The Oz Principle:
Implications for Records Management by Organizations
Owen Ambur, May 30, 2003

In *The Oz Principle: Getting Results Through Individual and Organizational Accountability*, Roger Connors, Tom Smith and Craig Hickman say the American character is in crisis. In large measure, they suggest the crisis is due to the *cult of victimization*, which has been defined as: "an odd combination of ducking responsibility and telling everyone else what to do."[1] They do not define character but Richard Sennett addresses it as follows:

> ... it is the ethical value we place on our own desires and on our relations to others... [It] depends on ... connections to the world ... [and] is a more encompassing term than ... "personality," which concerns desires and sentiments which may fester within, witnessed by no one else. Character particularly focuses on the long-term aspect of our emotional experience. [It] is expressed by loyalty and mutual commitment, or through the pursuit of long-term goals, or by the practice of delayed gratification for the sake of a future end. Out of the confusion of sentiments in which we all dwell at any particular moment, we seek to save and sustain some; these sustainable sentiments will serve our characters.[2]

Character has also been colloquially defined as "what you do when no one is looking." It is difficult to conceive of character without thinking of Martin Luther King's famous dream that individuals might be judged by the content of their character, and that thought leads in turn to his admonition: "The truth will set you free."

The relationship between truth and character is inextricably close and reciprocal. For we cannot truly be of high character based upon falsehood or charade. Conversely, our character cannot be known except to the degree that it is truthfully revealed. Indeed, character is *determined* by the truth as it is made evident in reliable records of our behavior in various contexts. Documentation is critical because of the unreliability of human perception as well as the fallibility of human memory, the psychology of deceit, and the natural tendency for irrational thought. Indeed, Charles Ford suggests the most important lesson with respect to deception is how we use lies to deceive *ourselves*.[3] How can we be of high character if we cannot even be truthful to ourselves? And how can we be truthful to ourselves if we have no reliable, objective (i.e., documentary)

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[1] Although their book was published nearly a decade ago, in 1994, it seems likely they might argue the principles they outlined then remain true today, perhaps even more so.

[2] *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the NewCapitalism*, Richard Sennett, p. 10.

[3] For more information on Ford's views on the psychology of deceit, see http://ambur.net/Lies.htm. Daniel Schacter's views on the sins of human memory are highlighted at http://ambur.net/MemorySins.pdf and Robyn Dawes' views on irrationality are discussed at http://ambur.net/irrationality.htm.

evidence (i.e., records) upon which to base our understandings and beliefs?

The relationship between character and records is also implicit in Sennett's observation that character is what we "seek to save and sustain" of our essence – since records are the informational traces of reality that are created, saved, and sustained as we conduct our affairs, particularly our business activities. Records are evidence of our behavior, which in turn is the best evidence of our character that can be observed by others.

Connors and his colleagues highlight the argument that "people have lost so much of their personal power to affect their circumstances and shape their lives that they must look to others for the means to succeed."[4] (pp. 4-5) Consequently, the authors note "the legal language in this country dealing with rights has become extremely well developed, while the language dealing with responsibility and accountability lags far behind ..."[5] (pp. 6-7)

Furthermore, they suggest "...exposure for the victims of schemes, deals, mismanagement, neglect, abuse, incompetence, lies, mistakes, manipulations, and a host of other circumstances reinforces victimization attitudes." (p. 7) Thus, when confronted with poor performance or unsatisfactory results, "The majority of people in organizations today ... immediately begin to formulate excuses, rationalizations, and arguments for why they cannot be held accountable, or, at least, not fully accountable for the problems." (p. 8)

Ultimately, Connors and his colleagues suggest, "***The culture of victimization has weakened the American character, stressing*** ease over difficulty, ***feeling good over being good, appearance over substance, saving face over solving problems, illusion over reality***." (p. 8, emphasis added) Accordingly:

> ***With great excitement and fanfare*** ... wizards have taken America's best corporations on adventure after adventure down interesting, but imaginary, paths to lands of Oz where they make proclamations that are more "make believe" than "make it happen." ... Moving from one illusion of what it takes to achieve organizational effectiveness to another, ***executives never stop long enough to discover the truth***. (p. 9, emphasis added)

The reference to "excitement" and "fanfare" is insightful because, as Norman notes, people at all stations in life have a strong tendency to favor "experiential" rather than "reflective" cognition. That is, we prefer to be entertained rather than engage in critical thought.[6] On the other hand, Connors and company note:

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[4] In support of their thesis they cite *A Nation of Victims: The Decay of the American Character*, by Charles Sykes.

[5] In support of this point they cite Mary Ann Glendon's book entitled *Rights Talk*.

[6] For more information on Donald Norman's ideas about "things that make us smart," see http://ambur.net/smart.htm.

In reality when you strip away all the trappings, gimmicks, tricks, techniques, methods, and philosophies of the latest management "fads," you find them all, albeit awkwardly, striving to accomplish the same thing: to produce greater accountability for results... *the essence of organizational success will always be found in the accountable actions and attitudes of individuals*. (p. 9, emphasis added)

The point is very well-taken but fails to take the argument to its logical conclusion and, thus, leaves too much wiggle room for evasion and doubt. Accountability for the actions, much less for attitudes, cannot be reliably established *except* upon the basis of records, and that is true for individuals at all levels in any organization. To think otherwise is to deceive ourselves as well as others, to the degree we may have the social power to do so.[7]

Speaking of those who have power over others, Connors and his colleagues observe, "Given the huge compensation received by America's top chief executive officers, you'd think they'd be turning in stunning leadership performances. Unfortunately, too many CEOs hand off accountability to subordinates without acknowledging their own responsibility for creating results." (p. 10) In turn, "... many *people* in American organizations, *wanting to feel good about themselves* when results don't materialize, *would rather offer excuses* for why they didn't get the expected results *than find ways to overcome the obstacles* keeping them from those results." (p. 13, emphasis added)

That's another way of saying that it is a natural human tendency to want to re-create history to suit our immediate and subsequent purposes. It also explains why many people do not *want* good records – because reliable evidence constrains their ability to re-craft reality as they wish, particularly since we often set ourselves up for failure. For example, referencing the devastating oil spill at Valdez, Alaska, Connors and colleagues suggest, "... Exxon was rather predictably traveling through each stage of the victim cycle ..." (p. 16) And they are far from alone on that journey. Dorner notes that such behavior is common. Indeed, he says people routinely "court failure in predictable ways."[8]

Insightfully, Connors and company aver: "... research and experience suggest that *the majority of workers who feel they have no control over their jobs* <u>*choose*</u> *to feel that way*. *Rather than accept accountability for making things different and better, they actually behave like victims of circumstance*." (p. 17, emphasis added) This dynamic is greatly abetted by the lack of records authoritatively establishing not only responsibilities but also actual performance and results achieved pursuant to individual actions. So the answer to the question posed by Connors and his colleagues is not at all surprising:

... why accept any blame for the ultimate disaster, when it's so easy to find someone else

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[7] For a discussion of the bases of social power in the information age, see http://ambur.net/French&Raven.

