



Institute of Systems Wisdom

Fellows Newsletter

Volume 12, Number 1

June 23, 2026

Institute of Systems Wisdom is an innovative social-academic-practice community that emerged in 2013 (and published a [Newsletter](#) beginning in 2014) that resulted from applied consulting and research projects hosted within the Organizational Dynamics MS and MPhil programs at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn). When project members (faculty, scholars, practitioners, and students) moved from Penn to the Thomas Jefferson University Doctor of Management in Strategic Leadership and Doctor of Philosophy in Complex Systems Leadership programs, a co-laboratory relationship between the Institute and Jefferson was established. When Jefferson closed both leadership doctorates in 2021 then the School of Continuing and Professional Studies in 2023, the community continued within the *Institute of Systems Wisdom* where many were *Fellows*:
<https://www.systemswisdom.com/institute-systems-wisdom>.

John Pourdehnad *Joins HS Talks*



John has accepted an invitation to prepare and deliver a 30-minute presentation to be recorded by [Henry Stewart Talks](#), an educational database that provides access to thousands of curated, animated video lectures, case studies, and seminars. The content is created by leading experts, researchers, and Nobel Laureates from academia, industry, and commerce.

The platform is divided into two primary collections utilized heavily by universities, medical schools, and global pharmaceutical companies: The Biomedical & Life Sciences Collection features over 3,800 lectures ranging from basic science to advanced clinical interventions and therapeutics.

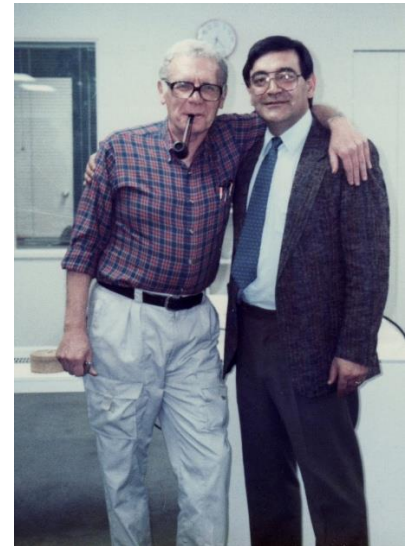
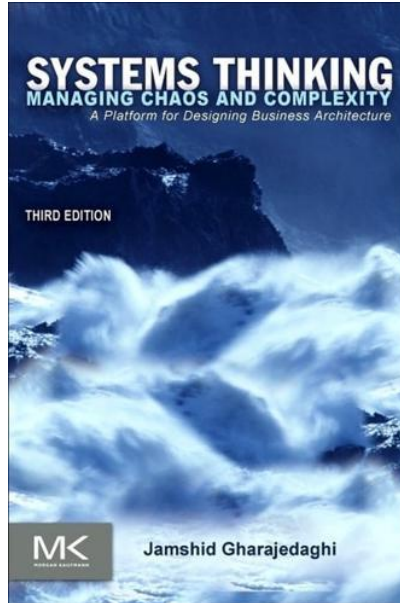
The Business & Management Collection covers topics such as marketing, finance, strategy, technology, and global business management. John's talk is described as follows:

Professor John Pourdehnad – professor of systems and design thinking – will present the topic, “Problem Solving vs Problem Dissolving.” Here is a summary:

Managers and decision makers often find themselves caught in a relentless cycle of problem-solving; a ‘treadmill’ that demands constant effort yet delivers little real progress. This happens because what appears to be a ‘problem’ is frequently only a symptom of deeper, unrecognized, and unresolved systemic issues. In this presentation, we explore the distinction between conventional problem solving and the transformative method of dissolving complex issues, and how systemic approaches enable leaders to address root causes rather than surface symptoms



In Memoriam: *Jamshid Gharajedaghi*



It is with profound sadness that I share the passing of my dear friend, colleague, and mentor of 56 years, Jamshid Gharajedaghi, who left us on May 30, 2026. As a professor of systems thinking and director of the Wharton School's Busch Center—the practice arm of Social Systems Sciences—Jamshid inspired generations of students, scholars, and practitioners through his teaching, practice, and his leadership.

