

Paul-Marie Chavanne
Olivier Truong



DARING TO CARE IN ORGANIZATIONS

Utopia or Reality?



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Dictators, perverts, temperamental or volatile characters, etc. the authors paint the portraits of tyrannical leaders and then formulate proposals about how to reconsider the individual so he can fulfill his potential. This work gives managers the keys to success so they can reinvent the relationships at work and develop a culture of caring.

“By brilliantly clarifying the concept of caring and illustrating it with multiple perspectives, the authors successfully develop a masterful and pragmatic synthesis of a vital area of focus for managerial development.”

PHILIPPE GABILLIET, PROFESSOR AT ESCP EUROPE

“This book demonstrates that caring is at the heart of management in the 21st century. The route to follow is demanding, but gratifying, and above all, effective.”

ERIC ALBERT, PSYCHIATRIST AND BUSINESS CONSULTANT

“Placing caring at the heart of an organization makes work a humanistic reality. This book is filled with advice and illustrated with examples. It will guide you to economic and social success.”

EMMANUEL JAFFELIN, PHILOSOPHER

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Preface

The philosophy guiding my professional engagement, civic commitment and personal life is to “make life better.”

We live in a world of withdrawal, loss of faith in institutions and profound economic changes. Can we turn things around; the things around us and especially those in our professional environment? We spend so much time at work. What can we do so our relational life, our life full of exchanges continues to thrive in a company?

I believe there are many ways to experience this intensity at work and my career has shown me that one can make the world better by striving to ensure that in their job employees are more harmonious and open to others and amongst themselves.

I am convinced that what we experience in a company is not disconnected from what’s happening in the rest of society. If you treat people well and promote the common good, these “kind” behaviors will have a knock-on effect elsewhere.

The idea that I promote around me extensively, and that I engage my teams in, is that of creating together a *Great Place to Win*. I am convinced, and I have had the opportunity to demonstrate in my different professional experiences, that when everyone feels emotionally connected with the company, has the opportunity everyday to do what he can do best, and feels respected, empowered and developed, we achieve the best performances. The *Great Place to Win* begins with our employees. Then it positively

“contaminates” our customers, our consumers, our partners and all of the communities around us.

The manager’s role is key in this approach. A manager makes the difference by clarifying expectations, making sure each of his employees has the resources to succeed, showing respect and a caring attitude, encouraging personal development and favoring cooperation around a shared vision.

Nevertheless, there are many questions: how can we ensure that managers’ reflex is to support and recognize their teams and to reject dominating attitudes? How can we ensure that everyone’s desire to balance his professional and personal life is respected in his company’s culture?

When my daughter was born, I undoubtedly became a better “manager.” My work remained essential but I wanted to be present in the evenings for her. She taught me to get to the essential and to reconcile what isn’t negotiable with my professional passion.

I believe that caring is an attitude that cascades through an organization, from the top to the bottom and all around it. Being caring means taking a sincere interest in others and their well-being, in all circumstances. Caring doesn’t exclude strong leadership, quite the contrary. A caring leader also takes difficult decisions. Fittingly, he takes them from a perspective of caring.

It is also important to create the conditions of success, especially by forming “lean” organizations, with fewer hierarchical levels, so decisions can be taken as close as possible to customers and so everyone has a clear responsibility and feels free to act every day.

Does that verge on utopia? I don't think so.

The book by Paul-Marie Chavanne and Olivier Truong is rare because it starts with and builds on a knowledge of the deepest motivations of the human soul (his fears, his vulnerabilities and his desires) in order to offer us a credible path forward, full of hope, to spread a culture of caring and help make the world better.

Nathalie Roos

Nathalie Roos is president of the professional products division and a member of L'Oréal's executive committee. She has held general management positions in multinational groups and was vice president of the Alsace Region's competitiveness and employment cluster (2010–2014). She is a mother of three.

Introduction

Has caring become a fashionable notion? If the subject seems consensual, individual behaviors in organizations are far from embodying this desired virtue: cynical, jaded, angry and capricious... some people forget the qualities of tolerance, paying attention and showing appreciation that are portrayed as being essential to strengthening team cohesion and contributing to organizational innovation and creativity.

Everywhere, images of a world marked by violence and crime turn our attention away from others. Managers are nourished on the idea that entrepreneurs and successful leaders have all the rights and that their narcissistic whims and excesses go together with their genius. Some openly advocate being nasty to succeed, like this legendary businessman in the Silicon Valley who essentially said: "Only the paranoid survive."

