



Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan

Independent Study Project Report

TERM : Summer 1998

COURSE : MO 750

PROFESSOR : Robert E. Quinn

STUDENT : Mark D. Levine

TITLE : The Deep Change Workbook
(Part 3: Reflecting on Change)

Part Three

Reflecting on Change

In this final section, the reader is offered case studies and quotations from the literature in order to integrate the concepts of personal and organizational change. In his article “Advanced Change Theory “, Dr. Quinn proposes seven criteria for leading personal and organizational change:

1. What are the patterns of self-deception?
2. Are values and behavior aligned?
3. Is there a vision of the common good?
4. Is the change agent empowered?
5. Does the change agent operate at the edge of chaos?
6. Does the change agent respect the freedom and dignity of others?
7. Does The Change Agent Simultaneously Challenge And Support?

We will utilize these seven criteria to reflect on the case studies, which follow.

What Are the Patterns of Self-deception?

We see patterns of self-deception at the beginning of change. ACT suggests that the change agent needs to reflect deeply on his or her own values and this often requires that the change agent must first recognize patterns of self-deception. The change target is attracted to, not forced by, the efforts of the change agent. Real change, in the target only, comes when the agent first changes themselves.

Changing a Child

Warner (1992:0-4) provides a case of a mother-daughter relationship. The eight-year-old daughter does not care about doing schoolwork and even cheats. The mother insists that the child complete her homework and spends hours working with her. The child complains. The mother tries to be cheerful but gets continually more irritated. The mother states, "The trouble with Erin is especially frustrating because for years I have given her my best efforts." The mother describes the self-discipline necessary not to compare Erin with her sister and her efforts to give Erin warm hugs on a daily basis. She describes drilling Erin with flash cards and the seemingly intentional efforts of Erin to frustrate the effort by intentionally giving wrong answers. The mother recounts the feeling of being "kicked in the teeth" and her frustration at not knowing what else to do.

In attending a workshop run by Warner, the mother is exposed to many notions that parallel ACT. She is led to reexamine herself. Afterwards, she notes considerable self-deception and implicit communication of negative affect, "I was outwardly encouraging, but inwardly I mistrusted her, and she felt that message from me." With her new and more complex worldview, the mother takes on a higher level of concern for the change target, "I cried when I realized the price she had to pay for my inability to love her without reservation." With a new vision for the relationship, the mother stops micro-managing the relationship, models the importance of self-discipline, and encourages Erin come to her for help when she is ready. The relationship dramatically changed. The little girl began to perform well in school. The mother goes on to report a particularly interesting moment: "But this time I pulled her up on my lap and looked at her, and I had this overwhelming feeling of love for her that just seemed to flow between us. I hugged her tightly and told her how much I loved her. I realized that for the very first time in eight years I was expressing true love for her. Previously I had hugged her but the love didn't flow. This time the love just flowed. It was as if I was holding a new baby for the first time. Tears were streaming down and she looked at me and said, "Are you crying because you love me, Mommy?" I nodded. She whispered, "Mommy, I want to stay with you forever."

Reflections

Exercise:

1. In your organizational experience, have you ever been treated as the daughter was treated in this story? Describe your reaction and feelings in that situation.
2. Identify a situation in which you want someone to behave differently. Describe how you have acted up till now.
3. Now write an imaginary story about the situation you just described in answer to question two. In the story you get what you want by changing yourself as the mother changed herself. Let your imagination run free. Then describe the process that you imagined.
4. Returning to the situation in question two, what are some behaviors you might try that you have not tried before.
5. Now, write an action plan that might transform the situation in question two.

Reflecting On the Story

1. Self Change Precedes Changing Others

In recognizing the need to reduce integrity gaps in others, the change agent must turn inward and examine the hypocrisy in self. Personal discipline is required because of the pain in examining integrity gaps and because of pain involved in changing behavior. For example, Ghandi talked about “obtaining reform by growth from within, which is obtained by self-suffering and self-purification” (Iyer, 1990: 90). Jesus said, “Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother’s” (Luke, 6:42). Martin Luther King, Jr. Described the courage necessary to take a stand - “I am taking a stand for what I believe is right. But now I am afraid. The people are looking to me for leadership, and if I stand before them without strength and courage, they too will falter” (King, 1986: 509). Each of these change agents understood those self-change proceeds changing others.

- 1.1 Reflecting on the story of the mother and child, what was the role of self-change?
- 1.2 What key insights occur to you?

