In Over Our Heads - The Mental Demands of Modern Life

Surveying the disparate expert “literatures,” which normally take no account of each other, Kegan brings them together to reveal, for the first time, what these many demands have in common. Our frequent frustration in trying to meet these complex and often conflicting claims results, he shows us, from a mismatch between the way we ordinarily know the world and the way we are unwittingly expected to understand it. In Over Our Heads provides us entirely fresh perspectives on a number of cultural controversies—the “abstinence vs. safe sex” debate, the diversity movement, communication across genders, the meaning of postmodernism. What emerges in these pages is a theory of evolving ways of knowing that allows us to view adult development much as we view child development, as an open-ended process born of the dynamic interaction of cultural demands and emerging mental capabilities.

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If contemporary culture were a school, with all the tasks and expectations meted out by modern life as its curriculum, would anyone graduate? In the spirit of a sympathetic teacher, Robert Kegan guides us through this tricky curriculum, assessing the fit between its complex demands and our mental capacities, and showing what happens when we find ourselves, as we so often do, in over our heads. In this dazzling intellectual tour, he completely reintroduces us to the psychological landscape of our private and public lives. A decade ago in The Evolving Self, Kegan presented a dynamic view of the development of human consciousness. Here he applies this widely acclaimed theory to the mental complexity of adulthood. As parents and partners, employees and bosses, citizens and leaders, we constantly confront a bewildering array of expectations, prescriptions, claims, and demands, as well as an equally confusing assortment of expert opinions that tell us what each of these roles entails. Surveying the disparate expert “literatures,” which normally take no account of each other, Kegan brings them together to reveal, for the first time, what these many demands have in common. Our frequent frustration in trying to meet these complex and often conflicting claims results, he shows us, from a mismatch between the way we ordinarily know the world and the way we are unwittingly expected to understand it. In Over Our Heads provides us entirely fresh perspectives on a number of cultural controversies—the “abstinence vs. safe sex” debate, the diversity movement, communication across genders, the meaning of postmodernism. What emerges in these pages is a theory of evolving ways of knowing that allows us to view adult development much as we view child development, as an open-ended process born of the dynamic interaction of cultural demands and emerging mental capabilities. If our culture is to be a good “school,” as Kegan suggests, it must offer, along with a challenging curriculum, the guidance and support that we clearly need to master this course—a need that this lucid and richly argued book begins to meet.

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**Immunity to Change - How to Overcome It and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization**

Unlock your potential and finally move forward. A recent study showed that when doctors tell heart patients they will die if they don't change their habits, only one in seven will be able to follow through successfully. Desire and motivation aren't enough: even when it's literally a matter of life or death, the ability to change remains maddeningly elusive. Given that the status quo is so potent, how can we change ourselves and our organizations? In Immunity to Change, authors Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey show how our individual beliefs--along with the collective mind-sets in our organizations--combine to create a natural but powerful immunity to change. By revealing how this mechanism holds us back, Kegan and Lahey give us the keys to unlock our potential and finally move forward. And by pinpointing and uprooting our own immunities to change, we can bring our organizations forward with us. This persuasive and practical book, filled with hands-on diagnostics and compelling case studies, delivers the tools you need to overcome the forces of inertia and transform your life and your work.

**How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work - Seven Languages for Transformation**

Why is the gap so great between our hopes, our intentions, even our decisions-and what we are actually able to bring about? Even when we are able to make important changes-in our own lives or the groups we lead at work-why are the changes so frequently short-lived and we are soon back to business as usual? What can we do to transform this troubling reality? In this intensely practical book, Harvard psychologists Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey take us on a carefully guided journey designed to help us answer these very questions. And not just generally, or in the abstract. They help each of us arrive at our own particular answers that can solve the puzzling gap between what we intend and what we are able to accomplish. How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work provides you with the tools to create a powerful new build-it-yourself mental technology.