[8] For more information on Dorner's views on "the logic of failure," see http://ambur.net/failure.pdf.

on whom to heap it? ***It's so natural to excuse yourself from blame***. It's so human to pretend you really didn't understand the risks or the circumstances. And it's so common to wait and see if things will somehow, someway get better, without any undo effort on you part. (p. 18, emphasis added)

On the other hand, they suggest, "Down deep, we know that others are not at fault when we have made mistakes or 'dropped the ball'." (p. 19) However, to get "above the line" and out of the "victim cycle," they say we must climb four *Steps to Accountability*:

- See it – involves recognizing and acknowledging the full reality of a situation.

- Own it – means accepting responsibility for the experiences and realities you create for yourself and others.

- Solve it – entails changing reality by finding and implementing solutions to problems that you may not have thought of before.

- Do it – entails mustering the commitment and courage to follow through with the solutions you have identified. (p. 18)

With reference to the need to "see" reality, perception is notoriously unreliable. Not only do groups of people see different things when confronted with the very same events, but individuals perceive the same phenomena differently based upon context and expectations. Thus, it is difficult, if not impossible to "see," much less recognize and acknowledge the "full reality" of any situation unless it is adequately documented so that we can revisit it as often and from as many different perspectives as necessary.

Likewise, it is difficult, if not impossible to truly "own it" unless "it" is documented in a manner that clearly and complete establishes the relevant linkages not only to our rights and responsibilities, but also to our actual behavior. Moreover, it is unfair and foolish to suggest that we should endeavor to "own" anything over which we may not have practical control. Indeed, the definition of scapegoating is the assignment of responsibility without adequate resources to carry it out. In short, it is impossible to truly know with any degree of certainty what realities we are "creating for ourselves and others" unless both our actions as well as the results that can be tied directly to them are adequately and reliably recorded.

Moreover, the quest for solutions is greatly hampered if the failures of the past are not well documented. Indeed, the implications of the sins of memory highlighted by Schacter include the fact we may not even accurately recall what potential solutions we have tried before unless they have been adequately documented.[9] In other words, we may fall into the rut of repeating the

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[9] For more information on the seven "sins" of human memory, as documented by Daniel Schacter, see http://ambur.net/memorysins.pdf.

same tried and failed solutions.[10] It is difficult to improve upon that which we may not even be aware due to incomplete or faulty perceptions compounded by the frailties of human memory.

The root cause of all instances of waste, fraud, and abuse is the failure of individuals and organizations, first, to adequately document their activity as they "do it" and, second, to effectively manage and share with their stakeholders the records created in the routine course of their business processes. It is not enough simply to "follow through with the solutions [we] have identified." We must also have the "courage and commitment" to *document* not only the "solutions" we have identified but also the analyses that led up to our conclusions as well as the actions we take in "follow-up" and, of course, the actual outcomes achieved as results of our actions.

With respect to organizational leadership, Connors and colleagues assert:

> Accountability for results rests at the very core of the total quality, employee empowerment, customer satisfaction, and continuous improvement movements ... Interestingly, the essence of these programs boils down to getting people to become personally *accountable* ... ***Creating ... individual accountability is the number one managerial and leadership challenge facing organizations*** ... while many people and organizations recognize the pervasive and urgent need for such accountability, few know how to create it or maintain it ... (p. 19, emphasis added)

Perhaps the reason few organizations know how to create individual accountability is because organizational leaders are slow to expect others to do what they themselves, as human beings, prefer not to do, which is to ensure that clear and complete records are created and maintained documenting their actions. Instead, as Connors and his colleagues note, "All of us at one time or another succumb to the urge to take ourselves 'off the hook' with one excuse or another ..." and "... all our justifications for failure focus on 'why it can't be done,' rather than on 'what *else* I can do'." (p. 20)

Drawing on their Wizard of Oz analogy, the authors suggest: "... many American business people and organizations the world over suffer from the same feeling of anxiety and helplessness than beset Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Lion, and the Tin Man on their trek down the yellow brick road to Oz. ... people who use their victimization to justify inaction, excuse ineffectiveness, or rationalize poor performance unwittingly stifle their own progress ..." (p. 23)

On the other hand, they note, "... people who accept accountability for making things better move beyond their victimization to overcome obstacles, deal with setbacks, and rise to new heights." (p. 23) They suggest, "There is a line between accountability and victimization that separates rising above your circumstances to get the results you want and falling into the victim cycle where you can easily get stuck." (p. 28) However, "Even the strongest commitment to accountability will not prevent you from ever falling 'below the line.' That sort of perfection is

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[10] One definition of insanity is performing the same actions over and over againand expecting a different outcome.

not humanly possible. Everyone, even the highest achievers, can get stuck in the victim cycle on occasion, but those who are truly accountable never remain there for long." (p. 29)

Avoidance of being stuck "below the line" requires regular reality checking, which in turn requires reliable records documenting both actions taken and results achieved, as well as drawing the logical connections between them. However, Connors and company note:

> *People and organizations* operating "below the line" *consciously or unconsciously avoid accountability for results*... If they choose to continue feeling victimized, they will move through predictable stages in an unending cycle that thwarts individual and organizational productivity: ignoring or pretending not to know about their accountability, claiming it's not their job, ducking their responsibility, blaming other for their predicament, citing confusion as an excuse for inaction, asking others to tell them what to do, claiming that they can't do it, developing their story for why they are not at fault, and finally waiting to see if some hoped-for miracle will be bestowed by an imaginary wizard. (p. 29)

Indeed, as we wait in vain anticipation of miracles, the authors explain, "*[We] find [ourselves] spending valuable time crafting a compelling story detailing why [we] were not at fault.* (p. 33, emphasis added) Not only do stories substitute for reliable records of actual actions and results, but Dawes argues stories also lead to irrational decision-making – since they inevitably leave out relevant facts.[11]