2. Fears That Shut Down the Change Process

Schein (1996) indicates that people and organizations will change when personal defenses, group norms, and organizational culture are unfrozen. This involves three processes. 1. Disconfirmation of expectations. 2. Induction of learning anxiety if the disconfirming data are accepted as valid and relevant. 3. Provision of psychological safety that converts anxiety into motivation to change. Unfortunately, the second step is often negated because we fear that, “If we admit to ourselves and others that something is wrong or imperfect, we will lose our effectiveness, our self-esteem, and maybe even our identity.” Given such risks it is natural that our defense mechanisms serve to shut down the change process both personally and collectively. We claim that we want progress but we pursue the preservation of our current position.

- 2.1 Reflecting on the story of the mother and child, what was blocking progress in the change process?
- 2.2 What key insights occur to you?

3. Hypocrisy Is Ubiquitous in Organizations

Argyris (1988) claims that hypocrisy is ubiquitous in organizations. We all have an espoused theory and a theory in action. He argues that there is a systematic discrepancy between what we espouse and how we behave. Furthermore, we are unaware of the discrepancy. This results in “miscommunication, self-fulfilling prophecies, self-sealing processes, and escalating errors” (Argyris, 1988: 261).

- 3.1 Reflecting on the story of the mother and child, how would you use the concepts of espoused theory and theory in action to analyze what happened?
- 3.2 What key insights occur to you?

Does the Change Agent Operate At The Edge of Chaos?

This is a particularly difficult notion. From the cases, we learn that it is normal for people to behave transactional. In trying to change others, the traditional change agent draws on the power of expertise and formal authority. This intention ties the change agent to established ways of knowing and can potentially disconnect them from being aligned with a changing reality. Operating at the edge of chaos means engaging uncertainty. It means giving up control with faith that a new order will emerge through the change efforts. At the edge of chaos, the ACT change agent tends to discover ways in which seeming opposites interpenetrate. Since the new vision is more complex than the old, and the change agent is able to integrate differences. This usually happens when, , the change agent is required to step "outside the safety of our prescribed role, to be different, to risk the unconventional."

Changing a Client

Peck (1978:140-150) describes the case of Rachel, a recently divorced woman. Rachel had difficulty in many of her relationships. These difficulties may have stemmed from her relationship with her mother who implicitly communicated that Rachel's place in the family was only assured by acceptable performance. Rejection was always a looming possibility. Giving of herself meant total commitment. Because Rachel could never conceive of such commitment in return, she remained emotionally uninvolved. In the therapeutic relationship with Peck, Rachel held the implicit belief that if intimacy begins to grow, it is best to desert the other person before being deserted yourself. Given Rachel's difficulty in establishing trust, progress in her therapy was very slow. One day, Rachel argued that, due to her financial situation, the frequency of their sessions would have to be reduced to one per week. Although Peck knew that money was not a problem in her situation, he violated one of the traditional rules in operating as a professional therapist and told her he would reduce his fee by fifty percent to maintain the twice a week sessions. She was stunned and moved. Yet, over the next several years, she actually quit several times, and Peck went to great lengths to invite her back to the relationship. After three years of such testing, Rachel slowly began to trust and share. By the fourth year Rachel had completely transformed herself into a trusting person enjoying the full potential of her relationships.

Reflections

1. In your business life, have you ever needed your boss to take a risk with you (or have you ever been in the situation of Peck's client where you needed something unusual from another person?)
2. Identify a situation in your professional life, where you have unsuccessfully attempted to impact or influence others using methods that worked in the past. Describe what used to work and now is ineffective.
3. Now write a story about that situation you just described in answer to question two. In this story, you effectively impact the situation by creatively pursuing new and unconventional strategies, which feel intuitively right. Let your imagination run free. Then describe the process that you imagined.
4. Returning to the situation in question two, what are some behaviors you might try that you have not tried before.
5. Now, write an action plan that might transform the situation in question two.

Reflecting On the Story

Effective Change Agents Operate On the Edge of Chaos

Wheatley (1994: 19-20) writes, “Finally, the information grows to such a level of disturbance that the system can no longer ignore it. At this point, jarred by so much internal disturbance and far from equilibrium, the system in its current form falls apart. But this disintegration does not signal the death of the system. In most cases, the system can reconfigure itself at a higher level of complexity, one better able to deal with the new environment.” The effective change agent understands this notion and does not have a safety net but rather operates at the edge of chaos. The change agent knows that in withdrawing from the present social sanctions and in acting unconventionally, the old self disintegrates and is immediately replaced by a new self which is more aligned with the current emerging reality. Virtually the same thing happens to the social system itself in that the old arrangements disintegrate and new, more aligned arrangements emerge.

