reward systems are critical for success. The volume concludes with a concise summary of matrix capabilities and an epilogue on the "uses and abuses" of the matrix.

Overall, the volume is very clear, highly accessible, and thoughtfully written. If there is any weakness it's that the political and symbolic/cultural dimensions of organizational life (e.g., Bolman & Deal, 2003) are often glossed over, suggesting that such concerns can be dealt with through strong leadership at the top of the matrix. Perhaps they can, but my own experience suggests that some of the most difficult and compelling challenges managers face are rooted in these areas. It would have been useful to have more detail, drawn from his rich experience, as to how these challenges and resultant conflicts can be overcome. Many of the problems inherent in this organizational form—well documented for roughly 30 years (e.g., Goold & Campbell, 2003; Knight, 1977)—continue to create challenges as companies struggle to capture the needed balance and alignment for which Galbraith calls. Yet, as he concludes, complex businesses will need to be managed through complex organizational forms like the matrix—and, at successful companies, mastering the resultant complexity will become a normal way of doing business.

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Robert B. Kaiser (Editor). (2009). **The Perils of Accentuating the Positive.** Tulsa, OK: HoganPress, 170 pages, $29.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by *Theodore L. Hayes,* Personnel Research Psychologist, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Washington, DC. (The opinions expressed herein are solely the author's.)

Consultants rarely have answers to management's simplest questions, such as, *should we develop people by building on strengths or by*

fixing weaknesses? Perils may provide the only definitive, serious answer grounded in data and reality rather than psycho-dross. It's not a marketing vehicle in book form. This impressive first imprint from HoganPress is well edited with strong authorship, keen psychological insight, bold attitudes, and an implementation focus.

Perils is an expanded version of a 2007 SIOP symposium. Both the symposium and book were coordinated by Kaiser in reaction to what he describes (p. 3) as "large marketing machines" promoting development via strengths alone. In *Perils* he writes that strengths-only development is insufficient. Furthermore, according to Kaiser (p. 4) and Leslie and Chandrasekar (p. 35), advising clients not to rehabilitate personal or competency-based limitations is willfully misleading because this advice makes the personal experiences of the individual manager more important than the requirements of the position and the needs of the people he or she manages.

All the *Perils* authors are against strengths-only development. Several strengths proponents declined the invitation to submit chapters for *Perils* (R. Kaiser, personal communication, 13 February 2009). Because proponents chose not to contribute, descriptions of strengths in this review are based upon their portrayal in *Perils* and materials published elsewhere.

First, some background. Psychologists and consultants prefer measuring variables to explaining how people flourish amidst life's vicissitudes. Daily functioning became viewed as a Sisyphean struggle with disorders and despair (Gable & Haidt, 2005). Several authors in *Perils* acknowledge that the pendulum had swung too far in that direction. Theory and research on the pragmatic value of hedonic positivity grew and cemented the foundation of the positive psychology movement (Fredrickson, 2001; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Positive psychology's founders deduced "strengths" and "virtues" as labels for hedonic experiential phenomena, which in turn led to development of strengths assessments. Reinforcement of virtues and strengths quickly became the product and process of development.

According to *Perils*, strengths as popularly conceived and marketed are generalized personality traits or emotional states encompassing habitual action/learning styles. Hogan and Benson (p. 118) call these intrapsychic "hidden secrets" that are sought out to provide individual insight and make people whole. Typical strengths assessments measure hedonic phenomena (strengths/virtues/archetypes) and provide a ranking or ordering of within-person intensity (a.k.a. ipsativity). But as Eichinger, Dai, and Tang write (p. 16ff), having an intrapsychic strength doesn't mean you're strong in an absolute or relative sense. Intrapsychic, ipsative, commonplace strengths are meaningless to anyone but the individual who has them, say Eichinger et al.

In contrast to generalized personality traits, *Perils* authors identify interpersonal competency-based strengths as a significant focus of one's development. These attributes have value organizationally, can be refined, and help one distinguish oneself relative to others. Eichinger et al. state (p. 16) that "strengths might be those talents, skills, and competencies you personally do best." There may be five to seven of these strengths per person, but the exact number is arbitrary. Whatever their number, strengths only matter to the extent that they are intense relative to others' strengths (i.e., are competitive) and are aligned with success criteria (Eichinger et al., p. 20ff).

