

Reviewed by Ira J. Morrow, Associate Professor of Management, Lubin School of Business, Pace University, New York, NY.

In this book, Herr offers a passionate and well-argued defense for the place of emotions at work. He contends that most organizations that emphasize supposedly rational and dispassionate decision making and that are designed along traditional hierarchical lines work against human nature, and that "you and I have been brainwashed by Western culture to look at human beings as fundamentally rational creatures. This is simply wrong. We are fundamentally emotional creatures who devise rational strategies to serve our emotional needs" (pp. 8–9). Herr maintains that the traditional organizational view that emotions are irrational, messy, at best unimportant, and at worst destructive, is inaccurate. Instead, he argues that emotions are at the very "core of economic decision-making, economic utility, employee satisfaction and engagement, organizational excellence, and the human condition," and that "we are universally motivated to seek emotional pleasure and to avoid emotional pain" (p. 3). The author feels that by working "harmoniously with human nature rather than against it" (p. 1) an organization can become a "superorganism ... held together organically and naturally by invested relationships and doesn't need an artificial shell to force cooperation and coordination" (p. 1).

The author distinguishes the biological appetites for nutrition, rest, oxygen, reproduction, and physical security that are self-evident from the less obvious five "social appetites" (p. 4) that are each in turn energized or enforced by the underlying human need for emotional gratification. These social appetites include the need for cooperation, which is energized by good feelings when we are with others who are important to us, or "painful feelings of alienation when we are excluded from the tribe" (p. 4); the need for skill mastery or competency, which is enforced by "feelings of high and low self-esteem" (p. 4); the need for skills deployment or goal attainment, which is energized by the "euphoria" of winning or the pain of losing; the need for innovation, which is energized by curiosity and the thrill of discovery; and the need for self-protection energized by feelings of security or of fear and anxiety. Anyone who endeavors to lead others must recognize the importance of these "social appetites that drive high performance" (p. 8). As the central focus and theme of this book, Herr strives to demonstrate "how to evoke positive emotion to create an optimally productive workforce" (p. 8) by carefully examining the role of each of the five social appetites in organizations. The book's intended audience, including executives, managers, and supervisors, and indeed any reader who intends to be in a leadership or managerial role in the future, could benefit from this work. The book is clearly written, strongly and convincingly argued, insightful, provocative, stimulating, and interesting to read.

The author builds a research-based case for his arguments in that he supports the importance

of each of the five social appetites with findings from the field of neuroscience. For example, he tells us, "Cooperation is partly regulated by an area at the front of the brain, the ventromedial prefrontal cortex" (p. 27); and the competency appetite, or pleasant feelings of high self-esteem and painful feelings of low self-esteem, "are regulated by the neurotransmitter serotonin and serotonin-2 receptors in the medial prefrontal cortex and amygdala" (p. 29). Moreover, based on neuroscience research, Herr also contends that emotional appetites are most effectively engaged, and that a "unitary culture and shared identity" is more likely to be constructed at work within the context of rather "small tribal groups" (p. 10) of no more than approximately 150 individuals.

Another interesting feature of the book is its frequent referencing of effective examples from three companies led by his "management heroes" (p. 13): Ken Iverson, the former chairman of Nucor Steel (deceased); Harry Quadracci, the founder and former president and CEO of Quad/Graphics (deceased); and Ricardo Semler, the CEO of Semco SA, a Brazilian company. Herr cites these business leaders as individuals who were able to align their organizations with human nature by treating people with respect and dignity. They also, the author feels, deemphasized vertical hierarchies and chain of command and instead built flat egalitarian structures, and they were able to think small and maintain small units in plants, offices, and teams "even as they grew into large organizations with thousands of employees" (p. 14). In addition, they deemphasized traditional organizational controls such as rules, regulations, organizational charts, and bureaucracy.

The author recognizes that emotions at work can sometimes be harmful, but he compares this to the visible tip of the iceberg that tends to get all the attention rather than the less visible but much more important part of the iceberg that is beneath the surface, namely, in this case, "the subtle, background feelings that ensure our survival ... by imperceptibly influencing every decision and every move we make during the course of the workday" (p. 22). The author again cites research in neurobiology that has recently shown that all forms of reward, both monetary and nonmonetary, depend on feelings and that emotions are in fact at the core of economic decision making. Herr contends that all too often organizations rely on the primitive and unsophisticated motivational tool of the carrot and stick approach based solely on the use of monetary incentives and the fear of being fired, instead of addressing the other important emotional needs of workers to really fire them up. "This approach," as Herr states, "creates companies that sputter instead of roar" (p. 31). Regarding the carrot of pay, "The business community has traditionally used a flawed accounting system to measure employee incentives" (p. 34) so that only the extrinsic rewards such as pay and benefits are considered and measured, and important and powerful intrinsic rewards are ignored. The author believes that both sets of rewards are important and that each rests upon an emotional foundation to provide the employee with an "emotional paycheck" (p. 35) that can be measured. This book has much to offer and serves as a useful corrective to organizational overreliance on cold, precise, dispassionate rationality.