- 1.1 Reflecting on the story, how did Peck operate on the edge of chaos?
- 2.1 What key insights occur to you?

Finding the Confidence to Proceed under Uncertainty

Grasping the dynamics of hypocrisy, Torbert (1987) suggests that most professionals practice “conditional confidence,” confidence that the professional actor will perform well as long as the situation does not violate the actor’s assumptions about the situation. Yet, Torbert argues that it is possible to deviate from the norm in that an actor can practice a form of “awakened attention” that allows them to press forward in uncertain and threatening situations, learning as they go. Torbert calls this process “action inquiry.” It requires an unconditional confidence that one can discard inaccurate assumptions and ineffective strategies in the midst of on-going action. According to Torbert, this unusual capacity is predicated upon increasing one’s personal integrity which, in turn, is gained by engaging ones lack of integrity.

- 1.1 Reflecting on the story, how does this paragraph apply to the story told by Peck?
- 1.2 What key insights occur to you?

Effective Change Agents See Purpose As More Important than Self

It takes tremendous strength and courage for Ghandi or King to willingly submit themselves to the club of an enraged, racist policeman. It takes tremendous courage for a CEO to invite external analysts into to the company to make a brutal assessment of the strategy upon which he has built the future of the company. Such people are neither weak nor naïve. They have developed a personal theory of change that includes but exceeds the logic of transaction. They are less naïve than the seemingly politically astute advocates of the Machiavellian position. Making deep change always involves risk or walking on the edge of chaos. The transactional perspective wishes this reality away while the effective change agent recognizes the danger and embraces the associated pain. This is possible for the change agent because the purpose is now more important than self. It is not possible to the transactional agent because the survival of the current self, is more important than purpose.

- 1.1 Reflecting on the story, how was Peck different in this case than in others?
- 2.1 What key insights occur to you?

We Organize Ourselves Defensively

Argyris (1991) suggests that there is a “universal human tendency” to organize our lives around four basic values: remaining in control, winning, suppressing negative feelings, and rational pursuit of objectives. Thus, when we encounter even the suggestion of failure, we become defensive and shut down. This occurs at the moment when learning is needed most.

1. **How does this quote relate to the story?**
2. **What key insights occur to you?**

We Are A Living Symbol

Trusting in our vision enough to start our journey into the chasm of uncertainty, believing that the resources will appear can be very difficult. The fact that we have enough trust and belief in ourselves to pursue our vision is what signals to others that the vision is worth investing in. Our message is filled with integrity and good intentions. It is our actions, not our words, that send the message.”

1. **How does this quote relate to the story?**
2. **What key insights occur to you?**

We Create Reality by Enacting It

“People create their environments as those environments create them...action, relationships, trust, faith, experience, and presumptions are not just tools of sense-making. They are also tools of epistemology and ontology. They create that which they interpret...if you believe life is worth living, then that belief too can validate itself. The issue turns on faith or the lack thereof, because it sets self-fulfilling action in motion...A presumed order becomes a tangible order when faith is followed by enactment” (Weick 1995: 38,52).

1. **How does this quote relate to the story?**
2. **What key insights occur to you?**

Is the Change Agent Empowered?

The practitioner of ACT becomes empowered when they take responsibility for themselves, risk new behaviors, and evolve meanings (Spreitzer & Quinn, 1997). When this happens they are less concerned about the existing sanction systems. Change agents become self-authorizing individuals with a unique voice (Spreitzer, 1995). They have more impact that in turn provides positive feedback, which re-energizes the change agent. The mother and child, Peck and Rachel, the risk taking student and the class, the executives and their people all experienced this process. As indicated above, true empowerment is a threatening concept to the administrative mindset. Empowerment programs are typically designed based on transactional assumptions (Quinn, Sendelbach & Spreitzer, 1992). The result is a "flavor of the month" or "empowerment in a box" approach which simply reinforces the existing transactional power relationships. Organizations cannot empower people. People can only empower themselves. While organizational environments can encourage risk taking (Spreitzer, 1996), they cannot mandate the process -- the process requires that the change target transcends the sanction system.