Connors and company say the victim cycle runs through many stages but six are basic and common to most people and organizations. (p. 33) Two that are particularly relevant to this discourse are *ignore/deny* and *cover your tail*. With respect to the former, they say, "...*people pretend not to know that there is a problem, remain unaware that the problem affects them, or choose to altogether deny the problem... It almost seems impossible for those in the 'denial mode' to see what is really going on around them*." (p. 34, emphasis added) This dynamic is abetted by the lack of records confronting us with reality. The challenge is summed up in the authors' reference to Mark Twain's assertion, "it's not what you don't know, it's what you know that just ain't so." (p. 36)

With respect to the tail-covering dynamic, Connors and his colleagues observe:

> ...*people craft elaborate and precise "stories"* as to why they couldn't possibly be blamed for something that might go wrong. These stories can be, and often are, *generated after the fact*. However, as amazing as it may seem, the vast majority of these stories are prepared before the results are even known, "just in case" an eventual problem or potential failure should occur. There are a number of methods that people use when they "cover their tail." These range from documenting everything in writing to sending back-up E-mail messages that can be saved and used as later proof that they are not to

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[11] For more information on Robyn Dawes' views on storytelling and irrationality, see http://ambur.net/irrationality.htm.

blame. You may have had the experience of someone coming to you to substantiate the sequence of events and the nature of your conversations in order to build an alibi that may prove useful in the future. (p. 43)

Again, the point is well-taken but, unless extended to its logical conclusion, could contribute to an undesirable outcome. The fact that individuals document their actions and engage in reality checking with others is most definitely *not* the problem, except to the degree that it may become excessive. Rather, problems result if those efforts are *disconnected* from the actual business process and are aimed at re-writing reality rather than re-crafting it in advance, based upon reliable records of the linkages between actions taken and results achieved in the past.

To the degree that the process itself creates records, they constitute the evidence that is most highly pertinent. As the authors suggest, efforts to document understandings apart from the actual business process itself may constitute tail-covering and, at best, they may be unproductive. On the other hand they may also be taken as a sign the leaders of the organization have failed to establish open and reliable channels for necessary feedback. Not only may the lack of such records serve the psychological needs of leaders but "followers" may also willingly, if unconsciously enter into a Faustian conspiracy to conceal them.

Paradoxically, even though it is contrary to our longer-term best interests, the authors note: "***People tend to remain in the victim cycle because they find certain comforting, if not self-defeating, rewards***... Such rewards include 'I don't have to admit I was wrong,' 'I won't lose face,' 'I don't have to do anything differently in the future,' and 'I can justify my lack of performance and growth'." (p. 46, emphasis added) This dynamic is abetted by the lack of reliable records documenting the relevant linkages between individual performance and organizational results. In that respect, Connors and colleagues argue:

> ... on the road to results our society has adopted a much too shallow definition of accountability, one that is myopic in scope and that, ultimately, does not create the empowering influence of true accountability... most people view accountability as something that happens to them or is inflicted upon them, choosing to perceive it as a heavy burden to carry... many people think about accountability as a concept or principle to be applied only when something goes wrong or when someone else is trying to determine causes and pinpoint blame. (p. 59)

That dynamic too is fostered by the lack of records documenting reality in way that it cannot plausibly be denied. If we only care about records when something goes wrong, the message is pretty clear. Accordingly, it is not surprising that: "... millions of people in thousands of organizations expend their valuable time and energy justifying their lack of performance instead of focusing on ways to improve performance." (p. 60)

Acknowledging that there are many real instances of victimization, Connors and colleagues argue, "... whether you are a true victim or a pseudovictim, you will never overcome a hurtful past until you develop a present and future-oriented view of your own accountability for getting more out of life. To achieve such a shift in how you view things, you must start with a better,

more proactive definition of accountability."[12] (p. 63) Moreover, they suggest there are two major reasons that require redefinition of the meaning of accountability:

> First ... society and organizations have stimulated people to feel more responsible for explaining their results than for achieving them... ***many people seem to think that a good explanation can excuse a poor result***. The contemporary view of accountability tends to emphasize past actions as opposed to current or future efforts.

> Second, in a complex and changing world, ***only a complete definition of accountability, one that captures all the historical as well as the current and future aspects of a person's responsibility and one that stresses the proactive instead of reactive, can reverse America's decaying character and revitalize its institutions***. (p. 64, emphasis added)

In other words, what is needed are current and complete sets of records that establish linkages between individual behavior and organizational results and which are readily available to organizational stakeholders. The problem is not that accountability focuses on past actions. Indeed, the problem is the failure to capture, maintain, and make readily available true and complete records not only of past actions but also the results they generate. John Case calls this concept "open-book management."[13] Connors and company say the following definition of accountability captures the essence of the Oz Principle:

> An attitude of continually asking "what else can I do to rise above my circumstances and achieve the results I desire?" It is the process of "seeing it, owning it, solving it, and doing it." It requires a level of ownership that includes making, keeping, and proactively answering for personal commitments. It is ***a perspective that embraces both current and future efforts rather than reactive and historical explanations***. (p. 65, emphasis added)

In other words, it entails taking responsibility for ensuring that one will be creating a record of which one can truly be proud, based upon complete and truthful accounting of the contributions of one's actions to the results achieved, not only for oneself but for others as well. Our tendency to want to create "reactive and historical explanations" should not be taken as an excuse to fail to create and maintain honest and accurate records of our business processes *on an ongoing basis, as they occur*. Connors and company continue:

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[12] Addressing the University of Georgia Law School, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas advised graduates to persevere through hardship and consider themselves "heroes" rather than "victims" lacking options. He implored them to conduct themselves so as to be able to assert several decades from now that they had done their best. In short, he urged them to create personal life stories of which they can truly and truthfully be proud, based upon reliable records of their actual performance regardless of the obstacles that may be placed in their way. Source: *The Washington Post*, May 18, 2003, p. A13.

[13] For more information on Case's views, see http://ambur.net/openbook.htm.

