and needs to be taken seriously. Creating meaningful work, therefore, leads to many desired organizational outcomes, but implementing it does require the courage to question some fundamental ways of thinking about business and the integrity to engage with the issues sincerely. At an organizational level this book offers many practical examples of how to build and maintain workplaces that are meaningful to people. The idea that there is a parallel between the meanings, decision-making dynamics and actions of individuals and organizations is central to the structure of this book. It therefore addresses meaning at both individual and organizational level and in the dynamic between them. This is neither a self-help book, nor an organizational systems book; its strength is that it draws together the aspirations of individuals with those of the organizations in which they work. At the same time, this is not a naïve book. One of the strengths of the Holistic Development Model is that it takes tensions, paradoxes and

imperfections as a given. They are part of being human and they are part of organizations. The book is not only about the importance of living meaningfully, it is about how to do it. The book is full of stories of people who have worked with the model. They demonstrate the versatility of the model and how it helps them to analyse, speak to, plan around and respond to an enormous variety of everyday issues and situations. It is this resourcefulness the authors would like readers to get from this book and have at their fingertips. This book is primarily written for anyone, from a CEO to a blue-collar worker or consultant, who is interested in creating more meaning and purpose in work and organizations, and who would like to better understand how to get others on board. It is for those searching for ways to re-energize their roles or change their careers. It is for anyone who firmly believes that it must be possible to align our deeper life purposes with our daily actions in the workplace.

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Customer Reviews

We have been applying aspects of the Holistic Development Model here in classes in management and leadership at Toi Whakaari New Zealand Drama School over the last four years. Students have found this frame an invaluable tool for orienting themselves in the face of what they see as an insurmountable range of paradoxes presented by our modern world. They ask themselves: how can I effect change ethically and meaningfully when my needs and those of the world, my values and the direction of society seem so at odds? Working with this frame has brought integration and empowerment, clarity and personal commitment to these students. It's great to see it now in its published form. --Christian Penny, Director, Toi Whakaari New Zealand Drama School I read this

book and did all the exercises in it. The book contains an indispensable tool to keep us whole. It will save us from burnout; it will save us from cynicism. It's totally non-judgemental. It's like a key that unlocks all that is important to us as human beings. As a consultant working in developed and developing countries, this framework gives me a simple way to profoundly engage with people across cultures. I can see for the first time not only myself but the context in which I live my life.

--Kerry McGovern, Public Sector Asset, Governance and Financial Management Specialist, K McGovern & Associates, Australia
By providing a well-tested, comprehensive framework and language, this book helps managers to engage in a genuine dialogue on how daily tasks can be a natural expression of what truly matters, beyond profits and growth. Grounded and deep, the authors show us how to integrate inspiration and purpose into the reality of business. --Lenette Schuijt, leadership trainer and author of several books on management and inspiration

Marjolein Lips-Wiersma is Associate Professor of Management Studies at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. She has spent the last 15 years understanding the theme of meaningful work in practical and empirical ways. She has been a board director, chair of the Management, Spirituality and Religion group of the Academy of Management, and regularly works with individuals, groups and organisations to diagnose and action how to create more meaningful work and work practices. Her academic work has won several awards. She has integrated the theme of meaningful work into a wide range of teaching including undergraduate business ethics, postgraduate responsible leadership and executive MBA organisational behaviour. Lani Morris has over 20 years experience of working as an independent organisational behaviour practitioner with organisations and individuals in New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom and as a contract lecturer at a number of universities and tertiary institutions. She has an MBA and an MSc in Responsibility and Business Practice from the University of Bath. She has studied the human search for meaning all her life, through philosophy and comparative religion in her undergraduate degree and through independent study since then. The key focus of her work is to help people take responsibility for and reclaim power over themselves, their lives and their work. Her expertise includes: leadership, motivation, clear communication, creativity and meaningful work. She has worked with the Holistic Development Model since 2000.

A few months back we had a Management Retreat to work toward a new Strategic Plan for the organisation. Our Facilitator used the Map of Meaning for the morning session as a lead up to the work needed for the Plan. It was an extraordinary way to get people involved in looking at

differences between how colleagues think, react and what we think is important to us. Its a perfect way to then be able to put together a Plan knowing that everyone's perception may be different and how these differences can add value to the organisation. It may be that the Facilitator was exceptional (which she was), in being able to bring the most out of the book, but we saw value at buying the book to continue the journey among our staff.

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