Changing a Class

Covey (1989: 265) provides a classroom case, which is illustrative of the principles of ACT. In this case, the change agent is not the course instructor, but a student. Covey illustrates how natural it is for all of us to unconsciously accept and enact transactional assumptions in relationships. For example, he brings all the normal trappings of educational authority and control to the classroom: a syllabus, textbooks, presentation plans, and a structure for grading. All are tools for controlling information flows, structuring context, and applying sanctions.

Three weeks into the class, an unexpected event occurred: "...One person began to relate some very powerful personal experiences. A spirit of humility and reverence fell upon the class -- reverence toward this individual and appreciation for his courage. Others began to pick up on it, sharing some of their experiences and insights and even some of their self-doubts. The spirit of trust and safety prompted many to become extremely open. Rather than present what they prepared, they fed on each other's insights and ideas and started to create a whole new scenario as to what that class could mean...I found myself gradually loosening up my commitment to the structure of the class and sensing entirely new possibilities. It wasn't just a flight of fancy; there was a sense of maturity and stability and substance which transcended by far the old structure and plan' (Covey, 1989: 265-266)."

Reflections

1. Have you ever felt stymied by the external rules, structure or traditions of an organization? Describe your reaction and feelings in that situation.
2. Identify a situation in which you want someone to behave differently. Describe how you have acted up till now.
3. Now write an imaginary story about the situation you just described in answer to question two.. In the story you get what you want by freeing yourself from the external rules and sanctions of your organization. Let your imagination run free. Then describe the process that you imagined.
4. Returning to the situation in question two, what are some behaviors you might try that you have not tried before.
5. Now, write an action plan that might transform the situation in question two.

Reflecting On the Story

For each of the quotes below, answer the following two questions:

1. How does this quote relate to the story?
2. **What key insights occur to you?**

The Paradox of Empowerment

The notion of actually having empowered employees is an enormous threat. As one person asked, "How would I manage such people?" In short, administrators become masters "of talking" participation and empowerment while "practicing" instruction and control. With this in mind, there is a seeming paradox. The paradox is that empowered people are more loyal to the system than are the people worried about the loss of control if people were really empowered.

The Power Of Culture

"Within our organizations, we have spent many years learning how to routinize and control things, how to build equilibrium-preserving hierarchies. Though we are skilled at creating hierarchical cultures, we are very unskilled at altering organizational structures that have outlived their usefulness. Though today the rhetoric of organization calls for nonhierarchical approaches, our cognitive maps still drive us toward enacting the old culture."

A Change That Should Have Worked

Organizational cultures are not designed, they tend to evolve naturally. At any given time, the culture will facilitate certain desired outcomes and block others. The CEO in this example encouraged everyone to eliminate work from the system. He had the most formal power in his organization, and he offered a plausible strategy. Everyone agreed that his advice was wise and desirable. Yet a year later, everyone was doing even more. How can such a change fail?

Corporate Change Requires A Social Movement

Here we would make the radical claim that every change that requires alteration in ingrained behavior patterns requires a social movement. In a corporation, culture change requires the authority figure to become a social insurgent, the leader of a social movement. Why is this a radical thought? Because the notion of change driven by authority, and notion of change driven by social insurgency, are assumed to be mutually exclusive, even at war with one another. Authority exists to resist insurgency and vice versa. The notion that a CEO, or even a lowly employee need to model moral power and become the leader of a social movement is both intellectually and behaviorally difficult at best.

Effective Change Agents Strive For Congruence

The literature emphasizes the power of situational influences and the external sanction system. Yet Carl Rogers suggests that we can be internally driven: "The self-structure moves... to a sense of integrity, wholeness, reconciliation, relief from tension, and a trust in one's own organism. As the point of evaluation shifts to within the self, a sense of positive worth, personal direction and a capacity to take risks develop. The growth of a congruent personality involves... a greater independence from social pressures to conform, combined with a capacity to understand other people's frames of reference (Hampden-Turner, 1981: 116)." To be effective a change agent must be able to go against the status quo, freeing the self from external sanctions while pursuing an internalized vision. The ability to live in the present increases the capacity to feel the real needs of others. This suggests the need for wholeness and congruence.

Are Values and Behavior Aligned?

