CHAPTER 5

The Nuances of Effective Human Capital Performance Strategies: Deconstructing the Dynamics of Inter- and Intrapersonal Change

When you couple economic challenges with the additional challenges of natural disasters, staying strong in the face of adversity becomes taxing. Perhaps holding on is no longer the answer. Now is the time for taking stock of where we are in our individual lives and working toward reinventing ourselves as well as creating our own opportunities. Reinventing self may mean that we take more responsibility for what is occurring in our economy. Reinventing self may also mean we fortify our belief in ourselves and our abilities. Reinventing self may also mean we move past being content to a constant state of discontent in order to take advantage of all that this continually emerging, yet challenging global market is offering us. Now is the time that we invoke gratitude that we are still standing and able to move forward.

Yet, the time for sugar coating today’s status is long past due. We are in an extremely competitive global environment, which as I have already posited means we have to understand our context from multiple perspectives. More importantly, in concert with an extremely competitive global job market, we are still forced to move through many systems of domination—racism, class elitism, sexism, and imperialism. Each “ism” has the ability to wound the spirit (hooks, 1995). Unfortunately, damaged spirits rarely choose liberation...which may be why so many people are shrinking from engaging in the change that is necessary for
them to emerge in this job market strong enough to successfully face that is being called for (hooks, 1995).

We should understand the relationship between stagnation, issues of our own self-esteem and our inability to articulate a clear vision (Ashby, 2003). To better understand the dimensions and dynamics of our respective situations and the associated psychologies of those who now have power and privilege, our approach to our personal change should push the limitations of traditional conversations, propositions, and change strategies in order to effectively develop new ways for reentering today’s job market. In this open space, we must feel the freedom to deconstruct our implicit feelings embedded in our settings, context, and social interactions that can and will hold us back (Foucault, 1986; Hansen, 2006).

Our daily lives are embedded with so many issues of “isms.” For example, as a woman of color, I know and understand that my theoretical sensitivities emerge from a place where issues of duality and objectification in the background continue to be themes in my life. It does not matter that I possess three degrees, which includes a doctorate degree. It does not matter that I am trained to teach others. At the end of the day, the fact that I am an African American woman emerges as a combination that is impacted by intersecting patterns of racism and sexism (Parker and Lynn, 2002). If I am an out-of-work African American woman, despite my education and work experience, my life emerges with a whole new set of issues and complications in concert with my manifesting false historical narratives I have “chosen” to internalize.

It has been suggested that most organization members sincerely want to love their work and crave the restoration of hopeful work environments to provide balance to their lives (White-Zappa, 2001). Yet, in order to fortify oneself to effectively evoke a change in our organizational environment, one should first seek to understand the “self” and be ready to internally change. Signs of hopelessness in our society are all around us, particularly in our work environments, which are evidenced by the radical changes created by public and private sector acquisitions, reengineering, and breakdowns in the relations and psychological contracts between employer and employee (White-Zappa, 2001). Yet, we cannot become personally challenged and scared by these issues. Each individual has to learn to believe their abilities and invincibility.

We can choose to be a subjectively coherent participant in our story lines, or we can choose to be an objective participant (Davies, 1991); choices that impact our understanding of how we fit (or do not fit) in today’s global environment. Equally important where change occurs to which we have no input and/or control, one may have to take an