Jamshid joined Russell Ackoff and other colleagues in formally establishing INTERACT, the Institute for Interactive Management, as an independent organization. The institute became a pioneering center for systems methodologies, organizational design, and the resolution of complex organizational challenges.

Jamshid and Russ shared a remarkable relationship as friends, academic collaborators, and business partners. Together, they helped shape and advance the field of systems thinking through both their joint and independent work. Russ frequently acknowledged Jamshid's intellectual contributions, collaborated with him on influential projects, and incorporated many of their shared insights into the development of systems thinking frameworks.

When Jamshid published his landmark book, *Systems Thinking: Managing Chaos and Complexity*, Russ wrote the Foreword noting it is the most comprehensive description of systems methodology he had ever read and that the book develops a critical new pattern of thought necessary to solve the complex problems organizations face today.

Throughout his career, Ackoff described Gharajedaghi as a “delightful friend, invaluable colleague, and constant source of inspiration.” He often reflected on how their different cultural and philosophical perspectives enriched one another's understanding of systems theory.

Jamshid immigrated to the United States following the Iranian Revolution. Although he spent nearly five decades in America, his love for Iran never diminished. He remained deeply connected to his homeland, possessing an extraordinary knowledge of Persian culture and a particular passion for Persian poetry. Throughout his life, he often served as a bridge between Persian and American cultures, helping each better understand and appreciate the other. Here is a [video of Jamshid](#) expressing his feelings about Russ Ackoff as part of Russ' Memorial service in 2010.

While pursuing his studies at the University of California, Berkeley in the 1960s, Jamshid taught Persian language courses, sharing his language and culture with American students. After completing his education, he returned to Iran and began his professional career with IBM. He later joined the Industrial Management Institute (IMI), widely regarded as Iran's premier institution for management education, consulting, and research.

Jamshid's vision, leadership, and intellectual contributions were instrumental in shaping IMI into a world-class institution. Under his influence, the institute gained international recognition and became a leading center for management education and organizational development. Those who knew its history would agree that Jamshid played a pivotal role in creating IMI's distinctive character and establishing its reputation both within Iran and around the world.

For those of us fortunate enough to know him personally, Jamshid was far more than a distinguished scholar and pioneering systems thinker. He was a generous mentor, a trusted colleague, and a cherished friend whose wisdom, vision, and humanity touched countless lives. His legacy endures through his writings, his students, his colleagues, and the many organizations and leaders whose thinking he transformed.

He will be deeply missed and gratefully remembered.

John Pourdehnad, June 1, 2026

<https://www.systemswisdom.com/jamshid-gharajedaghi>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamshid_Gharajedaghi



Boris Vishnevsky Consults about AI with US Federal Agency



Boris writes:

I am presently leading the AI and Cybersecurity Program at a (cannot be disclosed) Federal Agency in Washington DC. The consult integrates the following core principles:

- >**Applied Innovation:** Practical innovation delivered through intentional, scalable business solutions;
- >**Augmented Insight:** AI as human-amplifying intelligence that improves understanding, decisions, and foresight;
- >**Architected Intelligence:** Enhanced human capabilities supported by scalable, AI-Augmented systems;
- >**Agentic Integrations:** Autonomous/semi-autonomous agents integrated into well-orchestrated MCP eco-systems, APIs to realize business value and measurable outcomes.

I am helping the participants to appreciate that AI is often broadly misinterpreted. It is neither Artificial; rather, it is powered by actual and comprehensive computer algorithms, nor Intelligent in and of itself since the Intelligence is an emergent property derived by effective and purposeful human- to- computer interactions. This is not "the first time" I have been engaged in leading the Adoption of the AI Capabilities. This YouTube video shows my presentation at a conference at Villanova University: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxaEiSnBmgc&t=1s>

Larry Hirschhorn *to Speak at International Meeting*

ISPSO INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
FOR THE PSYCHOANALYTIC
STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONS

European Regional Meeting 2026

BETWEEN DOUBT AND CONVICTION

Leading Organisations in a
Turbulent World

PARALLEL SESSION 4

What Is Going on Here?