...accountability works best when people share ownership for circumstances and results. The old definition of accountability leads people to assign "individual responsibility" without acknowledging the shared accountability that so often characterizes organizational behavior and modern life... Assigning singular responsibility may comfort the majority, but the fact remains, organizational results come from collective, not individual, activity... when an organization fails to perform well, it's a collective or shared failure. (p. 67)

Once again, the point is well-taken but should be considered with caution because of the truism "when everyone is responsible, no one is responsible." There is no doubt that we must rely upon each other to achieve outcomes none of us could accomplish alone. However, in the final analysis, unless we are Siamese twins, each of us is indeed an independent actor – even if our actions are coerced by others or by bureaucratic force of habit. Connors and his colleagues argue:

> When people look at their accountability to the organization they usually view it strictly in terms of their own individual responsibility. As a result, things tend to fall through the cracks because the fall outside of the boundaries they have drawn around independent aspects of their job... When people assume ... joint accountability for all aspects of a project, the cracks or boundaries disappear, and people then see it as their responsibility to make sure the ball is not dropped. (p. 68)

These assertions should be taken with a degree of skepticism and subjected to critical thought. While to a large extent we are indeed our brother's keeper, busy people in modern organizations have a hard enough time keeping track of their own obligations, much less those of everyone else in their immediate work groups, not to mention the organization as a whole. What Connors and company call "cracks" others have called "hand-offs," suggesting that the number of them should be reduced. However, the number of hand-offs required is dependent upon the complexity of the task. Just as none of us can accomplish great things alone, neither can such tasks be accomplished without reliable means of passing intermediate work outputs from one person to another. When such work outputs are information, another term for them is "records" and the objective is to ensure the record passed from one person to another is of sufficient quality to meet the needs of the next person in the value chain.[14]

Connors and his colleagues missed the boat in suggesting that some fuzzy notion of mutual accountability might suffice in lieu of reliable records. However, their observation is certainly true that "... ***many people have become experts at concocting explanations and victim stories***. ***While doing so may provide an illusion of safety, that illusion can so easily be shattered by reality***." (p. 72, emphasis added) Reality is represented, as best it can be known in this life, in reliable records. Consider in that context the following "clues" the authors suggest can be used to enable us to stay "above-the-line":

● You invite candid feedback from everyone about your own performance.

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[14] For further discussion along this line of thought, see http://ambur.net/CusRight.htm.

- You never want anyone, including yourself, to hide the truth from you.

- You readily acknowledge reality, including all its problems and challenges. (p. 85)

Feedback, truth, and reality all depend upon reliable records. The best way to "invite" feedback is through performance objectives mutually agreed upon between each individual in the value chain, with metrics built into the means by which our work is actually carried out. It is not necessary for such objectives to be inspirational. That is the role of vision statements. Moreover, inspiration is about motivation, not about performance. Vision is about pursuit, not achievement. To cite the oft-used cliche, it is "a journey, not a destination." However, in order to know whether we are getting anywhere (i.e., making progress), objectives, milestones, and records are required. Objectives need not be bold or aggressive. Indeed, they should be *realistic.* Otherwise the effect will inevitably be to create incentives to fudge the record of results, thus violating the author's second and third "clues" of "below the line" behavior.

Ironically, the authors hold up as a role model Jack Welch, the legendary, recently retired CEO of General Electric. In particular they cite his definition of management as "looking reality straight in the eye and then acting upon it with as much speed as you can." (p. 92) In retrospect their use of Welch as a role model is highly instructive since exposure of the records associated with his retirement benefits caused a scandal that resulted in his disavowal of most of those benefits.[15]

The point is not to demean Welch's vision or perhaps even his integrity relative to any of the rest of us. Indeed, when publicly confronted with the evidence of the sweetheart deal he had worked out for himself, he quickly rescinded it, thereby demonstrating in practice his own definition of management. ***The point is that accountability depends upon reliable records that are readily available to stakeholders***. No amount of rhetoric, organizational theorizing, or hero worship can supplant the need for such records. Otherwise and inevitably, as Connors and company note: "***People most frequently fail to see reality because they choose to ignore or resist changes in the external environment***." (p. 94, emphasis added)

It is far easier to ignore not only changes but also everyday realities if they are not made explicit in reliable records. Lacking such records we are free to shape reality as we see fit in the inner workings of our own minds, at least until reality "sets in" with consequences that are undeniably unpalatable – as in the case of public exposure of Welch's corporate largess to himself.

Having ironically selected Welch as a "poster child" for "above the line" behavior, the authors assert the first step toward accepting accountability is to acknowledge and accept reality. (p. 99) However, they note:

> In most troublesome situations, people do know, in the back of their minds, that acknowledging reality means they'll have to do something about their situation, first

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[15] In *At Any Cost*, Thomas O'Boyle "holds Welch personally responsible for various scandals over the years at some of GE's multifarious appendages." Source: http://hallaudiobooks.com/general/175.shtml

viewing their situations differently, then acting differently to improve their situations. Viewing a situation differently often means getting comfortable with the fact that you did something wrong, admitting that you yourself could have done more and didn't, or deciding that since you can't do anything to remedy the situation you may as well move on. Doing something differently about your situation often requires doing things you dislike doing, such as taking a risk you've been avoiding or confronting an issue or person you've been ignoring. (p. 100)

It is unclear that Welch accepts the fact that his behavior was wrong or that it ever occurred to him in the inner recesses of his mind that he might be discovered and chastised for it. What *is* clear is that he was embarrassed when the record of it became public. To his credit, at that point he did something about it. In light of his temperament, position of power, and resulting visibility to the public, it would have been difficult for him to establish believable victim story. However, for the rest of us mere mortals, as Connors and his colleagues observe:

> ***Embracing ... realities can prove difficult because doing so involves shedding the protective cocoon of a victim story***. It seems so much safer to remain in the victim cycle, but the cocoon really offers only an illusion of safety because eventually the time will come to pay the piper for your inaction. When you give yourself permission to do nothing about your situation, when you don't act, don't learn, don't acknowledge your responsibility, don't admit having done wrong, don't face the facts, don't give up the sympathy that a victim story attracts, and don't look for what else you could do to achieve results, your behavior gets you nowhere. (p. 100, emphasis added)

Thankfully, one thing Welch clearly is not is a victim. When confronted with his wrongdoing, he soon disavowed it – at considerable cost, which he easily could accept while remaining an exceedingly wealthy man. In that sense, he was clearly in a better position to cut his losses than most of the rest of us. Yet, on a more optimistic note, the authors suggest:

> Even the most habitual victim would rather be leading a better life, but achieving a "break through" usually requires a "break with" *past actions* and attitudes. That means that any person feeling victimized must replace his or her victim story with a willingness to see things as they really are and not as they appear to be from the tenuous safety of the victim cycle. To create a better future, you must often break with the past. (p. 101)

Obviously, that does not mean *forgetting* about the past. Preferably, individuals and organizations should *learn* from it. Toward that end, Connors and company suggest the following steps:

●   ... strive to broaden your scope of understanding about the problem you face by seeking greater understanding from a wide array of resources...

