

Spring 2006

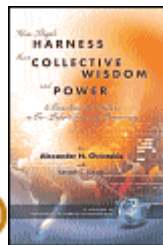


*In the dialogue business...for real* -Aleco Christakis

## A Best Seller

On March 17, Aleco searched the Barnes and Noble website [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com) for our book. This is what he found:

**BARNES & NOBLE**.com



[Nonfiction](#) <>

[Public Affairs & Policies](#) <> [Coming Soon/New Releases](#) <> [New This Month](#) <> [More than \\$50](#)

—We found **5** titles, sorted in '**bestselling**' order.

Sort by:

People who bought this book also bought:

- [Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't](#) Jim C. Collins, Jim Collins
- [Winning](#) Jack Welch, Suzy Welch
- [The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness](#) Stephen R. Covey
- [The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable](#) Patrick Lencioni
- [The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies for New Leaders at All Levels](#) Michael Watkins

Aleco has been having fun ever since checking the best-selling status of our book. On March 31, for example, there were over 7,000 titles in the category Public Affairs and Policies. Our book ranked #56 in this category. In that same category for books over \$50, there are over 3,000 titles. Our book ranked #5.

## Reviews

The book is starting to receive **4-star reviews**, some of which can be read online at [http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593114826/sr=8-2/qid=1141325606/ref=sr\\_1\\_2/103-2219689-5657414?%5Fencoding=UTF8](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593114826/sr=8-2/qid=1141325606/ref=sr_1_2/103-2219689-5657414?%5Fencoding=UTF8)

and

<http://btobsearch.barnesandnoble.com/booksearch/results.asp?WRD=Alexander+N%2E+Christakis&z=y&btob=Y>

There is also a review of the book at: <http://newswire.indymedia.org/es/newswire/archive.shtml>

Some excerpts:

In the book by Alexander Christakis with Kenneth C. Bausch, titled, “*How People Harness their Collective Wisdom and Power to Construct the Future in Co-laboratories of Democracy*”, a scholarly attempt has been made by the authors to explain the principles and practices of the “Structured Design Process.” ...For a practitioner, the most relevant is Part III, where seven successful applications have been described, all belonging to diverse sectors and cultures.

-Dr. Surinder Batra, IM practitioner, India

SDP provides conditions for people to genuinely learn from one another by giving all stakeholders an equal opportunity to “make distinctions” as part of the process of creating a vocabulary of accepted distinctions – that is, as part of the process of constructing “the world”.

The authors... point out that the “power” that becomes generated through SDP is one of “mutual persuasion and respect”. They emphasize that this is “radically different than the power often experienced in other types of group work, where power relation is based on authority (positional or expertise) or personality (the person who dominates)” (p. 198). The SDP offers an approach to generating dialogue that renders the ideal of participatory democracy feasible in practice.

In my view, the book does successfully engage the reader to wish to “try out” the approach in practice and hence to set more examples of its workability. I strongly recommend that it be read and used by people concerned with ways of developing “participatory democracy.”.

-Dr. Norma. Romm, University of South Africa

In his formal review of 30 years of evolving thought behind SDP, Dr. Christakis cites and then mercifully leaps beyond the foundational theory and numerable validation studies of the elements of the process, and engages the reader in a mechanic's view of SDP.

-Tom Flanagan, academic practitioner, Boston

I find the book to be fluent and well written...I like the idea that it considers the action research processes that you are considering within the political arena (hence participative democracy)...action research is very political.

-Dr. Maurice Yolles, Liverpool Business School, UK

For a change we have a book that comes up with a practical 'how to' approach that has also been tested out over many years.

-Dr. Janet McIntyre Flinders University Adelaide, Australia

## **How the Structured Design Process Rescued Our Community**

I am a 15 year member of Bryn Gweled Homesteads, founded in 1940. We are the intentional community discussed in Chapter 13 of Mr. Christakis's new book. There are currently 74 families living in owner built homes who share the ownership of 240 acres of woods. The sole intention of our community is to be good neighbors to one another.

A schism developed in our traditionally harmonious nature when it became evident that our over abundance of deer has caused over 70% of our members to be infected with Lyme's Disease. The deer have also destroyed the under story of our woods and caused multiple car accidents.

When there is an emotionally charged issue like the culling of deer, we require a super-majority written vote of 2/3rds or better to initiate action. Mr. Christakai is a member and resident of our community. He graciously volunteered to engage the community in a Structured Design Process workshop. The results were so enlightening and revealing that some time later our community hired him to host a second SDP workshop.



Bryn Gweled Co-Laboratory

These two SDP workshops were pivotal in resolving this deeply emotional issue. Our community subsequently created a three part strategic plan that won an 80% super majority vote. Our plan is now being implemented successfully. The SDP workshops also fathered an ongoing ad hoc committee to help us all improve our problem solving abilities. This in turn has encouraged less active members to participate anew.

Our community harmony is now greatly improved and getting so much better all the time! Thank you Aleco!!

Thomas Fetterman  
Vice President  
Bryn Gweled Homesteads  
Southampton, PA

## **Ongoing Activity**

The Institute for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Agoras is still in the middle of its design work with the United States Department of Agricultura (USDA).

It recently assisted the Americans for Indian Opportunity (AIO) in its efforts to receive a sizable government grant to assist 3 tribes plan and implement their futures. More later.

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