Consulting Between Doubt and Next Steps

Larry Hirschhorn
Programme Facilitator and Interlocutor

3-5 July 2026

Lausanne, Switzerland

Larry continues to offer services through his consultancy: <https://www.dynamicsofconsulting.net/>.

He also wrote: I am very excited to attend this important conference. The AI revolution taxes our capacity for thoughtful decision-making to the utmost. How can we navigate the terrain between great doubt and great conviction as we make sense of the epochal changes we face? We cannot simply jump on bandwagons, nor can we retreat to simply being bystanders. We urgently need thinking and dialogue that will inform our practice. Please join me! [More here:](#)

Doctoral Leadership *Community* *Summer Event*



Robyn Chin writes: Sorry for the delayed response; having a baby has been taking up more of my time than expected.

Just wanted to close the loop on this. I think it would be best to reschedule our official community meet-up until next year in summer 2027, when we have more time to plan and reach out to group members earlier in the process. Larry, thank you again for volunteering to hold it at your home!

On a smaller scale, we can still have a pop-up meet-up at [Taqueria Amor](#) in Manayunk on Saturday August 22, 2026 around 3:00 PM for anyone who is available. If you are planning to attend, **please text me (267-357-5017)** closer to the date, and I can make reservations. I will also send a reminder as we get closer. Enjoy the summer. I look forward to seeing some of you before it ends.

Adena Johnston, *Invited Disruptor*



Conference News: *DisruptHR South Jersey 7.0* was another sold-out success, and we're so grateful to everyone who made it possible. A huge thank you to our incredible speakers—including [Adena Johnston, D. Mgt., MCEC](#), for sharing their knowledge, insights, and fresh perspectives.

Adena wrote: It was such a fun evening, and I felt honored to be among such amazing speakers!

Adena also notes: Traditional coaching often follows a linear progression: assess, explore, plan, act. But complex organizational challenges require a more nuanced approach. I've developed what I call the **PRUNE Method** for coaching leaders through systemic challenges. [More here:](#)



Rachel Delgato, *English and AI*



Rachel wrote: Thank you for asking us about our personal and professional activities. Since leaving Cohort 7 early because the program closed, I have been teaching English Composition at Delaware State University and Delaware Technical Community College part-time where I face the Sisyphean task of preventing AI writing assignment use. Ironically, my full-time role is a Senior Consultant at Infosys North America working on AI Transformation in financial services. I also gave a presentation at Temple University Fox School of Business on career outlooks for students interested in IT Governance and Risk.

I have 3 grandbabies now, so I have been busy discovering life through their eyes. A child's sense of wonder helps to ground you and give you a different perspective on life. I remain a person who marvels at the beauty of the ordinary.

Rev. Val Andrews, *First Female Pastor*



VALLEY FORGE (03/11/2026)—The [Beyond the Stained-Glass Ceiling Grant](#) (BTSGC), offered by American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS), supports African American female clergy called to lead small congregations, many of which face financial struggles and cannot afford to pay their pastors a living wage. It was inspired by the reflections of Rev. Chris Smith, pastor of Restoration Ministries of Greater Cleveland Inc., who wrote “[Beyond the Stained Glass Ceiling: Equipping and Encouraging Female Pastors](#)” (Judson Press, 2013).

Reviewing the history of our communities, I bring your attention to 2024, a year with an unprecedented number of nominations, the grant was awarded to **Rev. Dr. Valerie Andrews**, the first female pastor called to serve Eternal Life Missionary Baptist Church, a Liberian congregation in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It funded her first trip to Liberia, which served both as a spiritual pilgrimage and a pastoral formation experience.