●   test your view of reality with other people when faced with a perplexing problem...

●   consciously and actively work to get 'above the line' by objectively acknowledging

reality...

- acknowledge how you contributed to a lack of results. (p. 106)

Acknowledging the difficulty of following their prescription, the authors note: "Although painful and embarrassing at times, the honest input from others helps create the accurate picture of reality that lies at the core of accountability. Since no one individual can mandate a perfectly accurate description of reality, you must draw from many other people's perceptions to imbue your reality with the deepest possible understanding of its many hues and shades." (p. 107)

Highlighting the unreliability of perception, Connors and company add, "... other peoples' perceptions of reality, whether you agree with them or not, always add important nuances to your own perception of reality." (p. 108) Continuing this line of reasoning, they observe and suggest:

> There are right and wrong ways to seek feedback. If you don't do it right, you may only hear what people think you want to hear. To gain the most honest feedback, you should follow these tips: 1. Ask for feedback in the right environment ... 2. Tell the person from whom your seeking feedback that you want honest input about a particular situation or concern. ... explain your motivation. 3... don't get defensive, even if you strongly disagree with something the person says. 4. Listen carefully and ask for elaboration (...be sure not to off-handedly invalidate feedback which is not supported by examples). (pp. 110-111)

Again, however, none of these tips are substitutes for reliable records created by the actual business process itself. Rather than encouraging employees to engage in such behaviors on an *ad hoc* basis, organizational leaders should endeavor to build into the business process itself procedures and systems generating the relevant records providing the appropriate kinds and degrees of feedback in order to optimize performance. Notwithstanding the psychological and social forces opposing the creation and use of such records, the cult of victimization cannot be overcome without them. In competitive markets, both jobs as well as the continued existence of entire companies are dependent upon good corporate record-keeping principles, systems, and practices. (By contrast, in social and political systems inefficient, corrupt, and authoritarian power structures are often supported by *poor* and misleading record-keeping systems, including misinformation and disinformation.)

Citing the dynamics of "the new metaphysics of work," Connors and his colleagues quote a pair of *Time* magazine articles as follows:

> Companies are portable, workers are throwaway. The rise of the knowledge economy means a change, in less than 20 years, from an overbuilt system of large, slow moving economic units to an array of small, widely dispersed economic centers, some as small as the individual boss. In the new economy, geography dissolves, the highways are electronic... Companies become concepts and, in their dematerialization, become strangely conscienceless. And jobs are almost as susceptible as electronics to vanishing into thin air... America's growing reliance on temporary staffers [is] a trend that's shattering the tradition of employee loyalty and commitment. [For example,] Manpower,

Inc., with 560,000 workers, is the world's largest temporary employment agency. (p. 116)

Connors asserts, "the United States has entered a new era, the *free-lance economy*, where the ranks of part-timers, temps, and independent contractors are expanding while the traditional full-time work force is shrinking." (p. 117) They cite projections that the ranks of such "shadow brigades" are growing so rapidly they are soon expected to outnumber permanent full-time workers. Yet, they note, "While this trend may benefit the bottom line, it can take its toll not only in terms of alienated relationships among co-workers, but also in terms of pride in product quality and customer satisfaction." With respect to these dynamics, they ask: "Will 'temps' care as much as full-time workers about the long-term consequences of their jobs? Will they be as willing to go beyond their job description in order to get the results? Or, will they use their job description as justification for why they failed to get results? Will they feel victimized by an organization that wants to 'rent' their services, but requires them to 'own' their jobs?" (p. 117)

While they don't provide answers to those questions, Connors and his colleagues, quote Robert Schaen and add their own assertion, as follows:

> "The days of the mammoth corporations are coming to an end. People are going to have to create their own lives, their own careers and their own successes. Some people may go kicking and screaming into the new world, but there is only one message there: You're now in business for yourself." In the free-lance economy "owning" your circumstances, whether for a week temping in an unfamiliar organization or for a few years in a career-enhancing position or for a lifetime in your own business, will become more and more critical for every American. (p. 117)[16]

With respect to their notion of "ownership," Connors and colleagues observe and aver:

> All too often people view unhappy circumstances as positions in which they find themselves stuck; yet when they find themselves in happy circumstances, they tend to take credit for a job well done. Ownership should not depend on the quality of your circumstances... Selective perception not only prevents people from owning their contribution to the creation of their circumstances, but it keeps them mired in the victim cycle. (p. 120)

Selective perception is abetted by the lack of current and complete records, and records managers and records management as a discipline have contributed this dynamic is by espousing the notion

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[16] While drawing similar conclusions about the fate of organizations, Charles Handy makes a contrary assertion concerning the notion of "ownership". Instead, he suggests, the concept of *stewardship* is more appropriate. For more information on Handy's views on organizations and stewardship in relation to the need for reliable records, see http://ambur.net/certainty.htm. Also, in *The Social Life of Information*, John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid, suggest that existing institutions are far more resilient than the proponents of information technology realize, because of the social values associated with organizations as human systems.

that it is incumbent upon individuals to "declare" the records with which they are associated to be "records". Other "documentary materials" have been considered to be "nonrecords," as if the evidence they contain did not exist. To overcome this dynamic and adopt a more accountable attitude, among the questions Connors suggests that we might ask ourselves include:

- What things did you pretend not to know?

- What clues or evidence did you ignore?

