I'm very happy to be here today to share with you my thoughts about our past and about our promise. I don't have light and jolly thoughts or feelings to share with you today. In fact, I have bloody serious thoughts to share. I want to talk about crises—crises for individuals and crises for our society. I also want to take about the ordeal of change. And, finally, I want to talk about how you and I can find hope and courage if we are willing to get clear about the purposes we want to serve.

We are just entering a new decade. It's the decade of the Brave New World of 1984. You and I must decide if we have the will and clarity of purpose that we need to shape our world.

At the start of a new decade there is always a rush of forecasting about what the future will bring. There is a benefit to this forecasting because understanding what's technologically feasible, understanding population trends, and understanding resource limitations is certainly the beginning of informed choice. But we must be careful about what we do with these forecasts. We cannot expect to find our future by passively gazing into the forecaster's crystal ball. It is crucial that we choose our future. Trends are not destiny. You and I can create our destiny if we have the will to choose our purposes. I believe that making such choices is a vital aspect of our professional work.

Our society is experiencing considerable stress; I think that we have a mess on our hands. Let me illustrate with the problems that are on my mind:
- We have a well-documented productivity slump.
- There is increased alienation of both labor and management.
- I believe we are seeing only the beginning of a tax revolt.
- The rate of inflation seems totally out of control.
- The costs of health care rise at a staggering rate.
- Some of our high schools are armed camps.
- We observe the decay of our once-vital center cities as if it were inevitable.
- 13 states have not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment.
- The federal government's regulatory agencies grow like a cancer.
- In recent years we've had Watergate, the Vietnam War and assassinations of fine leaders. I'm not a prophet of doom. I'm just describing "what is."

It's from this set of circumstances that we must move into the future. And what can you and I do with this situation? What role is there for us? If we wish to understand what role this profession might play in making choices for the future, we must appreciate who we have been in the past. To some extent, our past is our prologue. Basically, we have helped people and organizations by increas-
ing consciousness beyond self-awareness to a consciousness of social-awareness. We have been busy at the task of developing this new consciousness for the last decade and we and our work have become well-known and valued. We have brought to the world a practical understanding of the importance of organizational norms.

Throughout this time we have also become deeply identified with the change and improvement of organizations. We have become the process experts of organizational change. We have enthusiastically gone forth to become social inventors. Through our efforts to improve the cultures of organizations, we have learned a great deal about the process of change.

And we have become aware of some very deep aspects of the process of change from others experience. The research of Elizabeth Kubler-Ross on death and dying is just one example of other sources of insight.

This knowledge about just what is involved in the process of change is very important. It gives us a perspective which helps us go through the crisis we face as a society; and it will help us go through the crises we experience as individuals.

Let me illustrate with the use of a model from across the Atlantic—from Claes Janssen, of Sweden, who developed it to explain what it means to be an insider in one’s own culture. As he worked with it, he saw that it contained the essential stages of individual or societal transformation.

I would like first to describe the model in terms of an individual’s experience and then use it to consider our societal problems. The theory describes four major phases of transformation, or change. These phases are: first, contentment, then repression, then confusion, and finally renewal.

Let’s start with the phase called contentment. I don’t think that it would reflect an overly-optimistic attitude to assume that each of you has experienced contentment. In these periods of our lives, we are at peace with ourselves and with the world. At such times, our reservoirs of self-esteem are full; we are relaxed; we enjoy things as they are. We feel fulfilled.

We may go along for a considerable period of time like this, but then something happens which threatens our contentment. It might be that something goes seriously wrong on the job. A close personal relationship is damaged or broken. We suffer a large financial loss. The problem may be the result of forces outside of us or it may be the culmination of a slow process of erosion within us. We have a growing awareness that something isn’t right—isn’t whole. We are no longer content. But we try to hang on to our former happiness. We repress our unhappy feelings and carry on as if we were O.K. (I’m O.K. and you’re O.K. has become our “should.”)

We are now in the second phase of our model. We feel the distress but...
plied to organizational cultures have become as commonplace as bacon and eggs for breakfast. Inter-group confrontation meetings and the diagnostic processes involved in team-building almost always help free people and organizations from continuing to suffer with problems they have repressed.

When people and organizations experience confusion, again we have processes to help. Some of these are: the procedures that tap right-brain thinking, imagining the future, processes that tease out common visions, ideas about networking for learning, and creating collateral organizations for solving ambiguous problems. All of these are processes which help people through the briar patch of confusion.

Then there are the qualities we bring to these situations because we are who we are—optimistic, inventive people who have been through transformations before. We know that strength comes from being emotionally mature, understanding, supportive and caring.

For years we have been reminded by our better mentors that our own warm bodies are our best interventions. This has been our short-hand way of acknowledging the importance of our hope and optimism. So we can help others and ourselves through this painful side of change. And because of this, we know that we can play a very significant role in the future of our society.

But what about renewal? I'm coming now to this most exciting stage in the process of change. And, if you're anything like me, you're straining at the bit to get to the stage of renewal. Our society just might be at the threshold of a major transformation—a renaissance. We know that we are experiencing confusion; but listen to what Nietzsche so beautifully said about confusion: "One must still have chaos in one, to give birth to a dancing star."

Our work of differentiating process from task has been useful. But it was never intended to create lopsided people who follow the meandering of "what is" at the expense of choosing "what might be." We have to join clear purposes to our process orientation to capture the imagination and spirit of humanity and to help renew our society. We don't have to limit ourselves to supplying our process technology to purposes chosen by others. We can choose purposes as well as anyone. The question to ask ourselves is: Improve the process for what purpose? The answers may change but the question remains the same: "Improve the process for what purpose?"

