

FOREWORD

by JERRY COLONNA, Co-Founder, Flatiron Partners
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Over the years, I've been aware of the potential for greater workplace productivity and deeper meaning through work. I began my study of business as a journalist, chronicling the struggles of new and established companies. Later, I helped develop successful new businesses as a venture capitalist, starting two well-regarded firms and ultimately joining JP Morgan Chase's private equity unit, JP Morgan Partners. Often as a result, I served on more than a hundred boards of directors, working with both for-profit companies and nonprofit organizations. I've watched great companies become born and grow into large success stories and large companies falter and miss opportunities. I've watched small nonprofit organizations struggle through the maturation process, some succeeding, many failing. And through it all, every one of them, and every one of the people endeavoring to do the sacred work of creating something of lasting and enduring value, could have benefited from the lessons laid out in *The Empathy Factor: Your Competitive Advantage to Personal, Team, and Business Success*.

More recently, I began providing coaching services for teams and individuals. I've witnessed firsthand the transformative power of empathy, when my clients experience what Miyashiro calls the process of forming "empathic connection." Instead of the two-dimensional think-and-do cultures prevalent in our workplaces, the book advocates for a third dimension, Connect-Think-Do, placing a primacy on engaging with one another in our full humanness before we do the work.

This cutting-edge book highlights a growing body of research that validates the practice of empathy as a key business advantage. Most important, it details a proven and repeatable method for developing and practicing empathy as a workplace skill. The method described, Nonviolent Communication (NVC), represents one of

the largest empathy practice communities in the world. To this largely interpersonal model, Miyashiro adds a framework for teams and organizations that she calls Integrated Clarity® because of the way the individual, team, and larger organization can operate more collaboratively as a unified whole.

She writes:

Our workplaces are two dimensional because the process of empathic connection requires a literacy and comfort with two human qualities that have been systematically devalued and misinterpreted in the world around us. Our organizations are born out of this same consciousness and simply replicate this world condition in our workplaces. These two misunderstood qualities are: 1) our ability to be fluently aware of our feelings without judgment of them and 2) our ability to then connect these feelings to related human needs that are being met or unmet.

Miyashiro makes a compelling case for wider-spread use and awareness of the core NVC techniques—not just in situations where the violence of our interactions is apparent, but also in places where we don't necessarily see the violence being perpetrated.

The Empathy Factor is a call for ending this subtle, persistent, and awful violence to the Self done every day in the name of profits and productivity. But more than a call to action, it offers proof that—ironically—building a more compassionate, empathic workplace is precisely the path to greater productivity and, consequently, profits.

For at its heart, *The Empathy Factor* is a business book in every sense of the phrase. Not only that, it's a joy to read. On first pass, the book may not appear erudite, but it is. The style is very accessible, with callouts and real-world examples. The book builds on Miyashiro's twenty-eight-plus years of consulting, observing, and guiding a variety of for-profit and nonprofit organizations as well as her extensive research and comprehensive analysis.

I'm honored to write this foreword. The concepts in the book are brilliant, and its ultimate premise—that empathy significantly supports workplace productivity and collaboration—is powerful. I love the material presented and, even more, am thrilled to be able to put the concepts into practice every day in the work I do with my clients.

Miyashiro shows how today's managers can build organizations using empathy as the core driver of their success. In the end, those who read this will not only learn the power of Connect-Think-Do but will understand the even more powerful Connect-Think-Lead.

Jerry Colonna is the co-founder with Fred Wilson of Flatiron Partners, which became one of the most successful, early-stage investment programs in the country. He also became a partner with JP Morgan Partners, the private-equity arm of JP Morgan Chase, and now serves as a director, trustee, or advisor to a number of for-profit and nonprofit organizations. He was listed in *Upside* magazine's 100 Most Influential People of the New Economy, *Forbes ASAP*'s Best Venture Capitalists in the Country, and *Worth*'s 25 Most Generous Young Americans.