

## Reader's Review

*John Baker***THE POWER OF NOTICING:  
What the Best Leaders See**

By Max H. Bazerman  
215pp. New York, N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 2014  
Hardcover (USA) \$28.00

Max Bazerman is the Jesse Isador Straus Professor of Business Administration at the Harvard Business School and the Co-Director of the Center for Public Leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School. Professor Bazerman focuses on decision-making, negotiation and ethics and is an expert in applied behavioral psychology.

Mr. Bazerman is the author or co-author of twenty books and over 200 articles and has won numerous awards and honors for his work as a teacher and writer. In addition to his service with Harvard University, Professor Bazerman has worked with a wide variety of corporate and governmental clients in some 30 countries and instructed thousands of executives in adult education programs throughout the world. He is an extraordinary teacher, scholar and practitioner.

*The Power of Noticing*, Max Bazerman tells his reader, counters the decision-making myth that “what you see is all there is” by demonstrating that “... noticing identifies what information we do not see or notice, and describes how we can use this knowledge to seek the information that will be most useful for making great decisions” (p. xx).

The book is a how-to tutorial on noticing, offering its readers an opportunity to strip away the blinders that often hide key information from the negotiator and make decisions erroneous. For the first time, the decision-maker may work from an evidentiary deck and thereby make truly best-decisions by including elements that were either unseen or unnoted in the past. Obviously, the reader will gain usable information that the non-reader will not possess. Advantage: to the Reader.

Let us look at several of the categories Bazerman uses to guide his readers through the frequent fogs of information and missing information that surround the decision-making process. The first of these decision clouds is centered in cognitive “blindness.” We turn first to the problems created by focusing so narrowly on an element that we miss other elements entirely. We count the balls thrown as directed by a leader, but in the process miss entirely the clowns that run plainly through the scene. As a consequence, our decision will be heavily influenced by flying balls and weak on clowns.

A second category in Bazerman's information work deals with the need to protect the decision from the effect of the misdirection by others. We see this impact in the bump to a person's arm as the pick-pocket slides a wallet from the target's pant pocket or the wave of the magician's scarf as the lion disappears before one's eyes.

And so the importance of noticing grows as the reader encounters conditions such as Bernard Madoff's Ponzi scheme that was "too good to be true," Enron's balance sheets that its auditors stamped as accurate as the firm crumbled, and the possible reasoning mechanism that permits politicians to ignore global climate change signs and stay in office.

The elusiveness of facts and the availability of tools and methods to bring even the most shadowy of them into the light and therefore onto the decision scale, are the stuff of this interesting and invaluable to work. It is a book that every decision-maker will find invaluable.

The book includes an extensive Notes section and a careful Index.

Highly Recommended.

John D. Baker, Ph.D.

Editor

The Negotiator Magazine April 2015

Copyright © 2015 The Negotiator Magazine