Mother Theresa, Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, and Eleanor Roosevelt don't stick in our memories simply because they had process skills. They became symbols and instruments of important purposes—purposes which brought out the best in people. We have energy, creativity and intelligence within us. To use this potential, we need to find sets of relationships and purposes to be invested towards.

It was a long time ago that Plato defined a slave as the person who carries out the purposes of another. It's a rather heavy definition, but I think it makes the point. We can join others and pursue common purposes. We don't have to retain this special relationship of forever being the outsider, concerned only with process. We must dedicate ourselves to purposes of our choosing and be known for our advocacy. We can do this without becoming driven dogmatics. I'm not talking here about imposing the will or desire of a single leader. I am talking about joining in with the moving spirit of a whole group developing and pursuing some valuable purpose. Leadership is the act of choosing a purpose and mobilizing energy and resource in the pursuit of that purpose.

Perhaps I can illustrate what I am trying to express with a personal example. As I mentioned earlier in this talk, our nation is experiencing a productivity slump. We also see increasing evidence of worker alienation. These twin problems have given me a new sense of mission and purpose. To some people, productivity has come to mean working harder and faster, to produce cheaper products, of lower quality, in order to end up with a net profit at the expense of almost everything else. But that's materialistic number-counting running wild.

Productivity has a deeper meaning and people want to be productive in this deeper sense. To be productive can mean that we make the most out of the limited resources we have. It can mean putting quality into products. It can mean working safely at the work place and within the larger environment. And it can mean the excitement of mastery and the dignity one can find through shaping something of value. I always saw the dignity of a master craftsman when I was around my father. It was years later that I discovered that literally no one in the entire world could match the performance record of the engines that he and his mechanics overhauled. The quiet dignity that comes from excellence in one's work, from the conservation of resources, and from the creation of value, is one of the deepest meanings we can hope to find. This is what it means to be productive. It is a purpose worth pursuing as an individual, as an organization, and as a na-
I intend to work towards this common endeavor and to be known for my advocacy of its value.

I would like to direct you towards some other issues within our society which will require leadership, a good deal of which we could supply. These are areas which, in my opinion, will continue to change rapidly, bringing about stress and dislocation.

- First, it is likely that there will be continued and severe dislocations that will accompany the new economics of energy supply.
- Second, there will be an accelerating change in the nature of work, stemming from automation, robots, and microelectronics.
- Third, there will be continuing change in the composition and value orientation of the work force.
- And, finally, there will be a continued and growing disillusionment with our traditional political processes, institutions and structures.

These issues present us with the greatest need for purposeful leadership. We can face these challenges and choose our purposes with wisdom if we keep in mind some lifetime values gleaned from our common heritage. These values are:

- An appreciation of learning;
- An understanding of the basis of science;
- An appreciation of how profoundly we are related to others; and, finally,
- An appreciation of the twin values of community and self-governance.

The kind of learning that I’m talking about is that which values the experience of the learner as much as it values the body of information being explored. The view of science is one in which science is not a mechanism, not the discovery of absolutes, but instead the process of human search and creativity. The view of relatedness is that we cannot know ourselves, save through our relationship with others.

And the view of community and self-governance is that which was so well expressed by the early Bostonians. Fanueil Hall, their meeting place, is still standing. It’s been called the Cradle of Liberty. The hall symbolizes both the freedom of speech and the importance of community.

I have never stood in another meeting place where my heart has been so strongly moved. You can feel the human dimension of the art of government in that place. A person doesn’t feel small in that room. You can get in touch with what it means to be self-governing.

These values can be beacon lights for us as we chart our future. And the purposes we choose can, in turn, bring life and renewed meaning to these cherished values. We won’t renew these values by going backwards, but by creating new forms of relationship and new forms of organization and new forms of self-governance.

Is the world ready for the purposes we are likely to choose? I want to read a quote to you that shows an appreciation for the promise we have to offer our world. I chose this quote because it comes from the leader of the most conservative organization I know; and, because it is addressed to the world at large.

“[The criterion we should use] in comparing social, economic and political systems . . . must be the humanistic criterion; namely, the measure in which each system is capable of . . . eliminating the various forms of exploitation of man, and of insuring for people, through work, not only the just distribution of . . . material goods, but also, a participation . . . in the whole process of production and in the social life that grows up around that process.”

This is from Pope John Paul II’s United Nations Address, October 2, 1979.

The social democracy of the work place, of which we are a part, is indeed reaching into the established institutions of our world when the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, advises the representatives of the United Nations to judge nations by participative processes in the workplace.

We practitioners are optimistic and inventive people. We have the processes, we have the values, we have the ability to choose our purposes. If we put them all together, we will rekindle our spirit and our commitment—a commitment to life filled with meaning. There is a moment between chaos and commitment where we create our worlds and our meaning. It’s not simply discovery—it’s creation.

I don’t know what purpose you might choose to fulfill your promise. I only know that to be whole as a person and to make a difference in the world, we must make such choices. You know what will give your life meaning. . . . Choose that purpose.

Our world is crying out for a renewal of purpose and for those who will commit themselves. I again want to reach into our political history to help capture the strength of what it means to commit oneself. The signers of the Declaration of Independence concluded by writing: “And for the support of this Declaration . . . we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our Sacred Honor.”

You can be renaissance women and men if you wish, if you take the chance to be known for your commitment to some lifegiving purpose. My two young sons are here with us today. At the end of this decade they will be entering the world as adults. It will help them enormously if you and I fulfill our promise to our future.

Thank you.