The change agent seeks to reduce integrity gaps by aligning his or her values and behavior. Erin's mother had to reexamine her motives and in doing so realized the real messages she was sending. This realization brought great pain and a desire to more fully align her behaviors with her espoused values. Peck had to step outside his defined role and violate one of his own rules of a professional therapist in order to keep his behavior aligned with his values. When Covey realized what was happening, he dropped his authoritative props. The unit director and the division directors had to alter their behaviors to fit their clarified values. Because the CEO wanted the company to succeed he had to recognize and own his lack of control. In each case, the change agents had to clarify their own values and engage new behaviors that were more aligned with those values.

Changing a Unit

The authors recently interviewed middle managers in a large utility company and identified several people who were practicing ACT. One particularly provocative story was told by a man who led a downsizing effort. One of his direct reports, after being told he was being laid off, went home and committed suicide. He also left an audiotape for his former boss. That former boss told us that after he listened to the audiotape, he made some drastic, value-driven decisions. One was that he would never again play the transactional-political game and that he would tell the complete truth in every organizational situation. He said, instead of being fired as he first believed might be the outcome of these actions, he has become surprisingly powerful. He claims that over time, he has drastically changed and consequently so has his unit. Within the unit, people have complete trust in what he tells them, and they are willing to make great strides at his request. "We behave like a tight knit family." People above him also trust him and respect the performance of the unit. They are generally willing to trust the information he provides and tend to supply the resources he requests.

This man was jolted by the suicide of his employee. The jolt caused him to question the political-transactional model in which he was embedded. As he clarified his values, he chose to become value driven, which immediately resulted in unconventional behaviors. While the decision to always tell the truth seemed risky, what he found at the edge of chaos was a new way of seeing and behaving. Instead of being fired, his personal power increased. His capacity to influence increased. The relationships around him changed and his unit changed.

Reflections

Exercise:

1. Have you ever worked in an organization where people said one thing but did another? Describe your reaction and feelings in that situation.
2. Identify a situation in which you want someone to behave differently. Describe how you have acted up till now.
3. Now write an imaginary story about the situation you just described in answer to question two.. In the story you get what you want by aligning your behavior with your values. Let your imagination run free. Then describe the process that you imagined.
4. Returning to the situation in question two, what are some behaviors you might try that you have not tried before.
5. Now, write an action plan that might transform the situation in question two.

Reflecting On the Story

For each of the quotes below, answer the following two questions:

1. How does this quote relate to the story?
2. **What key insights occur to you?**

Self Change Is Transformational

Peck points out that what matters first is not the commitment or courage of the change target but rather the commitment, courage and risk-taking of the change agent. In reflecting back upon his most successful cases, Peck notes that success requires the change agent to step out of the safety of the prescribed role and “risk the unconventional.” The willingness to “suffer” through such risks is the “very essence of therapy.” This means not worrying about his alignment with established fact or authority, only worrying about alignment with his personal values. The change agent is courageously walking on the edge of chaos and is striving to align the self with current reality. A vision emerges, behavior changes, and a new relationship forms. The new relationship is an emergent organization characterized by stability and creative energy. Paradoxically, both the change target and the change agent are transformed.

Empowerment Follows Personal Transformation

When a person finds a purpose larger than self, and pursues that purpose, at a risk to the existence of the present self, learning occurs. The person grasps a vision of how the system works and what it needs and how the principle of transformation work to empower the self, others and the system. This awareness usually follows a life event that stimulates the individual to fully clarify personal values.

Effective Change Agents Confront Their Own Hypocrisy

It is interesting to note that Richard Harrison, a highly recognized organizational change agent writes about his own lack of integrity and suggests that such recognition is crucial to overcome personal denial and increase one’s consciousness of self. This process allows him to strive for an awareness that, “the finger I point at the world points back at me and that my clients usually mirror my own failings and difficulties (Harrison, 1995: 40).”

Does the Change Agent Respect the Freedom and Dignity of Others?

As the agent of ACT goes through the process of personal transformation, he or she is filled with concern for others. The change agents come to appreciate the change targets' system of needs and their right to decide. Erin's mother gives love as never before and sees Erin as a being of value. Rachel becomes capable of trusting and supporting others. Covey drops his trappings of authority, by trusting and encouraging the choices of the students. The division director returns to the company not with directives but with questions about the future. Because the agent of ACT experiences personal transformation, the change agent has increased **empathy** for others and understands the critical role of **choice** in human development.

