The Three Laws of Performance: Rewriting the Future of Your Organization and Your Life (J-B Warren Bennis Series)

By Steve Zaffron, Dave Logan

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A proven system for rallying all of an organizations' employees around a new vision and ideas for making the vision stick

When something at work isn't going smoothly, managers struggle with what part of the problem to tackle first. Do they start with cost reduction? Or should they go for process improvements first? The authors—who have helped hundreds of companies and individuals change and improve—say spend time and money adjusting the *systems* in which people operate, rather than targeting people and their performance directly. The authors show that it's in fact possible to change everything at once—with a focus on making such transformations permanent and repeatable.

- Brand-new Introduction written for the paperback edition
- Filled with illustrative examples from Northrup Grumman, BHP-Billiton, Reebok, Harvard Business School, and many others
- Two experts in the field show how to make major transformations happen

The book outlines a process for engaging all employees to buy-in to an improved vision of an organization's new and improved future.

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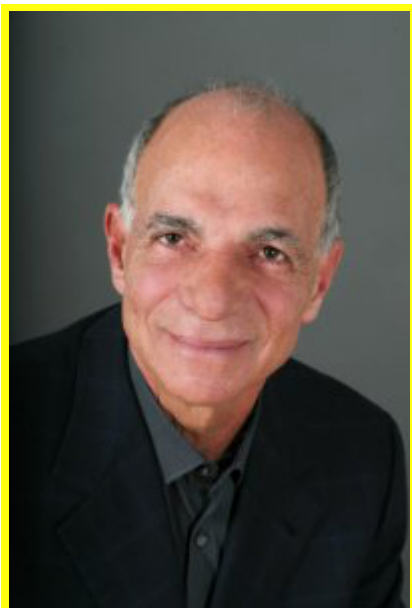⬇ **Download** The Three Laws of Performance: Rewriting the Futur ...pdf

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon-Exclusive Q&A with Steve Zaffron and Dave Logan

Author Steve Zaffron

What are the "three laws of performance"?

The laws of performance are universal. That is, any time people are involved in a situation, the laws apply. They aren't steps or tips, but general principles that are always at work. They are also phrased in a precise way, to give maximum insight and applicability. The laws are:

1. How people perform correlates to how situations occur to them.
2. How situations occur arises in language.
3. Future based language transforms how situations occur to people.

In your opinion, what do leaders struggle with the most and how can the laws help them?
The two biggest issues we hear from leaders are lack of buy-in and an absence in ownership. The first problem often becomes acute when the leaders, working with experts, determine what plan people should implement, and the work force doesn't want to do it, or doesn't engage with passion. Many leaders try to solve the resulting issues with incentives, which often make the problem worse, as Daniel Pink's book Drive demonstrates.

The second problem--absence of ownership--is related to lack of buy-in, but runs deeper. The problem, as many leaders have expressed to us, is that people don't treat the business as though it's their business. In some cases, it literally is their business, for example when people have some equity in the company through stock options. Yet even in many of these situations, people don't act as though they are owners. Many leaders have expressed that nothing they ever tried has fixed the ownership problem.

The Three Laws of Performance can help with both problems by encouraging leaders to see that people's actions are correlated to how situations occur to them. The second and third laws, taken together, say that future-based language—such as declarations, promises, and commitments—transform how situations occur to people. By focusing on the way in which things are " occurring to the people, their actions naturally shift. The point is clear when we remember that the Declaration of Independence transformed how the experience of being a colonist occurred for the colonists. The facts hadn't changed—the British still asserted their control. But the actions of the colonists shifted in a dance with the Declaration. What had been skirmishes by the colonists now became full-scale war and eventually the birth of a nation.

Author Dave Logan

The same situation happened recently in Egypt, when decades of tyrannical rule ended in 18 days. What really happened is that the situations occurred in a new way to Egyptians, and their actions naturally shifted. Imagine this level of empowerment and engagement in your organization. Using these three laws in an organization calls forth people's participation and involvement in surprising and exciting new ways.