Remember: Organizations don't value limitations, they select against them (Collins & Porras, 1994; Schneider, 1987). Therefore, one's weaknesses must be remedied or at least carefully managed. A significant contribution of *Perils* is its authors' careful evaluation of developmental needs—call them limitations or weaknesses—in addition to strengths. Rather than defining weaknesses as underdeveloped strengths awaiting invigoration, *Perils* distinguishes between weaknesses as flaws and weaknesses as overuse. Flaws are dysfunctional personality attributes, such as passive-aggression or paranoia, reflecting maladaptive or destructive behavior leading to derailment. Gentry and Chappelow, Davies, and Berglas emphasize that it's the behavioral pattern that matters in derailment. A high score on a derailment indicator doesn't mean one is doomed (Davies, p. 139ff). One can turn the counterproductive pattern toward a productive goal by intentionally rehabilitating the self-defeating tendency through coaching or feedback. In comparison, overused strengths become weaknesses through contemptuously asserting them due to "an excessive need to be 'Me'" (Goldsmith, 2007, p. 96ff; Kaiser & Kaplan, p. 65ff).

Perils concerns itself with the development of leaders and managers. In contrast, the strengths movement articulated a humanistic vision that everyone has strengths/virtues and everyone can flourish (e.g., Seligman, 2002). *Perils* authors criticize this vision, yet excepting one chapter their real argument appears to be with applying the same ipsative, generalized personality-based hedonic measures to everyone worldwide at nearly all ages and from all walks of life. In short, they might say, development really is about improving one's capacity to live among and compete with others; these imperatives are not limited to bureaucracies and boardrooms. Although *Perils* does not start from a humanistic perspective, anyone could try to develop using Hogan and Benson's (p. 72ff) elegant competency-oriented reality-testing approach: Use feedback, strengths, and weakness-awareness to outline activities to stop doing, start doing, and/or keep doing. How important is this process? As White (p. 161) notes, "only the self-aware, not the strong, survive."

What evidence exists outside the strengths or *Perils* camps to evaluate competing claims? No true experimental research has compared programs with different developmental orientations. The best published evidence (Smither, London, & Reilly, 2005) shows that those who improve after receiving multisource feedback (e.g., 360-ratings; see Leslie & Chandrasekar, Kaiser & Kaplan) have a "discrepancy production" orientation: They use structured feedback to help themselves change behavior in order to attain higher performance. In one of *Harvard Business Review*'s "10 must-read articles," Drucker (1999) wrote that although strengths are important, proudly ignoring one's nonstrengths is "self-defeating:" "It is equally essential to remedy your bad habits—the things you do or fail to do that inhibit your effectiveness and performance." Drucker also distinguished between personality-based strengths and competency-based strengths (a.k.a. performance). Collins (2001) described the "Stockdale Paradox:" Vietnam War POWs who survived years of captivity were optimistic but also confronted "the brutal facts of their reality."

McCall (p. 54) gets the final word: "Developing leaders with the breadth and experience to handle the complexity of organizations in today's global world simply requires an investment in helping those with talent shed what no longer serves them (both strengths and weaknesses) and continually acquire the new skills that they need."

Organizations are becoming savvier development consumers. They are demanding more from their coaches: thorough explanation of the goals of the assessment and the strengths and limitations of the assessment tools; regular recertification; ethics training; delineating boundaries between coaching and therapy; and so on (Coutu & Kauffman, 2009; Silzer & Jeanneret, 1998). Consultants who fail to adopt best practices and processes may be liable when confidential data are disclosed, promotions are not made after development, and so on. Managing these risks could lead to a two-tiered system where rigorous "real" development (strengths, weaknesses, multisource feedback, coaching) is provided for key personnel and the rest of us get strengths workbooks.

The strengths-only approach was revolutionary 20 years ago when the psychology of development and the nature of business were less sophisticated. Kudos to the strengths pioneers. Coaching changed too, from "fixing toxic behaviors" 10 years ago to developing interpersonal competencies aligned with business needs today (Coutu & Kauffman, 2009; McCauley & Hezlett, 2001). Kudos to the *Perils* authors for advancing professional practice beyond outdated all-or-nothing marketing claims. After *Perils*, consulting's "best practice" answer for management is *build competencies and rehabilitate weaknesses, as neither approach alone suffices. Perils* is necessary reading to align the consulting process, the actual "truth about you," and business and personal goals. Change is difficult,

success more elusive still. Only those committed to self-awareness, re-habilitation, and building will continue along that path toward what they seek. Others will go put their strengths to work after watching *Oprah.*

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Karl E. Weick and Kathleen M. Sutcliffe. **Managing the Unexpected: Resilient Performance in an Age of Uncertainty.** 2nd Edition San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007, 194 pages, $27.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by *Gary B. Brumback,* Palm Coast, FL.

There's only one certain certainty: death. (Don't plutocrats and corpo-rations avoid taxes?) As for the rest of life, it's a gamble with a gamut of odds, and in workplaces like aircraft carriers where the odds can be very dicey these authors say it's all about managing the unexpected.

The authors, he the distinguished professor at the University of Michi-gan's business school, and she, the associate dean and a professor there also, set out to think through an explanation of why some organiza-tions, what they call high reliability organizations or HROs, are better at managing the unexpected. My simplistic presumption is that such orga-nizations, if they exist, never take anything for granted, are prepared for