

Learning Agility - The Key to Leader Potential Part 3: How the Book is Useful to a Line Manager or HR Generalist

In the first part of this series, I shared with you some of the key professional experiences that shaped the thinking of both Warner Burke and myself.

Although our professional preparation was somewhat different, we did have Teachers College, Columbia University in common. I was a student and Warner, a professor. We were there at different times, but there is a bit of common ground, such as our interest and involvement in the development ideas put forth by Bob Eichinger and Mike Lombardo.

My second article for this series focused on our shared commitment to working with tests - either as creators or users - that have solid research behind them. My challenge to the readers? Be good consumers of test research.

In this article, I want to tell you why I wrote Part 2 of the book - the nine dimensions chapters - and Part 3 - the six application chapters.

I adapted the Competency Acquisition Process I learned at McBer in the 1970s of:

- Recognition
- Understanding
- Self-Assessment
- Skill Practice
- Practice on the Job

In each of the dimension chapters, I show you an illustration that captures the idea of that dimension, and then define the dimension. For each dimension, there is also a passage from a popular book in which the person is demonstrating that learning agility dimension.

I then give you actual business examples of an individual contributor, a manager and a senior manager and describe a situation in which he or she could have demonstrated that **dimension but didn't take it that extra step. There is a second example** - again at the three different levels - where the person is given help to demonstrate the dimension.

The idea is to be directional but not prescriptive. What do I mean by that? Many years ago, I was working with several managers on improving the existing performance appraisal system. We were working to get them to put more emphasis on development. Each of the managers

agreed that doing a better job on the development side of an appraisal was the right approach but said, “We don’t know how to do that.”

That was an “ah-ha” moment for me. I developed a guide/tool that would give them development suggestions, but not the answer, so to speak. That was all it took. They just needed something to get them thinking along the right lines, and they took it from there.

That is what we are trying to accomplish in Part 2 of the book, which is intended for HR and line folks. If, for example, a manager is working with one of his or her people in the area of Interpersonal Risk Taking, that manager can go to Chapter 9 and find some ideas that will be useful to getting better at Interpersonal Risk Taking.

So, why would a manager be working with one of his or her people on Interpersonal Risk Taking? That is a great segue into Part 3 of the book, which has separate chapters on six different applications. While I initially wrote this for HR people so it would help them understand how it could be used, I see this as being equally applicable for line people.

Why do I say that? Because the development of people in an organization is part of any **leader’s role**. Designing and managing the systems (selection, assessment, performance management and development and succession planning, etc.) falls under human resources. What is in these systems and how they are used to develop talent is the role of management.

Chapters 14-18 take you through the employee life cycle - from selection and onboarding to succession planning - **using the Burke Learning Agility Inventory™ (Burke LAI™) as part of the solution**. If an organization doesn’t have any of these systems, then these chapters will help you think about some of the architecture you will need. If an organization has an existing system and the plan is to modify that system to accommodate the Burke LAI, the chapters will help readers think about what the organization will need to change in the current system to accommodate the Burke LAI.

For example, if you are going to introduce learning agility into the performance management and development discussion, you will need to administer the Burke LAI to the participants being appraised before they have the appraisal discussion. You will need to educate managers on what learning agility is before they have a conversation about it with their direct reports.

Again, every organization and application is different, but we try to give you a starting point with one example.

Chapter 19 is all about organization development. How can you use the Burke LAI with teams, functions, business units and overall organizations? We give you a half a dozen examples to illustrate how it could be used.

We know we are just scratching the surface. We hope you will buy the book. We hope you will use the test, the Burke LAI. If you do, we would love to hear how you are using the book and the test, and what you are learning.

We see this as a journey, not a destination, and we would love to partner with you on that journey.

About the Author

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