2013

To Sell is Human: The Surprising Truth About Moving Others [review] / Pink, Daniel H.

William R. Auxier

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl
Part of the Leadership Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl/vol7/iss2/12

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Applied Christian Leadership by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.
and change, or a biblical perspective of habits. The author also used a shallow definition of “habits” and “addictions” (sometimes interchangeably), which seemed to lead more to opinion than fact.

It is important for any human to have an understanding of habits, how they are formed, the impact they have, and how to change unwanted or destructive habits. Duhigg underscores this by pointing out that a Duke University researcher found “that more than 40 percent of the actions people performed each day weren’t actual decisions, but habits” (p. 2). Can habits be changed? Yes. However, Duhigg’s remedies are not the “cure-all” for changing negative habits and addictions or creating positive ones.

Despite my reservations, I recommend this book for those looking to better understand the role of habit formation and the impact of habits on our lives and organizations.

Pastor Bill Miller is a Doctor of Ministry student at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and serves as the President of the Potomac Conference of Seventh-day Adventist.

TO SELL IS HUMAN: THE SURPRISING TRUTH ABOUT MOVING OTHERS

By Daniel H. Pink
Hardcover, 260 pages

Reviewed by William R. Auxier

I heard Dan Pink speak at the Leadership program Roundtable Conference at Andrews University in July 2006. His presentation, based on his book A Whole New Mind, was entertaining and informative. His communication style was sincere and effective, and he made us think. A Whole New Mind should be on every leader’s reading list. For that reason, I was eager to read To Sell Is Human: The Surprising Truth About Moving Others.

Lead. To lead is to move others. Leadership is the process of influencing or moving others. That is what To Sell Is Human is all about—moving others. Dan Pink makes the case that moving others is part of being human: we all sell. The book provides an overview of the knowledge base along with tips on how to be more effective at moving others. For example, the first sentence of this paragraph contains one word, a utilization of what Pink calls the one word pitch.

Effectively moving others requires multiple communication tools. Would you like to add some new tools to your toolbox? Dan Pink provides an opportunity to do so. He cites numerous studies alongside real world examples followed by how-to instruction. The question in the second sentence of this paragraph is what Pink calls the question pitch.

Moving others is the focus of this book by Dan Pink, a skill that if lacking, makes leadership stink! Notice the rhyme in the previous sentence? Rhymes enhance a hearer’s ability to process information and make sense of it. This is an example of a rhyming pitch.

Pink tackles the topic of selling or moving others (synonymous terms) with determination and hard work. He successfully makes the case that selling is not exclusive to salespersons. To Sell Is Human begins by building the foundation of this premise with an historical examination of the sales profession. He concludes that “most of what we think we understand about selling is constructed atop a foundation of assumptions that has crumbled” (pp. 2-3). Pink states that in effect we are all salespersons; we all
need to move others. This ability is crucial to survival and happiness because it provides attunement, buoyancy and clarity. Moving others “has helped our species evolve, lifted our living standards, and enhanced our daily lives” (p. 6). Moving others, or selling, is fundamentally human!

Healthcare and educational services, according to Pink, are the two fastest growing industries around the world. Jobs in this “Ed-Med” sector, as Pink calls it, are all about moving people. In a distinct contrast from selling, healthcare is often associated with helping and caring for others; however, Pink states that healthcare is all about selling. The goal of healthcare is for people to be better off, which often requires convincing someone to do something difficult, even painful, to improve health. Healthcare workers must have “the ability to influence, to persuade, and to change behavior while striking a balance between what others want and what you can provide them” (p. 42).

The Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) is definitely at the forefront of any discussion on healthcare today. A majority of people in the healthcare industry were excited and energized when the idea of more affordable and easier-to-access healthcare first surfaced. Now it appears to be a grand idea in great chaos. Why? Pink’s Chapter 3, “From Caveat Emptor to Caveat Venditor,” may aid in diagnosing what happened. Caveat emptor, or buyer beware, used to be the guiding principle of selling. This was the result of a world of information asymmetry, a world in which consumers relied heavily on a salesperson for the information needed to make a purchasing decision. “When sellers know more than the buyers, buyers must beware” (p. 49). The Internet changed all that. Buyers now have as much information as sellers. This information parity has created a new guiding principle—caveat venditor—seller beware. The lack of clarity, information and transparency during the process of pitching Obamacare created a caveat emptor environment, while American society has evolved to accept and expect a caveat venditor environment. Statements like “we have to pass the bill to see what is in it” and “if you like your insurance you can keep it” only exaggerated the buyer beware principle, causing uncertainty in a seller beware world. Caveat emptor gave salespeople a bad name and resulted in a negative stereotype. Considering the caveat emptor selling techniques employed to sell the country on healthcare, is it any wonder then that the Affordable Care Act is in chaos?

Pink’s final chapter, “Serve,” says that moving others is all about serving others by improving lives, and ultimately, improving the world. To accomplish this, it is essential to make it personal and purposeful. Moving others in a personal way that provides purpose is “the lifeblood of service and the final secret of moving others” (p. 219). Pink suggests that those who want to serve others should ask themselves two questions: First, if the person I am trying to move agrees to move, will his or her life improve? Second, once the individual moves, will the world be a better place? The answer to both questions should be a resounding yes.

Pink blends his field work with studies in a quirky, conversational style of writing that delivers a powerful, informative message that is fun to read. He includes step-by-step instructions on how to apply the concepts and take action to move others. To Sell Is Human provides over 180 references to support the ideas presented. Of those references, approximately one-third are from
scholarly articles published in peer-reviewed journals. These articles focus on motivation theory, persuasion and communication, as well as decision making. Another third are from statistical resources (e.g., United States Bureau of Labor Statistics). The final third are from the popular press (e.g., Wall Street Journal and The Economist). Since Pink’s target is a mainstream audience, not academia, the book and its lessons are entertaining and at the same time based on a broad platform of resources. The diverse reference list provides diversified resources for anyone wanting to delve deeper.

Though there may be some weaknesses in this book, Dan Pink did such a great job of influencing this reader that I highly recommend To Sell Is Human to anyone interested in leadership.

WILLIAM AUXIER received his Ph.D. in Leadership from Andrews University and is a leadership author, speaker and trainer/coach. Bill is a veteran of more than 25 years in the healthcare industry, where he honed his leadership skills in a variety of executive positions, including president and CEO. He and his wife are “empty-nesters” residing in Tampa, Florida.

HEALTH, HEALING AND THE CHURCH’S MISSION: BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES AND MORAL PRIORITIES

By Willard M. Swartley
Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press (2012)
Paperback, 268 pages

Reviewed by STANLEY A. JAMES

Health, Healing and the Church’s Mission, by Willard M. Swartley, explores the biblical and theological roots which have been the foundation of the Christian church’s philosophy in healthcare. Swartley, who is professor emeritus of New Testament at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, cogently reviews the historical mission and role of the Christian church in healthcare over the centuries. While his purpose is that readers respond with “moral passion” to the current health care challenges in the United States, he ultimately seeks to “reclaim the relationship between the triune God and our healing and healthcare efforts.” (p. 14).

Swartley starts the book by grappling with the question, “When God does not heal me or others, what am I to believe?” The reader is led through insightful passages of Scripture that support an understanding that mankind has had a tragic fall and it is God’s ideal to restore mankind through healing. With exegetical insight, the writer unveils a sense that God cares and is with us even when we are suffering. He asserts that we are not to be deluded into thinking that sickness and death are a result of a lack of faith. Instead, we must redefine our expectations of God’s involvement, Swartley says, and hold to the faith that ultimate healing will come from the Holy Spirit when we are fully redeemed and receive new bodies.

While clearly reminding the reader of our common mortality, Swartley also notes that God still seeks to restore His image in us through His revelation in the Word and the community of faith, and that as our personal Physician He seeks our cooperation in restoring healing to humanity as we deliver care. Swartley also eloquently argues that God gives preventive health after He saves. He points out how God gave the Ten Commandments to ancient Israel to preserve and to protect from emotional, social and physical illness, and how the church today must