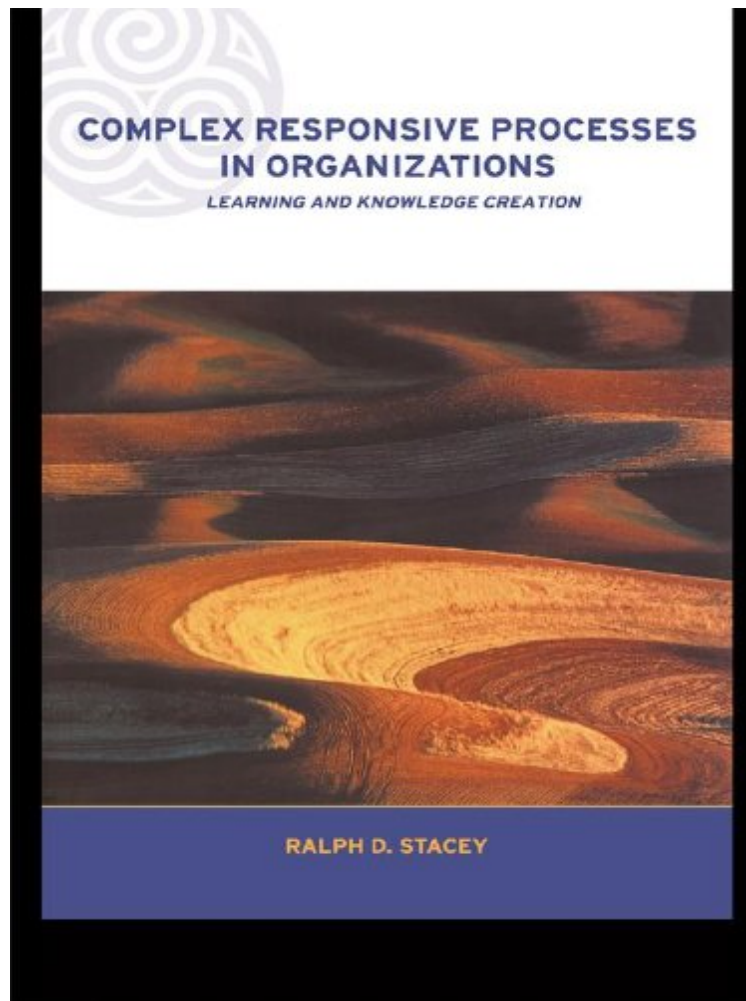


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# Complex Responsive Processes in Organizations: Learning and Knowledge Creation (Complexity and Emergence in Organizations)

*Ralph Stacey*

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**Ralph Stacey : Complex Responsive Processes in Organizations: Learning and Knowledge Creation (Complexity and Emergence in Organizations)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Complex Responsive Processes in Organizations: Learning and Knowledge Creation (Complexity and Emergence in Organizations):

18 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Explains novelty in organizations By Kim C. Korn First, this is the second book in a series edited by edited by Stacey, Griffin, and Patricia Shaw from the Complexity and Management Centre, University of Hertfordshire\* Complexity and Management - Fad or Radical Challenge to Systems Thinking (2000) - Stacey, Griffin, Shaw\* Complex Responsive Processes in Organizations - Learning and Knowledge Creation

(2001) - Stacey\* Changing Conversations in Organizations: A Complexity Approach to Change (2002) - Shaw\* The Emergence of Leadership (2002) - Griffin\* Complexity and Innovation in Organizations (2002) - Fonseca\* The Paradox of Control in Organizations (2001) -- Streatfield