Changing a Division

The next case also involves downsizing. A large corporation engaged in three downsizing over a short period. One senior executive graphically described his fears of losing his job, not being able to maintain his standard of living, send his children to college, or keep his home. After months of gut-wrenching agony, he began **to confront his fears and clarify his values**. In doing so, he concluded that he had an identity separate from the organization and that he could survive on a much smaller salary if necessary. **This change in perspective** had an empowering effect. He stopped worrying about the dangers of change and how he was seen by the organization. He began to ask himself **what was needed** in the present. He saw his immobilized colleagues and realized that he needed to do something **to empower** them. He designed a new role for himself. He carefully selected people and invited them into meetings and asked them what they wanted the division to look like in ten years. Initially they were startled by his question, but gradually they joined the process of designing the company's future. His sense of **empowerment spread** to others. Gradually things began to change (Quinn, 1996: 7).

Reflections

Exercise:

1. Have you ever been in a situation where your fear of losing your job (or displeasing others) undermined your involvement and empowerment at work? Describe your reaction and feelings in that situation.
2. Identify a situation in which you want someone to behave differently. Describe how you have acted up till now.
3. Now write an imaginary story about the situation you just described in answer to question two.. In the story you get what you want by appreciating and empowering this other person.. Let your imagination run free. Then describe the process that you imagined.
4. Returning to the situation in question two, what are some behaviors you might try that you have not tried before.
5. Now, write an action plan that might transform the situation in question two.

Reflecting On the Story

For each of the quotes below, answer the following two questions:

1. **How does this quote relate to the story?**
2. **What key insights occur to you?**

Effective Change Agents Exhibit Reverence

Rather than forcing others to change, the change agent must recognize that the change target needs the freedom to choose a path of self-alteration. The change agent has faith that the change will take hold in others - that others will be attracted to the moral goodness of the new vision. Jesus, Gandhi, and King each attracted their followers by modeling their vision. For example, Gandhi articulated: "Instead of bothering with how the whole world may live in the right manner, we should think how we ourselves may do so. If one lives in the right manner, we shall feel that others will also do the same, or we shall discover a way of persuading them to do so by example" (Iyer, 1990: 182). Here the change agent attracts others by maintaining reverence for their agency and an awareness of their highest potential self.

What Empowered People Claim

"Overall, the participants indicated that they went through a process of redefining themselves and their organizational roles. They believe that the process began with deep thought and progressed into the development of a new perspective. Their enlightened state gave them the courage, the tools, and the empowerment to take risks and initiate action and ultimately the ability to incorporate it all into their learning process. The process is based on the continuous evaluation, reinvention, and realignment of self" (Quinn, 1996: 138).

Excellence Is A Form Of Deviance

"Excellence is a form of deviance. If you perform beyond the norms, you disrupt all the existing control systems. Those systems will then alter and begin to work to routinize your efforts. That is, the systems will adjust to try to make you normal. The way to achieve and maintain excellence is to deviate from the norm. You become excellent because you are doing things normal people don't want to do. You become excellent by choosing a path that is risky and painful, a path that is not appealing to others. The question is "Why would anyone ever want to do something painful?" We do it because it's right and because it brings enormous internal satisfaction. That is the key."

Reverence; The True Source Of Vision

Many senior people have no idea how to develop a vision and find it very embarrassing to be reminded that their company lacks an adequate vision. As a consequence, it becomes necessary to stop talking about the needs they are not meeting. They implicitly send the message that the issue is no longer discussible. However, sometimes the situation warrants a message that is much more explicit. I know one executive who heard comments from his coworkers almost continuously that they did not know the company's vision. Finally, he met with his top management team, and together they generated a plastic card. Sadly, within a week, the message circulated again, "We don't know the vision." Finally, in frustration, he turned to one of his vice presidents and said, "Go tell them to stop saying that."

Paradoxes of Empowerment

Consistent with ACT, the man had become more internally driven and had begun to create his own external world. That creation process included people below, across, and above him. For executives embedded in transactional assumptions, the notion of having actually empowered employees is unthinkable. While administrators have learned to explicitly espouse empowerment in organizations, they implicitly know that it cannot actually occur in a transactional system. The notion of actually having empowered employees would be an enormous threat. As one person asked, "How would I manage such people?" In short, administrators become masters "of talking" participation and empowerment while "practicing" instruction and control. With this in mind, there is a seeming paradox. It has to do with this man's orientation to the troubled company: In freeing himself from the system of external sanctions, he "now acted much more independently" yet "he cared more about the organization" and went to great efforts to help his associates and the company. The paradox is that empowered people are more loving and loyal to the people and the system than are the "normal" people who employ transactional assumptions and worry about the dangers of empowerment.