- What could you have learned from your previous similar experiences that might have helped you avoid or minimize the negative outcome? (p. 125)

Explaining why so many people "fail to own it," the authors assert:

> People most often fail to own their circumstances because they cannot bring themselves to accept the accountable side of their story... [As the cliché states] there're two sides to every story. The victim side stresses only one side of the story, the one that suggests you played no role in creating the circumstances. In a difficult situation, it's easy to feel "had" or "let down" and to let yourself "off the hook" ... ***Victim stories tend to screen out all evidence of accountability***. (p. 127, emphasis added)

In turn, Connors and his cohorts observe:

> All too often, such people blame their lack of happiness on perplexing circumstances that seem totally beyond their control. Rather than own their circumstances by seeing the whole story, they choose to view themselves as incapable of modifying their situations through their own actions, resigning themselves to being "acted upon" by influences and forces rather than the other way around. (pp. 130-131)

The author's use of the term "such people" may lead some of us to assume that we are not among them. However, as Connors and colleagues observe, we should not be quick to conclude that we are immune:

> It seems ironic that, in this age of information, ***millions of people feel*** such ***a lack of control over their lives.*** Obviously, the communications revolution has done little to overcome, and may have contributed to, a feeling of detachment and disconnectedness with circumstances and other people. As a result, America has truly come perilously close to becoming "a nation of victims," in which its citizens feel paralyzed rather than empowered by what they observe and learn every day. ***In such a climate, it's not terribly surprising that so many people resist ownership of the consequences of their own behavior***. (p. 131, emphasis added)

Yet again, the point is well-taken but the authors fail to extend it to its logical end – which is to establish in reliable records the degrees to which people actually *do* have control over their own lives, as well as the degrees to which others have been empowered to exert control over them,

with or without their knowledge and concurrence.[17] As Connors and colleagues assert: "A nation of observers is not a nation of participants. If you sit on the sidelines watching 'the game of your life' play out before your eyes, you relinquish your ability to affect the outcome..." (p. 131) However, life will remain a "game" unless and until the important aspects of it are well-documented in reliable records establishing beyond reasonable doubt the causes and effects of individual actions.[18] Ironically, in many games, far better records of individual and group performance are kept than in most business processes. Indeed, one of the advantages Case cites for open-book management is that "it turns business into something resembling a game."[19]

By contrast, the authors suggest, "... ***most people quite naturally 'lock-in' on the victim facts*** that make them feel 'had' or 'let down' or 'victimized,' while they 'lock-out' the accountable facts that support their own role in creating the situation." (p. 136, emphasis added) Such thought patterns are indeed quite natural. However, by engaging in them we fail to realize they we are in fact writing the record of our own existence at each moment of every day. Regardless of the circumstances in which we find ourselves at any instant, we have it within our power to create a record of which we can be truly and truthfully proud.

Yet, as Connors and company note, "... many people attempt to solve problems without 'seeing' or 'owning' reality, which makes the whole problem-solving effort nonsensical and misguided ..." (p. 148) Consequently, they say, "The risk in getting stuck 'below the line' is never obtaining the results you most earnestly seek..." To avoid that fate, "you must focus your efforts on removing the obstacles standing between you and the outcomes you desire [while] unhappy consequences await those who fail to do so." (p. 158) However, "Too often, we 'lock-in' on what can't be done and, as a result, stop looking for and stop thinking about other alternatives." (p. 162)

Dawes defines irrationality in terms of considering too few alternatives and he says people commonly engage in such thought and behavior.[20] Two of the means Connors and colleagues suggest to overcome such irrationality include *using a new paradigm* and*creating new linkages*.

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[17] As the saying goes, "just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not really after you.

[18] Norman suggests that people have a natural tendency to favor *experiential* versus *reflective* cognition, i.e., that they prefer to be entertained rather than to engage in productive thought. To the degree that is true, it helps to explain why we may prefer to engage in the "games of life" rather than holding ourselves accountable for making productive contributions to *improve* the *quality* of life for ourselves and others. For more information on Norman's views in relation to the need for reliable records, see http://ambur.net/smart.htm.

[19] *Open-Book Management*, p. 51. For more on Case's views, see http://ambur.net/openbook.htm.

[20] For more on Dawes' views in relation to the need for high-quality records, see http://ambur.net/irrationality.htm.

In support of the former, they quote Einstein as having said, "The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them." With respect to the need to create new linkages, they note that: "Many solutions require new approaches that tap into new ways of thinking and implementation. Often, such approaches involve forging new relationships that involve others you may not have previously considered to be a part of the solutions." (p. 162) However, "solutions generally come only when one takes the initiative to explore, search and question *after* you have done everything." (p. 163)

With respect to taking the initiative to discover solutions, the authors note the common observation: "there are three kinds of people in the world: those that make things happen, those that watch things happen, and those that wonder what happened."[21] (p. 163) For those who choose to make thins happen, Connors and colleagues assert that it is essential to "stay conscious, which they say means "overcoming the 'auto-pilot' mode and paying attention to everything that may have a bearing on potential solutions, particularly those things that we may be taking for granted which become accepted ways of operating or thinking." (p. 163)

Another way of stating the concept of "staying conscious" that is more practical and actionable for organizations is to say that current and complete records of all significant business factors should be created, maintained, and used in ongoing decision-making processes. However, in explaining why people fail to "do it," the authors note, "people naturally resist the perceived risks associated with becoming fully responsible for results." (p. 175) Indeed, they cite no lesser institution than the venerable IBM as an example of a company where "it became too difficult for management and employees to recognize the illusions of their own victim stories..." (p. 206) By contrast, they say:

> "Above-the-line" leaders risk their own comfort and security by going beyond symptoms to the core problems that spring from a lack of accountability... Unwilling to let themselves or others be fooled by the masks people wear to hide the reality of a situation , they drive relentlessly to determine the real reasons why people aren't achieving results. Not even the most elaborate and creative victim stories fool them into thinking that if someone else would just so the right thing everything would be fine. They understand that symptomatic cures continue to hide and even exacerbate the problem, not solve it. They do not get trapped in the excessive activity syndromes, they are not blinded by the smoke screen of programmatic solutions offered by organizational special interest groups desiring to mask their lack of results. ... They understand that changes in structures and systems often only hide the real problems – they have the ability to rise above the haze to see things as they really are. (p. 207)

The latter observation highlights a commonly pursued, yet inevitably ineffective means of glossing over problems while failing to address their underlying causes – bureaucratic reorganization, otherwise colloquially known as "reshuffling the chairs on the Titanic." Structural reorganization, including new "governance" procedures, is no *substitute* for effective

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[21] Lee Ioccoca stated this proposition somewhat more forcefully in terms of leading, following, or getting out of the way.

records management systems. Indeed, too often it such reorganizations are undertaken to *avoid* implementing effective records management systems. If business processes are adequately documented and those records are managed and used in a business-quality manner to link individual performance to organizational results, both accountability and performance can be assured. Moreover, the bureaucratic structure of the organization can be shown to be as irrelevant as it is, which may explain why those in positions of power are consciously or unconsciously opposed to the implementation and effective use of records management systems. Connors and company suggest, "If you define everything that happens as an accountability problem, you may misinterpret the complete picture. However, if you fail to discern the accountability factor in every problem, you will also make a mistake." (p. 208) The authors also assert:

