

humanizing management

Patrick J. Borich

"The most significant task facing mankind is to become more human."

Albert Schweitzer

Humanizing management isn't an easy topic to discuss. When one combines the process of becoming more human with the process of management, a double abstraction is formed. Yet, each professional Extension educator soon finds that humanizing management may be the core of a successful Extension career.

Humanizing Process

First, let me explain that the process of humanizing management isn't reserved for Extension administration. The newest Extension professional who joins the faculty suddenly finds management of self and others to be the only way feasible to carry on any Extension program with quality and quantity.

There appears to be no promise of large numbers of added Extension staff hired to carry out today's program demands. No hope exists that Extension programs in any single community can succeed without a great deal of cooperation between Extension personnel and other agencies. Thus, management in a human way is a basic tenet of the successful Extension educator.

What Is Humanizing Management?

I believe the concept of humanizing should focus on the ability of an individual to accept oneself and others for mutual personal development and growth. The concept of growth is imbedded in humanizing. Each of us grows as a human being or we begin the process of dying. Being responsible for our growth process and helping others gain responsibility for their own growth are important parts of humanizing.

Managing, on the other hand, involves the process of achieving results through organized efforts of other people.

Patrick J. Borich: State Leader, Extension Research and Education, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Minnesota—St. Paul. Accepted for publication: July, 1978.

Humanizing and managing have some similar characteristics:

1. Both are a process and not an end to achieve.
2. Both require other individuals to be successful. We can't gain self-acceptance or show acceptance of others without other human beings in the interaction. The definition of management itself entails others helping us to achieve a desired goal.
3. Both are purposeful and related to goals and objectives. Humanizing isn't simply being friendly, but helping ourselves and others achieve goals we've determined as important. Management often focuses on organization goals, but humanized management includes the goals of individuals as well.
4. Both are intangible, with results being the only evidence of achievement. Both humanizing and management are more art than science. Yet, as any artist will tell you, skill and knowledge increase the chances of success, no matter how difficult the concept is to explain.

Becoming a humanized manager isn't an accident. It results from planning, learning, and action. It's a never-ending process, one that every manager must continually remember as he/she goes about the task of getting the job done. . . .

Often the concept of humanizing and managing appear to be in direct contradiction with each other. John Powell describes the whole human person as

. . . someone in deep and meaningful contact with the world outside of him. He not only listens to himself, but to the voices of the world. The breadth of his own individual experience is infinitely multiplied through a sensitive empathy with others. He suffers with the suffering, rejoices with the joyful. He is born again and every springtime feels the impact of the great mysteries of life, birth, love, suffering, and death. His heart skips along with the "young lovers" and he knows something of the exuberation that is in them. He also knows the ghetto's philosophy of despair, the loneliness of suffering without relief, and the bell never tolls without tolling in some strange way for him.¹

Aside from the overuse of the generic "him," this statement describes a person often very different from what we usually define as the "manager." Many individuals who function as fully human people when told they must assume

the role of manager suddenly begin to take on the tasks of the organization as the truths of the universe. In doing so, they believe the "good" manager can't exhibit human qualities.

Immediately when this charade is acted out as the manager relates to others, the concept of humanizing becomes divorced from that of managing. The manager becomes a *person who plays games with others rather than a human being* important to our growth and personal development. Thus, 4-H agents might manage a volunteer leader program not as a human being interested in helping leaders grow as humans, but only to assure achievement of the organizational goals regardless of the impact on the people he/she manages.

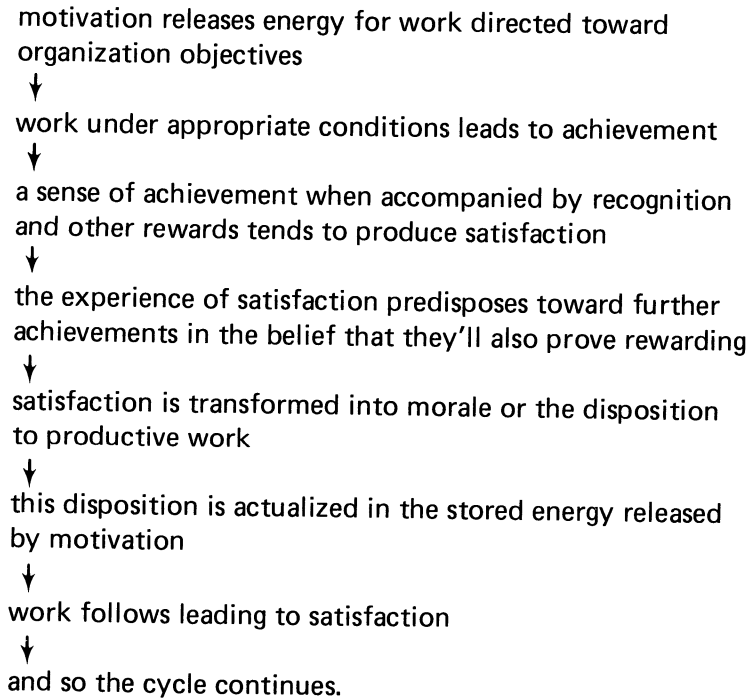
The concepts of satisfaction, morale, motivation, work, and achievement are singled out and discussed in depth by most management theorists. Francis Chase tries to show the relationship between these characteristics the manager can influence.²

In Table 1, the relationship between these phases on the part of the person being managed are shown to be related in a symbiotic manner. A manager affects the satisfaction, morale, motivation, work, and achievement of others by the way he/she provides rewards, expectations, stimuli, reinforcement, and measures effectiveness. Workers look to the manager for all these different types of input. When they don't get them, the workers often go elsewhere—to co-workers and/or clients.