During her visit, Dr. Andrews delivered a lecture at Liberia Baptist Theological Seminary and preached in the seminary’s chapel as well as at Providence Baptist Church in Monrovia. She emphasized the importance of cross-continental solidarity among women pastors during her numerous conversations with Liberian female clergy. [More here.](#)

Jerin Juby, *Academic & Practice Leader*



This is a photograph of Thomas Jefferson University President Susan C. Aldridge with Jerin Juby signifying some of his recent contributions and accomplishments including that he is the incoming [president of the Pennsylvania Society for Respiratory Therapy](#)

As reported in the News: For the *Atlantic Cape Community College's* first-ever Health Science Day, he gave an introduction to the profession and a respiratory therapy demonstration to engage students. [More here.](#)

As reported in the News: Jefferson Washington Township Hospital in Turnersville, NJ, earned two top honors at Thomas Jefferson University's inaugural Respiratory Therapy Program Pinning Ceremony for the Class of 2025. "We're incredibly grateful for the support our Jefferson Washington Township Hospital colleagues provide our students at the Jefferson College of Health Professions' Department of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Services," **said Jerin Juby**, DMgt, RRT, Assistant Professor, Respiratory Therapy Program Director and Chair, Department of Cardiovascular & Pulmonary Sciences at Thomas Jefferson University. [More here.](#)

Jerin has also co-authored two published papers:

- Miller AG, Burr KL, Emberger JS, Hinkson CR, Hoerr CA, **Juby J**, Roberts KJ, Smith BJ, Strickland SL, Rehder KJ. **Staffing and Daily Assignments in Respiratory Care Departments.** *Respir Care.* 2026 Mar;71(3):255-262. [Available here.](#)
- Miller AG, Burr KL, Emberger JS, Hinkson CR, Hoerr CA, **Juby J**, Roberts KJ, Smith BJ, Strickland SL, Rehder KJ. **Respiratory Therapy Leaders' Perceptions of Value of Respiratory Care Services.** *Respir Care.* 2025 Mar;70(3):287-297. [Available here.](#)

Scott Koerwer, *Shifts Context*

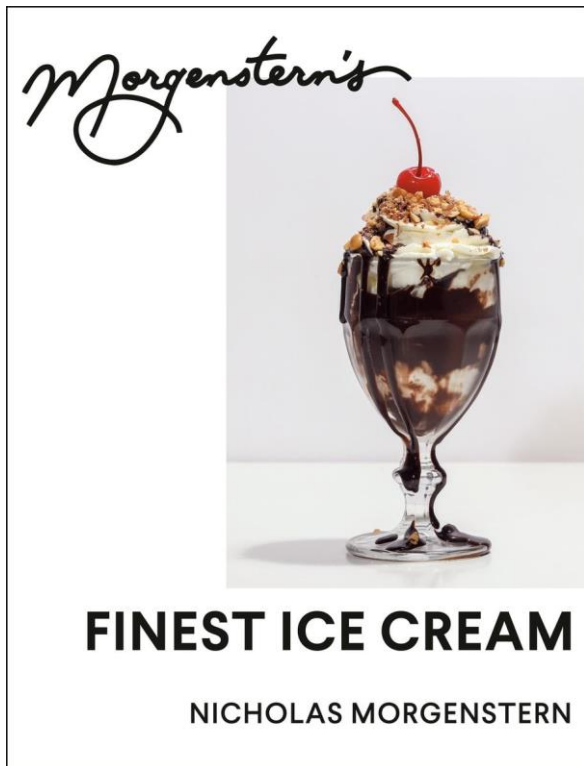


Scott has moved from the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania where he most recently was the 6th Executive Director of the Lee Iacocca Institute for Global Leadership at Lehigh University approximately 60 miles northeast of Philadelphia. Lehigh University has approximately 7,900 undergrad and graduate students and approximately 600 full-time faculty members.