Caring Enough to Lead

To survive, organizations need leaders who take risks and who "care enough to die for the organization-which would kill them for caring." Most organizations have few such people. When these leaders emerge, they usually have a vision, and their behavior reflects the transformational paradigm. They are self-authorizing and often follow unconventional methods that are based on moral principles rather than organizational pressures." Are such people needed in your organization? When? Where? What does your organization do to find or develop such leaders?

Is There A Vision of The Common Good?

A key element of the empowering-self modification strategy is creating a vision that integrates the individual and collective good. The change agent discovers how to engage in behaviors that result in synergy. Erin's mother has a new and more complex understanding of the nature of the relationship. Rachel takes a particularly radical turn in coming to a similar understanding. The students and teacher begin to experience synergy in the classroom and are willing to make a number of changes for the common good. The executives all do the same. The change agent practicing ACT has a vision of the common good, of how everyone can win. When the change agent embraces change and obtains a new path, the result is the growth of the change target and the change agent.

Does The Change Agent Simultaneously Challenge And Support?

The practitioner of ACT is supportive yet maintains a focus on the task at hand. Erin still does school work. Peck both confronts and supports Rachel. The students are deeply bonded while freely choosing to put in far more time than they put into other courses. The unit director pursues high performance, the division director tends to the future of the enterprise and the CEO continues to pursue stretch goals. Support does not equal weakness. On the contrary, it results in considerable strength and stability. Because the change agent is filled with both love and vision, he or she is able to ask for extraordinary efforts from the change target. The target senses genuine concern, respects the vision, and knows that the required effort will result in personal growth and increased common good. Commitment grows. Such phrases as "tough love" and "carefrontation" have been coined to capture this notion.

Changing a Corporation

The final case involves a Fortune 500 corporation with which one of the authors is currently involved as a consultant. For five years, the CEO drove dramatic change as the company moved from a domestic to a global operation. Profits were driven up as the CEO called for more and more stretch effort. At the end of five years, however, extensive problems were manifest including declining profits, unclear values and priorities, change overload, loss of life balance, too much hierarchy, strained interpersonal relationships, and one-way communication (top down). The occurrence of these problems led the CEO to recognize his inability to mandate change. "As we became more complex and the environment more intense, it became **impossible to get things done through the force of leadership**. Everything in my mind has always been so clear and logical. I felt if we just do what we know how to do every day, this thing will work. I had this grand design and vision, and I thought I could articulate it and get people lined-up. It did not happen. It absolutely did not happen. I think I had to come to grips with the fact that it is not enough to be committed, to have a plan and understand where we are going. I realized I had **to get everyone engaged and committed.**"

This realization led to a massive culture change effort in which the CEO and his associates committed to the principle that organizational change requires personal change. The CEO gradually experimented with honest confrontation of issues. He began to see the creative power of honest dialogue. Eventually he made a bold intervention: Some senior people were beginning to question his global strategy. Instead of coming down on them as he might have in the past, he invited three important financial analysts to the annual meeting of the company's top 120 executives. He asked them to provide an extensive criticism of the state of the firm. The response was seemingly disastrous. Relationships seemed to disintegrate into widespread conflict. Instead of addressing the conflict, the CEO gave his executives two days to discuss and explore the tensions. The result: A new meaning system emerged and they left the meeting with renewed commitment to the strategy. After this session, the CEO continued to experiment. Eventually he began to allow people to challenge his own personal behavior patterns. At each stage he grew more confident with this approach, continually exhibiting new behaviors; as he did so, he learned to **facilitate the emergence of new realities.**

Reflections

1. In your organization, have you ever been told to change? Describe your reaction and feelings in that situation.
2. Identify a situation at work in which you want to challenge or inspire someone. Describe how you have acted up till now.
3. Now write an imaginary story about the situation you just described in answer to question two. In the story you get what you want by creating a vision of the common good. Let your imagination run free. Then describe the process that you imagined.
4. Returning to the situation in question two, what are some behaviors you might try that you have not tried before.
5. Now, write an action plan that might transform the situation in question two.