Table 1. Chase's phases of the work cycle.

<u>State</u>	<u>Character-ized by</u>	<u>Time orientation</u>	<u>Arising from</u>	<u>Tending or predisposing to</u>
Satisfaction	Rest Contentment	Past	Achievement + rewards	High morale
Morale	Readiness Stored energy	Future	Satisfaction + expectation	Motivation
Motivation	Activation Release of energy	Present	Morale + stimuli	Work
Work	Action Expenditure	Present	Motivation + reinforcement	Achievement
Achievement	Arrival Culmination	Past	Work + effectiveness	Satisfaction

Chase describes the interaction as follows:



Thus, the humanized manager must be concerned with these five characteristics. Satisfaction, morale, motivation, work, and achievement are all related to one another. The manager's behavior affects these factors by providing rewards, expectations, stimuli, reinforcement, and effectiveness measures. When they provide these incentives, he/she has a lot to do with not only the output of the organization (in the form of Extension work), but also the development of human beings who work for the organization.

Problems

With relation to the above characteristics, let's look at some problems that seem inherent in Extension management.

Rewards Not Tied to Results

Extension results are often difficult to identify. Ask most Extension agents or volunteer leaders what happens because of the program they manage and they'll either talk about: (1) the quality of life that has been improved because of Extension participation or (2) the large number of activities they've accomplished during the past year.

Thus, recognition in the former is almost impossible to relate to what we really do and in the second case it's often misdirected toward the activity rather than the result. Many Extension individuals have pay increases not related to

...results of their work, but rather to other factors like length of service, academic degrees, etc. So, it seems that rewards for a job well-done aren't tied to achievement—and satisfaction is reduced.

*Unclear
Expectations*

Managers in Extension often don't communicate well with the person being managed. Verbal and nonverbal communication is often unclear and prone to be misinterpreted. Many Extension professionals are now talking about "contracting" with volunteer leaders to clarify these expectations. Precise job descriptions are also being jointly written to accomplish this.

A value held by some Extension managers might be detrimental to high morale. Many managers feel professionals don't want expectations clearly stated so that they can "do their own thing." It would seem, based on my observations, that the most human thing one can do to a co-worker is thoroughly discuss and clarify what should be achieved.

*Stimuli Often
Remote*

When individuals work together in an office, stimuli becomes a common occurrence at morning conference, coffee, lunch, etc. In Extension work, the manager often won't see other individuals for a long time. It thus becomes necessary to provide stimuli through the mail or other remote methods. This lack of personal contact greatly reduces the effect of the stimuli. This fact also accentuates the need for frequent visits through some method in which the message "I really care about you" is passed along verbally and nonverbally.

*Reinforcement
Is Sporadic*

Reinforcement for good work is also difficult because of the remote geographical characteristics of Extension work. Another factor that ties in with this remoteness is the difficulty for most Extension professionals to give or accept compliments and criticisms. Reinforcement requires honest feedback about the work being done.

*Effectiveness
Difficult To
Identify*

A lot of work is being done in program evaluation. However, many Extension professionals feel program evaluation is an added burden rather than an integral part of Extension programming. Yet, until each of us as Extension employees know precisely what effectiveness means in our work, it's obvious we won't get satisfaction from it. Precise expectations that identify criteria for evaluation are therefore necessary for open communication between members of the Extension team.

Becoming a Humanized Manager

The focus of humanized management is on two individuals: the manager and the person managed. No humanized managers acquired the necessary managing or humanizing skills at birth. However, many who do manage in the humanized way can't explain to co-workers and others what they do.

Here are three elementary, yet difficult, things to remember as you try to sharpen your skills in managing people to achieve organizational goals.

Focus on Person

Often Extension professionals begin to look at the activities of the organization and work as the most important parts of Extension education. Each individual who works with you to achieve some goals is a unique person. It becomes most important that the manager sees each individual as a special, multi-talented, ever-changing, complex being. Categorizing humans as "my leaders, my agents, or my secretary" takes away this uniqueness.

Gain and Express Acceptance

Management in a human way is an art that must be learned. In most organizations, including Extension, skill at subject-matter teaching or graduate degree success is ample proof of management ability. It's not surprising that many managers have a low self-acceptance of their own capabilities of managing others. Self-acceptance is the basis for good management. Self-acceptance can be gained through added management study, experience, and honest, open feedback from others.

Once an individual has self-acceptance, it becomes possible and essential to express acceptance of others. Acceptance is a form of love that every manager must express in some manner to the people he/she manages. Often this acceptance is left unsaid and just as often it's not received. Stimuli, recognition, and reinforcement are important to successful interaction between people. They're equally important when fulfilling a management responsibility.

Develop Humanized Management Skills

The skills of a humanized manager focus primarily on skills of understanding and communicating with self and others. Skills such as effective listening, understanding non-verbal communication, giving criticism positively, counseling, making joint decisions, setting priorities, and creating a positive atmosphere all are necessary to managing in a human way.

Summary

This article has tried to focus on the human as an important, yes, the most important, part of the management process. Becoming a humanized manager isn't an accident. It results

from planning, learning, and action. It's a never-ending process, *one that every manager must continually remember as he/she* goes about the task of getting the job done. Maybe it can best be summed up by a poster hanging in my office: "We must use things and love people and not love things and use people."

Footnotes

1. John Powell, *Why I Am Afraid To Tell You Who I Am?* (Niles, Illinois: Argus Communications, 1969), p. 100.
2. Francis Chase, "The Administrator As Implementor of the Goals of Education for Our Time," *Administrators Notebook*, Vol. XXV (Chicago: The University of Chicago, Midwest Administration Center, 1976-77).