

The human element

Making systems and organisations work better

David Boyle

Fellow, new economics foundation

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What I'm going to say



- Sustainable organisations need to have *reciprocal* relationships with people.
- Organisations need to blur the boundaries between inside and outside.
- Dump the targets.

Polly Wiessner



!Kung bushpeople



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Desert stores



**We are hard-wired
for reciprocity...**

Reciprocity I



Organisations which deliberately build in a kind of reciprocity with volunteers and other stakeholders tend to hang onto them.

Reciprocity II



Sticky organisations means no more dividing line between givers and receivers.

“*Co-production means **delivering** public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are co-produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of **change**.*”

Boyle and Harris (2009) *The Challenge of Co-production*,
NESTA/nef

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Friends of parks





“Co-production implies that citizens can play an active role in producing public goods and services of consequence to them.” **Elinor Ostrom**



TimeBanks USA

“Somewhere in the process something has gone wrong. If you're constantly defining people by what they lack or need, it's not difficult for people to lose sense of what they have to give. And it's not a humane way to live.” **Edgar Cahn**

Co-production II



Asking for help from people who have always received, and never been asked for anything back, can transform people's lives.

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- **Dump the targets.**

Debbie Morrison



The official method



1. They take an intractable problem about neighbourhoods, communities and places. Then they remove what seems to them to be irrelevant but essentially human details.
2. They formulate some abstract maxims that can apply to any situation anywhere.
3. They appoint somebody who can be trusted to put those maxims into effect without taking any notice of local peculiarities.
4. They assign a narrow measure to every aspect of the task. They convince themselves that you can somehow capture and pin down the progress by measuring it.

**Things that succeed
have a personality
behind them...**

Small is still beautiful



- Small police forces catch more criminals than big police forces.
- Big hospitals are more expensive to run per patient than small hospitals.
- Patients recover quicker when they know the doctor.
- Small schools have more choice, more after-school activities, more tolerance and better results than big schools.

Why numbers fail

- The McKinsey Fallacy (everything can be measured and what can be measured can be managed (*nonsense*)).
- People will always get round numerical controls (Goodhart's Law).
- Numbers never tell you what causes what.

Outcome indicators



Find out more

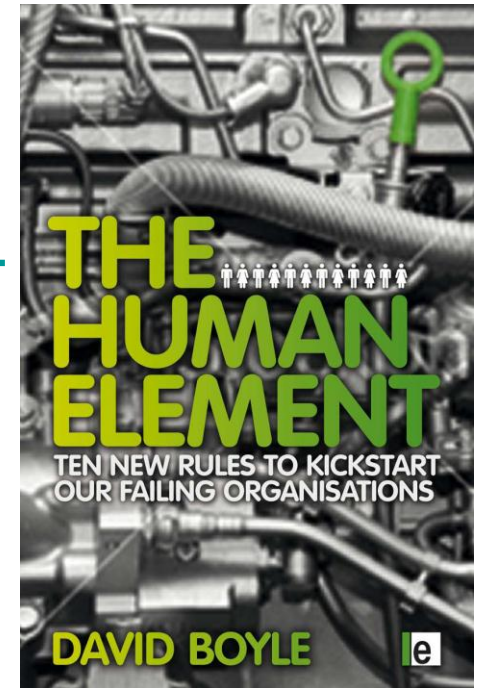


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dcboyle@gmail.com