> People can ... take accountability to the extreme by trying to control other people... like self-appointed "thought police"'[aka] ... overzealous extremist... "busybodies." No one can or should try to force another person to be more effective, more righteous, more knowledgeable, more productive, friendlier, braver, more trustworthy, or in any other way more politically or socially "correct." Coach them, encourage them, teach them, give them feedback, admonish them, love them, and lead them, but don't try to coerce them. (p. 209)

What should be managed are records, which should speak for themselves. Law-abiding adults should be free to manage their own behavior. It is not only demeaning to individuals but also inefficient and ineffective from the perspective of the organization to suggest otherwise. If records of individual contributions to organizational objectives are effectively managed, individuals will manage their own behavior with aplomb.

Connors and his coauthors say, "... many studies have indicated that over 90 percent of the things people worry about are completely outside their control; however, being accountable means worrying about things you can do something about." (p. 212) Those are the things that should be document in the records created, received, and processed by each of us, and those are the records the organizations that employ us should be preserving, managing, sharing, and using as corporate assets.

Although they do not use the term *scapegoating*, by implication they refer to it in asserting: "...a boss who deflects blame is a boss you don't want. Such bosses that lead from 'below the line' may in some cases experience short-term gains. In the long run, however, such 'below the line' behavior will only result in the loss of the trust, cooperation and focus needed to maximize results." They quote Joann Lublin, who notes, "A paper trail ... can vindicate an unfairly accused subordinate, especially if the mistake comes up later during a performance appraisal. ... give yourself an account of an incident and verify its date by sending yourself a certified letter and keeping the envelope sealed. ..." On the other hand they invite us to "Imagine the time, resources and energy people waste trying to protect themselves from such 'below the line' behavior of bosses." (p. 213)

However, in offering that suggestion they unwittingly appear to excuse the failure to create and

maintain adequate records in the routine course of our business processes. Instead, it would be better for us not only to *imagine* the time and resources organizations waste because they *fail* to manage and use their business records effectively, but also to *do* something about it! Toward that end, Connors and company assert: "Control your destiny is more than a useful business idea. For every individual, corporation, and nation, it is the essence of responsibility and the most basic requirement for success."[22] (p. 214) Again they cite Jack Welch as an exemplar, since he:

... set as his overriding goal empowering his people with the values of "self-confidence, candor, and an unflinching willingness to face reality, even when it's painful." ... Welch offers a compelling example of "above-the-line" leadership because he models "above-the-line" accountability in his own life, even when a problem besets him or his company. Like every leader, he knows he's not perfect. (p. 214)

Indeed, the record of his performance became quite evident upon his retirement, when he was no longer in such a powerful position to command the record of reality as it was exposed to (as well as hidden from the view of) GE's stakeholders and the public at large.

Explaining why subordinates may not trust the coaching provided by their leaders, Connors and colleagues suggest, "... your people may suspect you of having ulterior motives, particularly if you have participated with them in preparing victim stories in the past or if you have not previously established feedback as a pattern of communication in your relationship with them." (p. 218) To avoid that risk, they say:

> Leaders must make coaching a daily habit. ... while we have emphasized proactive coaching, which focuses on the present and the future, we have also come to appreciate the need for review of the past, what we call accounting for progress. ***When handled properly, an after-the-fact accounting can provide a person with an opportunity to measure progress toward results, learn from previous experiences, establish a sense of accomplishment, and determine what else can be done to get the desired results***. (p. 220)

In coming to appreciate the need for review of the past, Connors and his colleagues still grossly underestimate the importance of this point – since ***after-the-fact accounting is the only way that we can truly understand what happened at any instant, much less over any extended period of time***. In explaining the common logic of failure, Dietrich Dorner observes: "We rarely have trouble dealing with configurations in space. If we're not entirely sure of what we're looking at, we can take another look and resolve our uncertainty... That is not true of configurations in time. ***A time configuration is available for examination only in retrospect.***"[23] (p. 107, emphasis added) While Connors and colleagues understate the significance of this point, they do observe that too many leaders:

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[22] The authors reference Noel Tichy and Stratford Sherman's book *Control Your Destiny or Someone Else Will*. (p. 213)

[23] For more information concerning Dorner's views on the logic of failure, see http://ambur.net/failure.pdf.

- Wait for their people to do the right thing. Rather than asking for regular reports, they let them go, hoping that people will automatically measure their own progress.

- Avoid unpleasant confrontations that might possibly result from an unacceptable report. They fear that such a confrontation will damage their relationships with people.

- Allow skeletons to remain in the closet, rather than squarely facing troublesome issues that have gotten in the way of results...

- Tolerate excuses as true representations of reality when they know in their hearts that the excuses prevent people from accepting the true reality of a situation...

- Fail to convince people of the importance of reporting on progress...

- Insufficiently clarify their expectations or inadequately explain the purpose of accounting. They accept vague reports because they have set vague goals.

- Do not set a specific reporting timetable or schedule. They let people decide when and how they will account for progress...

- Do not understand that holding people accountable need not be a negative, hand-wringing, knuckle-crunching, head-bashing, life threatening experience for those involved. ... (pp. 220-221)

In organizations that operate "above the line," the authors say:

- People report regularly and thoroughly.

- People analyze their activities in an effort to determine what more they can do to get results...

- People welcome feedback. (p. 222)

What Connors and his colleagues do not say, but which is essential, is that: a) such *"feedback" and "regular and thorough reports" must be in the form of records having the attributes outlined in ISO 15489*, and b) *the creation, management, availability, and usage of such records should be automatically built into the routine course of business by which the work is done on an ongoing basis*. By contrast, in organizations operating "below the line," the authors say:

- People report only when asked to do so.

- People justify or explain their activities...

