

# Analysis of the disciplines in the book the fifth discipline: the art and practice...

[Business](#), [Management](#)



The introduction to the book is an approach to systems level thinking and how we as an individual should apply those concepts in our life to fulfil our goals. We have been trained to solve local issues in a sub system rather than looking at the whole system. Conventionally, we tend to forget about the system and focus on specific points. The author talks about the first airplane ever invented and how it took 30 years for that vision to evolve into commercial flights. The author strongly suggests that how the illusion of a separate, unrelated world exists and recommends creation of ' Learning Organizations' which will promote systems thinking through some tools and idea presented in subsequent chapters.

The five disciplines that the author writes about are summarized below.

1. **Systems Thinking:** This tool allows an individual to interrelate sub-systems and solve the problems on a bigger level. It involves tools and idea which enhance our natural intuitions of systems thinking. The visions which tends to be realized in a successful manner often incorporate individuals who are aware of their actions and its consequences.
2. **Personal Mastery:** It defines how an individual adapts to problems and the focus on attitude towards solving that issue. It involves periodic detailing and clarification of goals to improve the results. This is important as an organization's capacity to gain knowledge depends upon its members' capacity to learn.
3. **Mental Models:** The author states the importance of how an opinion is formed about a topic inside a person's mind and how they imagine

certain things to be. Teams should have a shared interest and similar thought process by discussing and encouraging conversation in order to promote learning on an organizational level.

4. Building Shared Vision: it is highly important for an organization to have a shared vision to be sustainable and successful. It is a cumulative vision of all the individual's ideas and are not according to company's mission statement.
5. Team Learning: An effective team attains extraordinary results by being part of something bigger and through communication amongst individual. It is of great importance that the principles of such group be created to best suit the goals and not just follow set guidelines. In this a person's growth is much more prominent in terms of learning rather than as an individual. Everyone can relate to this as at some point we all have been part of a sports team or in college where we complement each other's strengths and weaknesses. This reflects in the performance of the team. Learning is a continuous process and an organization should keep adapting and evolving from past experiences.

## **Metanoia**

The shift of mind is a result of true learning, something that could not have been done before. Grasping knowledge or information is often misinterpreted as learning but rather it should enable one to improve the innovation capacity and perceive the position in an institute.

What organizations often fail to realize is the underlying defects or “disabilities” even after achieving a great level of success. Although this

success is short lived, a large of companies still fail to become a learning organization in order to sustain. Some of the disabilities are discussed below.

1. I am my position: The mindset of people only considering their role as their identity in an organization often has a lot of negative impact on the overall performance. The different department can interact with each other and improve results in a cross functional working environment.
2. The enemy is out there: The first thing we humans do is try to blame something else for our mistakes. Instead of identifying problems and overcoming them we try to run away from it. This cripples an organization from within.
3. The illusion of taking charge: It's okay to be enthusiastic to solve problems and contribute in an organization but not to the extent of being aggressively proactive and increasing problem instead of solving them. Although it is quite different from being reactive, to wait for something to happen but not doing anything about it. The true taking of charge is identifying the underlying problem.
4. The parable of the boiled frog: instead of adapting to gradual changes or threats our mind is programmed to respond to sudden changes. But attention need to be paid and small problems needs to be fixed so that it does not cause a disaster at a later point. These threats can often lead to downfall of an organization.
5. The delusion of learning from experience: True learning is almost never achieved if the actions and consequences are far apart or even in

different departments in some organizations. It might take years before the results of critical decisions are realized. Learning from experience works in an industry only when the scope of consequences are within the boundary of our learning horizon.

6. The myth of a management team: Ideally, the function of a manager is to deal with the disabilities but the inability to solve these problems are often caused by internal politics, performance pressure, and stress and so on. The leader tries to force opinions on members and discourages discussions of any policies to try and find out underlying issues. This incompetence hinders the learning potential of the entire team.