

### Yin and Yang for Managers

**F**or more than 4,000 years, philosophers and religious teachers have been writing about the fundamental realities of life,” writes Margaret Seidler in her new book *“Power Surge.”* “The concept of yin and yang, which surfaced in Chinese philosophy 2,500 years ago, refers to two opposing and complementary elements of any one complex phenomenon. Together these two elements create something larger or better than the two parts individually. Yin-yang exists in a dynamic equilibrium: As one element declines, the other increases to an equal degree,” Seidler says.

A veteran management trainer well known to many in the public power industry, Seidler encourages individuals to

examine the values that motivate their actions as leaders—it might be achievement, change, community service, competition or something else. She then instructs her readers and students to construct a “Polarity Map,” her trademarked approach to improving managerial style. So, for example, an individual motivated by competition must balance that with an interdependent value—Seidler suggests cooperation. Similarly, community service must be balanced by service to self. If achievement is your yin, celebration is the yang.

“For many years, I worked as a manager who had only one set of beliefs about how things should be done—mine,” she says. “Things would be going smoothly with my employees for

a while and lots of work would get accomplished. Then, without seeing it coming, the wheels would come off and I would find myself vilified by those same employees. Now, I recognize the pattern I created: I was over-focusing on task and neglecting the importance of relationships with people who get the work done.”

Seidler’s book is a how-to on preparing your own “Polarity Map.” And lest the suggestions offered in her text prove too limiting or stale, the book comes with a membership to her online community, mypowersurge.com. Readers will not soon find the material in the book irrelevant. Seidler offers 98 possible motivating values, along with suggestions for the balancing value for each motivator. The online community accommodates an interactive

dimension with the potential to enrich the self-assessment.

“This book will transform thinking on all levels,” says Laura Varn in a statement published on the back cover of Seidler’s book. “Polarity Management has led to many ‘aha’ moments throughout my organization, as it directs you to think and take action through a completely different lens, one based on balance and differing views.” Varn is vice president of corporate communications for Santee Cooper in South Carolina.

*Power Surge* is available through the Product Store on APPAnet.org. Seidler teaches management skills for the APPA Management and Leadership Workshop, each fall. This month, she will teach a leadership course at the APPA Spring Education Institute in Minneapolis. ■

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