It seems that people can apply the lessons here in many ways – how they communicate, how they think, how they act. Since publishing the hardcover version is there a "way" that stands out to you?
Since we're writing about laws, and not tips or techniques, there is not a single "way." Rather, there is a general flow of conversations that taps into the power of the Three Laws. The flow goes something like this:

1. Ask people: what is the "default future?" That is, what do people see coming at them in the future, almost for certain and unless something completely unexpected happens? Getting and experiencing what people see as the default future gives everyone insights into how people are experiencing the organization and their opportunities in it.
2. Go deeper:, asking people: "if this default future existed throughout the organization, what actions would people find themselves taking, perhaps even without thinking?" Even though people may not want the default future, it acts as a mostly unspoken, often unconscious, self-fulfilling prophecy. People find themselves making it happen through their actions. Getting people to see their role in this process is critical. People created the default future, and are actively bringing it about. The same people can rewrite the future.
3. Ask people: "is this default future what you want?" If the answer is a resounding "no," they have the ability to set the default future aside and create something new.
4. Invite people to consider this question: "what do you really want instead?" People should speculate until a new future—technically, called an "invented future," takes shape. For an invented future to be effective, it must take people's individual concerns into account, as well as the concerns of the organization and its

stakeholders.

5. Develop projects that make realize an aspect of the invented future.

As people successfully implement the projects resulting from this flow, the invented future occurs as more attainable to people. Over time, people will find themselves acting in line with the invented future. There are no steps required, no need to remember to act in a certain way. Elevated performance is now natural and automatic.

In your new epilogue to the paperback edition you zero on the three critical implications for leadership SINCE the first version in hardcover came out. Which one really stands out and why ?

The fundamental aspect of leadership that most people miss is the importance of listening. Listening, as we describe it, is not simply gathering data and opinions from people, but rather exploring how situations occur to them, what they aspire to make happen, and what stands in their way. By listening in this way, leaders combine what they hear from lots of people into an invented future that represents the bulk of people's concerns. When people hear the invented future, they say, "That speaks for me!" because it is, in part, their idea. Lack of buy-in and ownership are replaced with excitement, inspired action, and full engagement.

People seem to describe this as a "different" type of business book? Why is that?
In working with our editor, Warren Bennis, our goal was not to write another list of steps or platitudes. Frankly, such books accomplish little more than short-term motivation, or incremental improvement. Our goal was to focus on the fundamental laws that govern human performance. We didn't set out to write a simple book, but rather, a book that would make an impact. People have told us that the Three Laws of Performance has allowed them to approach old problems in new ways, and often move to elevated performance in much shorter time, and with less effort, than they had thought possible.

This book taps into what appears to be a shift in organizations to more openness, transparency etc. Do you agree? How so ?
Yes, we agree. Organizations are going through a shift for a variety of reasons, perhaps most importantly the ability to connect with other people. Years ago, companies could hide activities, especially in the developing world. Today, these activities are captured by cell phones and shared on social media. There's really no place to hide anymore. As a result, organizations need to transform adversarial relationships with governments, local populations, unions, and communities, into partnerships. Doing so requires really grasping why people do what they do. We believe the Three Laws of Performance gives leaders a unique insight into how to make this shift one in a way that inspires greater levels of satisfaction, results, and the experience of making a difference.

Review
"The Three Laws of Performance provides a list of rules (and stories explaining how they work in practice) that promise to help individuals in leadership roles facilitate the group coherence and cohesion that are necessary to bring about transcendent performance. The book is based on a wealth of experience from decades of applying the ideas it explains. If you're interested in this kind of theory, the book is worth a read." (*BrokenSymmetry.typepad.com*)

"I received an email a few weeks ago asking if I would be interested in reviewing the new book from Steve Zaffron and Dave Logan titled "the three laws of performance". I jumped at the opportunity….free book right?