- People react defensively to suggestions for improvement. (p. 222)

While Connors and company fail to expressly address the requirement for reliable records, the need is implicit in their assertion: "... no organization can consistently behave and work 'above the line' without constant feedback. Continuous feedback must become a living, breathing part of the accountable organization's culture." (p. 234) Reinforcing the point, they quote a statesman whose fame is etched in history, while adding their own perspective on more contemporary organizational dynamics:

> Winston Churchill once said, "***First we shape our structures, and then our structures shape us.***" We think that holds especially true in this era of rapidly evolving organizations. ***If you want accountability to become a lasting and important part of your own organization's evolution, you must consciously foster accountability throughout every aspect of your organization's culture***... The secret lies in shaping the formal and informal systems with "above-the-line" values that redefine "going against the system" as "owning your circumstances and striving for better results." (p. 238)

While these are important truisms, by failing to establish the connection between accountability and reliable, readily accessible records, Connors and company miss the essential point – which is that ***accountability comes <u>only</u> from systems that effectively create, maintain, and make the appropriate records readily accessible***. As implied by Churchill's statement, ***by establishing systems that fail to do so, we are inevitably condemning ourselves to carrying out behaviors for which we feel and, indeed, are unaccountable***.

Indeed, by human nature, many and perhaps all of us implicitly prefer it that way. Instead, of keeping good records, as the authors note, we prefer to concoct and share stories, which have the power to "stir people's imaginations" while, the authors suggest, "concrete examples and anecdotes can make the point much more memorably than will a lot of philosophical or theoretical descriptions." (p. 242) Their point about examples is well-taken but misleading, because the evidence provided in stories is anything but "concrete," in the sense of being reliable and based upon objective evidence. Moreover, any example or set of examples may exclude relevant factors.[24] Indeed, in part, stories are memorable *because* they leave out aspects that are not salient but which may be highly pertinent.

With respect to the fallibility of eye witness testimony, for example, Daniel Schacter points out, in a phenomenon called "weapon focus ... [t]he emotionally arousing object draws attention automatically, leaving few resources to help encode the rest of the scene." Witnesses cannot later recount in the stories they tell facts that were not recorded in their memories in the first place. Instead, faced with gaps in our stories, we are highly prone to filling them in with assertions that seem logical to us, based upon what we think we "know".[25]

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[24] For information on how Robyn Dawes believes storytelling leads to irrational decision-making, see http://ambur.net/irrationality.htm.

[25] For more information on the seven sins of human memory as recounted by Schacter, see http://ambur.net/memorysins.pdf.

Similarly, in their accounting of the cult of victimization, the prescription offered by Connors and his colleagues lacks sufficient specificity to affect effective action and, thus, falls short of the requirements implied in their admonition:

> ... people only keep commitments when there is some sort of follow-up. This is particularly true when people are functioning in an environment of limited resources with numerous priorities that often appear to be conflicting ... In the typical cycle of making and keeping commitments, reporting tends to occur at the time the commitment should have been fulfilled. At that point it is too late to impact the activity... The Oz Principle suggests that follow-up occur well before the targeted completion date in order to increase everyone's chances of succeeding. (p. 246)

Toward that end, Connors and his colleagues observe:

> In creating clear accountability for making and keeping commitments, the two steps most often neglected by organizations are ...follow-up ... and ... taking responsibility... By focusing on these two steps as you work to build a culture of accountability into your organization you can begin to enjoy higher levels of accountability and greater results. (p. 248)

Again, however, they miss the essential point from which all other steps to accountability naturally flow: The first, most important step that most, if not all organizational leaders fail to take is to establish systems that automatically create the necessary records in the routine course of the ongoing business process. Addressing the requirements for "total quality improvement," H.J. Harrington forcefully made the point, as follows: "... there is one absolute necessity. The Document Control system *absolutely must* be developed and functioning before any other procedure is implemented. [Otherwise] the integrity of the system will suffer, and individuals may lose confidence in the system..."[26]

Why would anyone in their right mind have confidence in any system that enables others to re-write history by making up stories after-the-fact! Yet again, while missing the essential point, Connors and his coauthors hint at it in the following observation: "Ironically, in this so-called communications age, with all its networked computers, fancy phone systems, and screeching fax machines, many people accept poor communication as an organizational reality they feel powerless to correct." (p. 254) Without reaching the logical conclusion, they point further in the right direction in the following remarks about the fuzziness and, thus, inactionability of the common wisdom that "better communication" is what's needed:

> ...in most groups it's surprising how much talk and how little action surrounds a communication problem. One ... CEO grew so exasperated hearing his management team talk about a vague "communication problem" that he issued an edict that no one ever again utter the phrase... He would have been much wiser to stimulate people to go beyond

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[26] For more on Harrington's views on *Total Quality Improvement*, see http://ambur.net/RMmetrics.htm and http://ambur.net/ISO9000.htm.

talking about it to doing something about it. (p. 255)

He'd have been wiser still to have actually *done* something about the problem *himself*, namely, by implementing a system that automatically creates, manages, and shares records containing the information his managers need to do their jobs efficiently and effectively, while at the same time reporting not only the actions they take but also the outputs and results achieved. Yet again, Connors and colleagues point in that direction without actually reaching the desired destination, in the following assertion: "In today's environment, companies must learn how to manage organizational processes in a way that does not disconnect individual accountability from organizational results." (pp. 264-265)

Connors and his colleagues sum up their insightful, albeit incomplete argument on the journey of the cult of victimization through the Land of Oz as follows:

> Throughout this book we have talked about the pivotal role feedback plays in creating high levels of accountability within an organization. Yet it continually amazes us that few organizations establish an environment where feedback freely flows... By failing to confront poor performance, organizations unwittingly foster feelings of victimization among people who perform poorly but don't know it and thus can't effect improvements, as well as among people who must pick up the slack because of poor performance... executives, managers, and supervisors ... tend to cite several reasons for failing to deal with performance issues: the specter of lawsuits by poor performers who claim wrongful dismissal, a reluctance to hurt people's feelings, the difficulty of establishing a fair but effective review process, a tendency to shy away from time-consuming documentation, and a general fear of the risk involved in confronting poor performance. (p. 269)

Just as Dorothy learned on her return to Kansas from the Land of Oz, the authors conclude, "... only when you assume full accountability for your thoughts, feelings, actions, and results can you direct your own destiny; otherwise someone or something else will." (p. 277) That is certainly good advice for each of us as individuals in our personal and social lives. However, it falls far short of being an actionable charge for us as we attempt to organize, direct, and carry out our business and political affairs through the organizations we contrive for those purposes. For such purposes, as Harrington forcefully asserts, "The Document Control system *absolutely must* be developed and functioning before any other procedure is implemented." Otherwise we will remain forever in the Land of Oz ... and, truth be told, many of us prefer as much.