He has relocated to College Station, Texas in East-Central Texas, about 90 miles northwest of Houston. His new appointments at Texas A&M University include Assistant Dean for Executive Education and Executive Director of the Center for Executive Development at the Mays Business School. [More about his roles here](#). Texas A&M University in College Station has approximately 75,000 undergrad and graduate students and approximately 4,400 faculty members.

Imagine the differences between living and working in Texas compared to Pennsylvania. For example, when he sends me a text, it begins with “Howdy” (partner??). 😊

Larry Enters Pre-Retirement

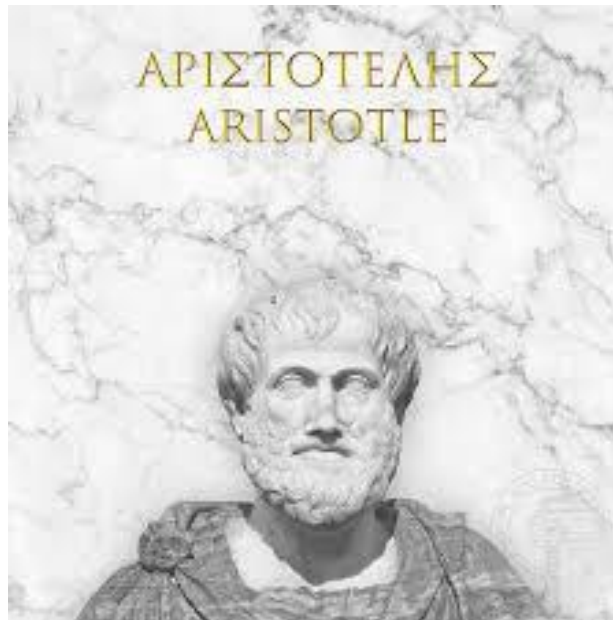


After retiring from the University of Pennsylvania, then from Thomas Jefferson University, Larry is pleased to report he is making progress toward pre-retirement from Lehigh University. Among his activities is writing a quarterly [newsletter for the Lee Iacocca Institute for Global Leadership](#).

Larry coauthored a paper with Regina Tendayi titled *Rethinking human resource management before it is too late*, published in the HR journal, [The People Factor Magazine: South African Board for People Practices](#), 2025, Vol. 7, No. 8 (August), 10-14. He also coauthored a paper with former Penn student Sarina Pasricha called *Ethical concerns about artificial intelligence: Bridging the gap between abstract principles and practical deployment*, published by Lehigh's Digital Library. Here is an [early version](#).

On a weekend getaway a few years ago in NYC, Larry stopped in the Lower East Side at *Morgenstern's Finest Ice Cream* shop. While there, his image was captured by photographers who were preparing a book of ice cream recipes. Fast forward to this past Fall; Elana read that the [book was published](#) so she ordered a copy. The above photo is on page 293. Postscript: Elana contacted the photographer (listed in the book credits) to thank her and received a lovely note offering to send us the original image. She said no, but had she been offered ice cream...

An Old Leadership Theory Revived: *With a Name You can Barely Pronounce*



Protrepticus Leadership

Protrepticus is a modernized executive development method rooted in *Aristotle's* ancient Greek art of philosophical dialogue. Its core premise is that to govern others effectively, you must first govern yourself by aligning your actions with your deepest personal values. [More here.](#)

Core Methodology

Protrepticus acts as an ethical mirror, allowing leaders to step away from daily operational crises and reflect on abstract, universal values (e.g., *trust, courage, responsibility, justice*). The process consists of: [\[1, 2\]](#)

- **Co-reflective Dialogue:** A peer-to-peer or coach-to-leader exchange between equals.
- **Bridging the Universal and Particular:** Exploring what a value means universally, then examining how it applies specifically to the leader's own decisions and behaviors.
- **Intrinsic Motivation:** Moving leaders away from fear-based or transactional actions toward purpose- and ethics-driven leadership. [\[1, 2\]](#)

Why It Matters for Executives

Most high-profile leadership failures are rarely technical; they are ethical and psychological.