Well…I'd happily pay twice the list price for this book and so should you….
The full title of the book is The Three Laws of Performance: Rewriting the Future of Your Organization and Your Life and it is called a 'Warren Bennis' book…if you like Bennis, you'll like this book too.

The premise of the book is that there are three laws that will always affect performance…just like the law of gravity will always have an effect on you.
The three laws are:

How people perform correlates to how situations occur to them
How a situation occurs arises in languages
Future based language transforms how situations occur to people

… This is a great book…I think it is one of the best books I've read in the last few years. Grab this book soon as you can and enjoy!" (*EricBrown.com*)

"Three Laws is about impossible transformations and how systemic change can remake your life or your organization." (*Life Insurance Selling*)

From the Inside Flap
How did companies, both large and small, in different countries and industries, all achieve breakthrough performance when the odds were stacked against them?

How did an engineer turned CEO transform his New Zealand steelmaking company around in one year and become a leader in the industry? How did a 600-person team, within the largest petroleum company in Brazil, overcome skepticism and dysfunctional dynamics to achieve the biggest process integration success in history? How did a major Japanese housing manufacturer thrive despite the worst economy in a generation? How did a South African platinum mine improve its safety performance by 57 percent in one year?

All of these results were possible because people applied *The Three Laws of Performance* and rewrote their futures. This book will show you how to do the same in your organization and your life.

Although most of us aren't aware of it, we have a future that's already been written. Our future is written by hopes, fears, dreams, expectations, and decisions made about life. In the same way, organizations have futures written by history, circumstances, culture, aspirations, successes, and failures. These already-written futures determine and shape the level of performance that's possible for individuals and organizations.

In *The Three Laws of Performance*, Steve Zaffron and Dave Logan crack the code on rewriting the future for people and organizations, elevating performance to unprecedented levels.

As Warren Bennis wrote in his editor's note: "I believe this book may be one of the most important written in many years. The ideas aren't tips, tools, or steps, but are in fact laws that govern individual, group, and organizational behavior. This book can be a resource for generations to come."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Kenneth Hand:

What do you consider book? It is just for students since they are still students or this for all people in the world, the actual best subject for that? Just you can be answered for that query above. Every person has diverse personality and hobby for each and every other. Don't to be pushed someone or something that they don't want do that. You must know how great along with important the book The Three Laws of Performance: Rewriting the Future of Your Organization and Your Life (J-B Warren Bennis Series). All type of book can you see on many resources. You can look for the internet resources or other social media.

Peter Hudson:

In this 21st hundred years, people become competitive in every single way. By being competitive now, people have do something to make them survives, being in the middle of often the crowded place and notice by surrounding. One thing that occasionally many people have underestimated it for a while is reading. Sure, by reading a guide your ability to survive improve then having chance to stand up than other is high. For you who want to start reading any book, we give you this particular The Three Laws of Performance: Rewriting the Future of Your Organization and Your Life (J-B Warren Bennis Series) book as basic and daily reading book. Why, because this book is more than just a book.

Suzanne Jensen:

The actual book The Three Laws of Performance: Rewriting the Future of Your Organization and Your Life (J-B Warren Bennis Series) has a lot details on it. So when you check out this book you can get a lot of advantage. The book was compiled by the very famous author. The author makes some research just before write this book. That book very easy to read you will get the point easily after reading this book.

Kathleen Bosarge:

The book untitled The Three Laws of Performance: Rewriting the Future of Your Organization and Your Life (J-B Warren Bennis Series) contain a lot of information on that. The writer explains the girl idea with easy approach. The language is very clear and understandable all the people, so do not worry, you can easy to read the idea. The book was compiled by famous author. The author brings you in the new age of literary works. It is possible to read this book because you can continue reading your smart phone, or device, so you can read the book within anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can wide open their official web-site as well as order it. Have a nice go through.

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