WHAT IS CARING?

Caring is more than being kind and paying attention to others. Caring goes well beyond that. It is a form of constant intent so everyone can be fulfilled, take initiatives, find a path to discover his destiny, develop his potential and achieve "self-realization."

Like love, caring is experienced more through its demonstrations than through its inherent nature. Just like love, it reveals itself when it is absent: the lack of caring says

something about caring, just as the lack of love says something about love. Caring about someone involves first of all taking an interest in him and taking care of him.

By extension, in a more psychological understanding of this notion, caring refers to the attitude of seeking the well-being of someone else, with the aim of enabling him to grow by relying on his qualities and helping him to surpass his limits.

“ A caring attitude towards someone is an attitude that intentionally favors the positive over the negative and a person's potential over his inherent shortcomings.

Finally, it is easier to speak about caring attitudes than about caring itself. A caring attitude towards someone is an attitude that intentionally favors the positive over the negative and a person's potential over his inherent shortcomings, all with the greatest respect for the person (and first of all his independence).

However, a caring attitude does not necessarily mean being conciliatory or even tolerant. Too much conciliation and tolerance leads to a form of indifference, which is the opposite of caring.

Caring is naturally a notion that we relate to the field of pure interpersonal relations. Along this line, caring is left up to each individual's incidental goodwill and temperament: fortunate are those who interact with caring individuals, and too bad for the others.

AND WHAT ABOUT CARING IN ORGANIZATIONS?

In this world of the ultracompetitive, globalized corporation, can one “Dare to care”? Isn’t this just wishful thinking expressed by a few idealists detached from the operational realities of the world? Actually, it is just the opposite. Many surveys show that teams only desire more caring in the organization. A study from the University of Warwick¹ shows that the productivity of a happy team increases 12%.

Human and social sciences show us that caring behavior can create an environment that is conducive to individual motivation and engagement and, in the end, to collaboration in small groups. However, this same research still struggles to demonstrate that caring behavior is a source of value creation for organizations for the simple and good reason that an organization’s performance is the result of a multitude of causal factors that can’t be reduced to just the dimension of leadership, human relations or the consideration of people.

And yet, on the contrary, nothing proves that caring behavior is incompatible with performance. Quite the contrary, an observation of small teams shows that the sense of safety, social cohesion, reciprocal protection, happiness and experimentation leads the teams to develop a strong engagement to their work. And employees’ engagement is one of the best keys to performance. Without it, individuals turn away from their tasks, exerting the least effort to do them. And the company fails to realize the treasures of creativity and potential innovation.

1. OSWALD Andrew J., PROTO Eugenio, SGROI Daniel, *Happiness and Productivity*, University of Warwick, 2012.

IS THERE A COLLECTIVE DIMENSION TO CARING?

The role of leaders and managers is clearly central. And yet, beyond the individual behaviors, are there barriers to implementing concrete organizations capable of promoting caring behavior? To ask this question is to question whether there can be a collective dimension to caring behavior.

In other words, is there room for a culture of caring in the organization? This question was the basic idea driving the reflection that we wanted to pursue in this book. There is no simple answer to this question, which concerns both the philosophy of human relations, the values that inspire them and the very concrete organizational methods and managerial practices of organizations.

Our reflection was guided by pragmatism and an observation of reality. This doesn't result in a theoretical model of behavior or organization that ensures there is a culture of caring.

But throughout the book we suggest or show signs, benchmarks and criteria that refer to situations that many readers may likely find themselves in.

Our greatest hope is that all of these signs will help the reader to reflect, to reconsider his experience and to consider that he too can contribute to the emergence of more harmony in labor relations.

This book is above all a means of raising awareness: we can all exemplify "a caring attitude" and thereby participate, even modestly, in bringing about a better world.

CARING DAY IN DAY OUT:
THE IMPOSSIBLE EQUATION?

Part I

At the Heart of the Human Phenomenon, the Power of Fears and the Force of Desire

Peoples' hearts and minds are filled with fears and desires. The first step in developing caring is understanding what motivates us in the depths of our heart. Fear develops a suspicious attitude, which encourages a climate of antipathy and leads to the primary focus being on self-preservation.

The mechanisms to overcome one's fears are complex and intimate. Overcoming one's own fear of being abandoned and eaten is the prerequisite for any manager who wants to inspire. Then he can, fully aware of these mechanisms, allay his employees' fears.