Reflecting On the Story

For each of the quotes below, answer the following two questions:

1. **How does this quote relate to the story?**
2. **What key insights occur to you?**

People In Lower Positions Can Be Transformational

Consider Jaime Escalante at Garfield High School in East Los Angeles whose story is recounted in the film *Stand and Deliver*. The school had degenerated to the most despicable conditions, yet Escalante built an astounding community of success and pride. He did this despite the fact that there was no honor or respect in the culture, the change targets were closed-minded, they had no identification with the organization, and there was no respect for the change agent. Escalante had to establish a vision, build respect and attract the highly resistant actors into the process of transformation. Furthermore, Escalante was not the senior authority figure in the school but merely a teacher. In that supposedly disempowered role, he transformed an impossible situation. How is this possible?

Is Change A Function of Power?

People operating out of the political-transactional model assume that change is a function of position power. Many argue that change starts with the top. When the CEO says to change, then it will happen. This CEO was articulate, persuasive and forceful. Yet he discovered that these tools were not enough. **Gaining commitment for the necessary adaptive work** required something he was not doing. It required personal change on the part of the change agent. Even CEOs, or maybe especially CEOs, need to practice ACT.

Radical Change Means Returning To the Root

“As Gandhi continued speaking, people gradually returned to their seats and began to listen. Why? Because they knew they were hearing something very real, something of great importance. This small, unassuming little man had journeyed through their heartland and captured the essence of who they were. He was now vocalizing it in a way they could feel and understand. Such articulation is often at the heart of radical, deep change. The term radical is derived from the Latin word for ‘root’. In mathematics, for example, we use the radical sign to indicate the square root. To make radical change, one must move to the root, the origin or archetype. An influential vision reflects the insight of an individual or group that has deeply contemplated the core issues. Gandhi’s vision was such a reflection. It was rooted in both facts and values. It also carried and inspired passion.”

Effective Change Agents Provide Purpose and Support

In an adaptive situation, people must step outside known patterns of behavior -- they must surrender their present selves and put themselves in jeopardy by becoming part of an emergent system or relationship, one that is in the act of becoming something it has not been before. This process usually requires the surrender of personal control, the toleration of uncertainty, and the development of a new culture at the collective level and a new self at the individual level. People are not willing to do these things unless someone gives them a purpose worth pursuing and the interpersonal concern that helps them feel supported in the process.

Vision Does Not Emerge From Rational Analysis

After showing me their new vision statement, I asked, 'Who is willing to die for this vision?' No one spoke up. My question had surprised them and made them somewhat uncomfortable. Why? Because as a politically segmented group, they had executed a rational exercise and formed specific common denominators or generalities into a vision to which no one could object. A worthwhile vision does not arise from painless compromise. Statements that emerge from such efforts are devoid of meaning.

Peak Performance Requires Transformation

There are several interesting points about peak performance. First, there are times when groups or organizations perform beyond our expectations. Second, however, this phenomenon requires immense effort and thus does not occur very often. Shifting from the current equilibrium or normal level of performance to a higher level means that a transformation must occur. At least one person must recognize that more is possible. Someone must then lead the group toward the collective goal. This transformational movement requires immense individual effort, communication, training, and cooperation, plus some luck. Finally, although some groups or organizations reach their goals consistently, this level of effort is difficult to sustain.

Excellence Requires Faith and Courage

Furthermore, you do not reach peak levels by repeating exactly the same processes that have worked in the past. Reaching a level of excellence involves analyzing each individual situation and determining what is right. Most of us seek quantum leaps in our performance levels by pursuing a strategy of incremental investment. This strategy simply does not work. The land of excellence is safely guarded from unworthy intruders. At the gates stand two fearsome sentries-risk and learning. The keys to entry are faith and courage.

Bibliography for Deep Change

- Andreas, Steve, NLP, The New Technology of Achievement, New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1994
- Bandler, Richard and Grinder, John, Re-framing: Neuro-linguistic Programming, Moab: Real People Press, 1979
- Bennis, Ron and Townsend, Robert, Reinventing Leadership, New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1995
- Blanchard, Ken, Empowerment Takes More Than A Minute, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1996
- Blanchard, Ken, Managing By Values, Escondido: Quality Books Inc., 1995
- Quinn, Robert E., Advance Change Theory, Publication Pending
- Quinn, Robert E., Deep Change, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996
- Robbins, Anthony, Unlimited Power, New York, Fawcett Columbine, 1986