

Introduction

While quality is everyone's responsibility, it is the responsibility of top management to ensure an environment where quality can flourish. W. Edwards Deming

You may want to read this introduction now or at the end of the book. The choice is yours. However, do read it—it's important. It sets the context for the methods and the process of change presented in the book. The introduction also outlines how I got to the point in my career where I work regularly with the human spirit, especially with managers and senior managers. I do this most frequently in the private sector, although I have also worked on a number of projects in the public sector. Many of my clients are engineers and scientists.

During my 10 years in Michigan I had the good fortune to study directly with Dr. W. Edwards Deming, an American statistician renowned for his work in Total Quality. In 1950, at the age of 50, Dr. Deming began a 30-year journey in Japan, where he was credited with helping to turn around the Japanese economy. He returned to the United States in 1980 to continue his work in developing quality in American business and industry.

In 1989 I attended his four-day seminar called "Out of the Crisis" at Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Michigan. This was my introduction to his work and to the concept of Total Quality. Although I didn't know it at the time, attending this seminar was a requirement for anyone who wanted to study directly with Dr. Deming in the Deming Study Group.

During this period General Motors was bringing in Dr. Deming to speak to what they called "The Crowd." I first met Dr. Deming in person at one of these "Crowd" meetings. He was introduced to me by Dr. Wendy Coles, a Canadian from Ottawa, who was the lead consultant for the Organizational Development Practice at General Motors Tech Center in Warren, Michigan.

Dr. Deming was relentless about the pursuit of quality in American industries. At the age of 90 he was working with Ford, General Motors and the Kellogg Foundation in Michigan. Each month, when he came to Michigan to work with these clients, he would set aside an evening to meet with those of us who wanted to learn from him. There were 30 to 50 participants at each meeting who would faithfully show up regardless of the weather. We called this group the Deming Study Group. Among the crowd were quality experts and manufacturing people from the automotive industry across the state. There were also first-, second- and third-tier suppliers to the auto industry, engineers and other technical experts, health-care quality specialists, statisticians, scientists, university professors and a number of independent consultants like myself. I had the unfathomable experience of studying directly with Dr. Deming for the next three years. I was part of the Deming Study Group.

As a renowned specialist in statistical analysis and quantitative measurement, Dr. Deming also valued qualitative measurement. During the latter part of his life he lectured on the importance of people. "You statisticians and MBAs have us measuring everything," he would say. "The most important things can't be measured, namely, how people think and how they feel." He so much believed in the voice of employees that he would often begin his work with a company on the

shop floor. By doing this he would discover directly from the front-line employees what was happening in the culture. “Your people know your culture,” he would say. “When you ask them directly about what’s going on, they’ll tell you. So pay attention to what they say!”

Dr. Deming believed in the power of people throughout the system to produce quality. His beliefs are reflected in the **14 Principles of Quality Management** that are outlined in Appendix One at the end of this book. This book is about the first 10 principles, the ones that are more intuitive and more challenging to implement.

During my 10 years in Michigan I also had the good fortune to study directly with Dr. Ron Lippitt, co-founder of National Training Lab (NTL), and Kathleen Dannemiller of DTA, the designer of Whole-Scale™ Change. Kathie’s work is currently practiced globally. Much of the work that I do today is based on the work of these two great change specialists. They provided me with a solid foundation for organizational change work.