The series intention is to develop thinking about organizations as Complex Processes of relating vs. as systems. In doing this, the authors clearly expose the failure of mainstream management thinking to explain strategic and organizational phenomena. In place of systemic (mainstream) thinking, are insights gained from complexity science that have been developed into the complex responsive process perspective. This perspective does descriptively address strategic and organizational phenomena and serves as a basis for prescriptive actions. See my review of Complexity and Management. Second, as with the first book in the series, this is not a book to be "read", it is a book to be "studied." It delves deeply into learning and knowledge creation, the creation of knowledge being the creation of novelty. The radically different views of knowledge between cognitive and behavioral psychology is illuminating. Stacey offers philosophical, neuroscience, and social science support for the legitimacy of the complex responsive process perspective over the mainstream management thinking. The book is, for the most part, descriptive. There is a comprehensive comparison of the systems thinking and complex responsive process perspectives in the ninth chapter based on what's in the first two books in the series. The tenth and last chapter outlines what the prescriptions might look like. These prescriptions are in the next four books in the series. The core of this book hones in on learning and knowledge creation, knowledge creation being essential to organization innovation and evolution. The first section deals with the systems thinking perspective. There is a strong case made for the inability of that perspective to explain knowledge creation as well as some insidious aspects of management based on this perspective. The next section provides a comprehensive and robust explanation of the emergence of knowledge from the complex responsive processes of relating. As in the first book, the content, issues addressed, the perspectives developed are worthy of more than a five star rating. And again, given the newness and challenging nature of the content, the repetition, or repetitive summaries, throughout the book were welcome. The reason for rating it four stars is due to the need to study it so intently in order to gain the understanding of what the author has to tell us. As in the first book in the series, more and better frameworks could have been provided for the information delivered. Given my intense interest in the subject, I developed several of my own frameworks to organize the content in order to gain greater benefit from the information provided.

The past decade has seen increasing focus on the importance of information and knowledge in economic and social processes, the so-called 'knowledge economy'. This is reflected in the popularity amongst practicing managers and organizational theorists of notions of learning, sense-making, knowledge creation, knowledge management and intellectual capital in organizations and more recently, of emotional intelligence as an important management skill. This insightful book: argues that the information processing view of knowledge creation held by systems thinkers is no longer tenable. It develops the alternative perspective of Complex Responsive Processes of relating, drawing on the complexity sciences as a source for analogies with human action. It places self-organizing interaction at the centre of the knowledge creating process in organizations. Learning and knowledge creation are seen as qualitative processes of power relating that are emotional as well as intellectual, creative as well as destructive, enabling as well as constraining, and the result is a radical questioning of the belief that organizational knowledge is essentially codified and centralized. Instead, organizational knowledge is understood to be in the relationships between people in an organization and has to do with the qualities of those relationships.

From the Back Cover

Over the past decade, practicing managers and organizational theorists have been drawing attention to the centrality of information and knowledge in economic and social processes, the so-called "knowledge economy". This is reflected in the popularity of notions of learning, sense-making, knowledge creation, knowledge management and intellectual capital in organizations. More recently, attention has been drawn to emotional intelligence as an important management skill in these processes of learning and knowledge creation. Complex Responsive Processes in Organizations argues that most of the literature on these matters, and the ways in which most practitioners now talk about them, reflect systems thinking and that its information processing view of knowledge creation is no longer tenable. The purpose of this book is to develop a different perspective, that of Complex Responsive Processes of relating, which draws on the complexity sciences as a source domain for analogies with human action. This alternative perspective places self-organizing interaction, with its intrinsic capacity to produce emergent coherence, at the center of the knowledge creating process in organizations. Learning and knowledge creation are seen as qualitative processes of power relating that are emotional as well as intellectual, creative as well as destructive, enabling as well as constraining. The result is a radical questioning of the belief that organizational knowledge is essentially codified and centralized. Instead, organizational knowledge is understood to be in the relationships between people in an organization and has to do with the qualities of those relationships. From this perspective, it makes no sense to talk about measuring intellectual capital and managing knowledge.

About the Author

Ralph Stacey is Professor of Management and Director of the Complexity and Management Centre at the University of Hertfordshire, and a member of the Institute of Group Analysis. He is also consultant to managers at

many levels across a range of organizations and the author of a number of books and articles on strategy and complexity theory in management.