Protrepticus helps leaders: [\[1, 2, 3, 4\]](#)

- Prevent the loss of sight of their core values.
- Examine the "why" behind their choices before acting.

- Distinguish between true leadership (focusing on people and purpose) and mere management (focusing solely on operational tasks and technology). [[1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)]

Modern Application

Revived by contemporary thinkers such as **Professor Ole Fogh Kirkeby** at the *Copenhagen Business School*, **protreptics has become a systematic executive training discipline**. It is used to teach leaders how to: [[1](#)]

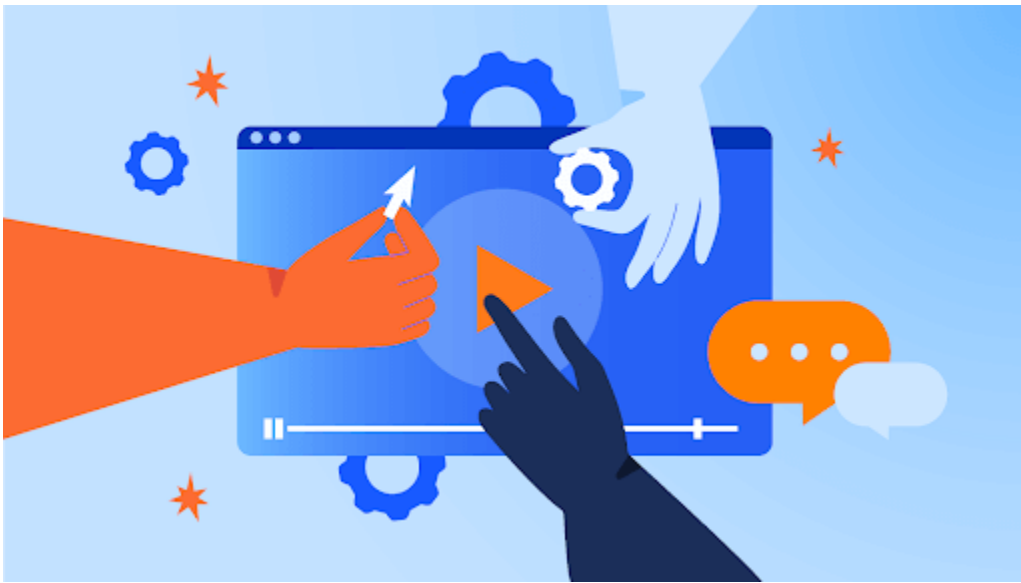
- **Practice Self-Governance:** Embodying the Aristotelian idea that "he who cannot be a good follower cannot be a good leader". [[1](#), [2](#)]
- **Frame Inviting Questions:** Using open-ended dialogue to inspire discovery and challenge assumptions rather than using questions as tactical weapons. [[1](#)]
- **Act in Public Interest:** Fostering leadership that delivers on long-term, societal, and organizational good rather than seeking transient reward

Protrepticus is pronounced **proh-TREP-tih-kuhs**

School is over but learning never ends so I thought you'd like this brief lesson in values-based followership-leadership.



Video Snippets



Here are a few online videos of former classmates.

Eugene de Klerk:

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7460683924474597376/>

John Ervin:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwbSaLH0MWo>

William Myles:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=william+myles+public+housing

Bob Schatz:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1dMRFIXtSA>

And a blast from the past: **John Pourdehnad** honoring Russ Ackoff at Russ' memorial service: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=951KP_pLkWo

Please keep your email up to date with me. Please remain connected. Please continue to share personal and professional updates, and any reports of activities you would like to report in our semi-annual newsletter.

I wish each of you and your families a safe and happy summer and fall.

A 2027 summer holiday party can be held if you work with me to plan it.



Institute of Systems Wisdom

Fellows Newsletter

PS: [Taqueria Amor](#) in Manayunk on Saturday August 22, 2026, around 3:00 PM