



Dedicated to the development of capacity and capabilities in adults for change and growth.

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## The Chaos Begins

**To:** [Don Prickel](#)

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 23, 2001 9:11 AM

**Subject:** Don, I am so excited!

Don, I put a call into Pecos River to ask if I could talk with someone about the learning theories that they base their work on. I got a call from Dave Schrader Ph.D. from Pecos and he talked with me for 1/2 hour today. The purpose of my call to him was to understand fully the work they do as I have such a passion for what they do. Dave was very open and gracious.

They have three components of their work. The first is a foundation of social cognitive theory. They base their work on the work of Dr. Maxie Maultsby, Jr. He suggested that I read Rational Behavior Theory. ...Second is the experiential learning piece, which is such a huge part of creating changes in road maps. They base their training on the work of Dave Kolb and recommended the book *Experiential Learning*. Third, the consulting work is based on John Kotter's work. *Leading Change* is what he recommended. Now I need to go out and buy these books, as this is exactly where I want to be. ...

Now for the best news! We are picking up Kinnera at the airport today. After a year wait, we finally are getting our little girl. This may be why I am a bit hyper! Don, wishing you the very best. Can't wait to talk with you. Hope your vacation is great.

### *Discussion of critical leap*

I lost my position in the dot.com industry on January 21, we picked up our new baby from India on January 23, and I engaged in a conversation with the curriculum director for Pecos, the organization that initiated my journey that same day. Each of these events in their own right would be a major event for me, however, combined they created an extraordinary amount of energy that was sorely needed with the dramatic changes in my life. As I come to the end of my masters work, experiential learning is still at the very center of what I am focusing on. My interest in experiential learning was the reason I called Pecos in the first place. The call was a critical step in my learning and set in motion my studies in experiential learning. Baker, Jensen, and Kolb (2002) describe learning in conversation as an experiential approach to leaning (p. 51). Experiential learning was the catalyst and core of my initial journey and is still at the core of my journey. I purchased and have studied all three of the recommended texts and have focused my research on conversational learning, the area of my passion.

### *Alignment with metaphor and learning philosophy and references to literature*

Experience is central to my metaphor. In my philosophy statement, experiential learning and especially experiential learning as group learning is an important area of focus and is central to Kolb (1984). An introduction to Kolb (1984) has been an important resource to me as I build my understanding of adult learning.

I also have a strong interest in leadership and its effect on the development of high performing teams. I found the work by Kotter (1996) revealing in its step by step process for leading change efforts in organizations. He describes leadership but not from a focus on the attributes of a great leader, but process steps that are necessary to insure that a change effort has a greater probability of success. As I learned later in the year, not paying attention to these very important processes steps can be costly. Unfortunately (fortunately?) I read the book after the experiences. In many respects, this book outlines many steps that are consistent with living systems thinking. It has been invaluable to my work and will continue to be so.

One of the most frustrating challenges that I have run into and still run into is helping someone move from not being willing to change and grow to being willing to change and grow. The reference to Maultsby (1984) became a valuable reference that I probably would not have found on my own. This is a great text and has helped me understand how to help others embrace rational frameworks and turn away from irrational thoughts that prevent change and growth.

All three referenced texts have provided me with valuable insights into organizational development and change and will continue to be valuable resources for my work in years to come. I am very grateful to Dr. David Schrader for his conversation and his recommendations, for our new baby that joined us on the same day, and most certainly for the loss of my dot.com position two days earlier, all of which helped me start my journey away from the safe haven of a career in sales and marketing management.

### *References*

Baker, A., Jensen, P., & Kolb, D. (2002). *Conversational learning: An experiential approach to knowledge creation*. Westport, CT: Quorum Books.

Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Kotter, J. (1996). *Leading change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Maultsby, M. (1984). *Rational behavior therapy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.