**Unlocking Leadership Mindtraps - How to Thrive in Complexity**
Author and consultant Jennifer Garvey Berger has worked with all types of leaders—from top executives at Google to nonprofit directors who are trying to make a dent in social change. She hears a version of the same plea from every client in nearly every sector around the world: “I know that complexity and uncertainty are testing my instincts, but I don’t know which to trust. Is there some way to know what to do when I can’t know what’s next?” Her newest work is an answer to this plea. Using her background in adult development, complexity theories, and leadership consultancy, Garvey Berger discerns five pernicious and pervasive “mind traps” to frame the book. These are: the desire for simple stories, our sense that we are right, our desire to get along with others in our group, our fixation with control, and our constant quest to protect and defend our egos. In addition to understanding why these natural impulses steer us wrong in a fast-moving world, leaders will get powerful questions and approaches that help them escape these patterns.

**An Everyone Culture - Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organization**

A Radical New Model for Unleashing Your Company’s Potential In most organizations nearly everyone is doing a second job no one is paying them for—namely, covering their weaknesses, trying to look their best, and managing other people’s impressions of them. There may be no greater waste of a company’s resources. The ultimate cost: neither the organization nor its people are able to realize their full potential. What if a company did everything in its power to create a culture in which everyone—not just select “high potentials”—could overcome their own internal barriers to change and use errors and vulnerabilities as prime opportunities for personal and company growth? Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey (and their collaborators) have found and studied such companies—Deliberately Developmental Organizations. A DDO is organized around the simple but radical conviction that organizations will best prosper when they are more deeply aligned with people’s strongest motive, which is to grow. This means going beyond consigning “people development” to high-potential programs, executive coaching, or once-a-year off-sites. It means fashioning an organizational culture in which support of people’s development is woven into the daily fabric of working life and the company’s regular operations, daily routines, and conversations. An Everyone Culture dives deep into the worlds of three leading companies that embody this breakthrough approach. It reveals the design principles, concrete practices, and underlying science at the heart of DDOs—from their disciplined approach to giving feedback, to how they use meetings, to the distinctive way that managers and leaders define their roles. The authors then show readers how to build this developmental culture in their own organizations. This book demonstrates a whole new way of being at work. It suggests that the culture you create is your strategy—and that the key to success is developing everyone.

**My Antelope Loves Cantaloupe**

To nourish the love of language—its music and its surprise—Harvard professor Robert Kegan appeals to all a young child’s appetites—the fascination with animals, the preoccupation with food, the delight in the incongruous. Kegan’s clever text and Walsh’s evocative watercolors introduce the young child to the classic form of The Joke—a set up (“My palominos...”) and a punchline (“...love jalapenos!”). They can’t resist “telling it” over and over. My Antelope Loves
Cantaloupe is the Raffi of picture books. An earworm of affectionate silliness, it will become a part of the family’s “shared language.” This book may start your child on a path to Harvard, or giggles, or both.

**The Evolving Self**

"The Evolving Self" focuses upon the most basic and universal of psychological problems--the individual's effort to make sense of experience, to make meaning of life. According to Robert Kegan, meaning-making is a lifelong activity that begins in earliest infancy and continues to evolve through a series of stages encompassing childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. The Evolving Self describes this process of evolution in rich and human detail, concentrating especially on the internal experience of growth and transition, its costs and disruptions as well as its triumphs. At the heart of our meaning-making activity, the book suggests, is the drawing and redrawing of the distinction between "self" and "other." Using Piagetian theory in a creative new way to make sense of how we make sense of ourselves, Kegan shows that each meaning-making stage is a new solution to the lifelong tension between the universal human yearning to be connected, attached, and included, on the one hand, and to be distinct, independent, and autonomous on the other. "The Evolving Self" is the story of our continuing negotiation of this tension. It is a book that is theoretically daring enough to propose a reinterpretation of the Oedipus complex and clinically concerned enough to suggest a variety of fresh new ways to treat those psychological complaints that commonly arise in the course of development. Kegan is an irrepressible storyteller, an impassioned opponent of the health-and-illness approach to psychological distress, and a sturdy builder of psychological theory. His is an original and distinctive new voice in the growing discussion of human development across the life span.