

rEvolutionary Leadership Practice Manual

A Guide to Support Those Preparing to be Change Leaders

by Tom Woll of the Strategic Change Initiative



About the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities

The Alliance for Strong Families and Communities is a national strategic action network of thousands of committed social sector leaders dedicated to achieving a vision of a healthy and equitable society. We aggregate the very best sector knowledge and serve as an incubator for learning and innovation to generate new solutions to the toughest problems. We accelerate change through dynamic leadership development and collective actions to ensure policies and systems provide equal access and opportunity for health and well-being, educational success, economic opportunity, and safety and security.

Go to alliance1.org for more information.

About the Alliance Center on Leadership

The Center on Leadership at the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities engages human-serving leaders in rEvolutionary Leadership so that they have the skills and capacities to address continuous change, adaptive issues, and systems challenges. Guided by the Alliance's exclusive model, leaders develop their cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and spiritual capacities to lead and manage within themselves, their teams, their organizations, and their communities.

About the Strategic Change Initiative

The Strategic Change Initiative was founded by Tom Woll in January 2010 to help organizations that were trying to adapt to a rapidly changing service delivery environment. It was borne out of his desire to share what he had learned from his work overseeing the merger of 21 separate Catholic Charities organizations to create an integrated service delivery system spanning the 3,500 square miles and eight counties of the Cleveland Catholic Diocese.

The Strategic Change Initiative pairs Woll's insight from experiences like this major merger alongside his extensive interview research. Since 2010, Woll has conducted 3,000 interviews with public and private sector leaders, practitioners offering services, families and youth receiving services, and elected public officials from across the country. He has asked them questions about the current and future states of the field and skills needed to be successful in the future.

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Introduction: rEvolutionary Change Leadership Practice Manual

We all want to be good leaders. In these times of great change what it means to be a good leader is changing. The rules are changing and the goals are changing. Many leadership methods are changing. We all need to adjust and prepare for our future.

This practice manual was specifically designed to support the *rEvolutionary Change Leadership Model* that was developed by the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities. This model explores the many dimensions of change leadership.

This practice manual aims to develop the model and support the efforts of those who want to prepare to be good change leaders. It will explore four “competencies” that all leaders must learn to develop: cognitive, emotional, spiritual and behavioral.

This manual will offer ten skill-sets that are directly connected to each of the four competency areas. The ideas and suggestions that are offered are only intended to stimulate conversations about change leadership. Ideas are offered, not “truths.”

This manual was designed to help develop executive leaders and leadership teams. Future practice manuals may be designed to help us consider change leadership in an organizational context and systems change within a broader community context.

Perhaps one effective way to use this practice manual is for executive leaders and their leadership teams to read the 40 skill-sets and then to use the assessment tool that has been developed to assess their individual and team skill levels in each area.

From these assessments individual leaders can set some goals on areas where they want to develop their skills. And teams can assess their collective abilities as well. Teams can decide what “collective capacities” they need to develop and form a plan.

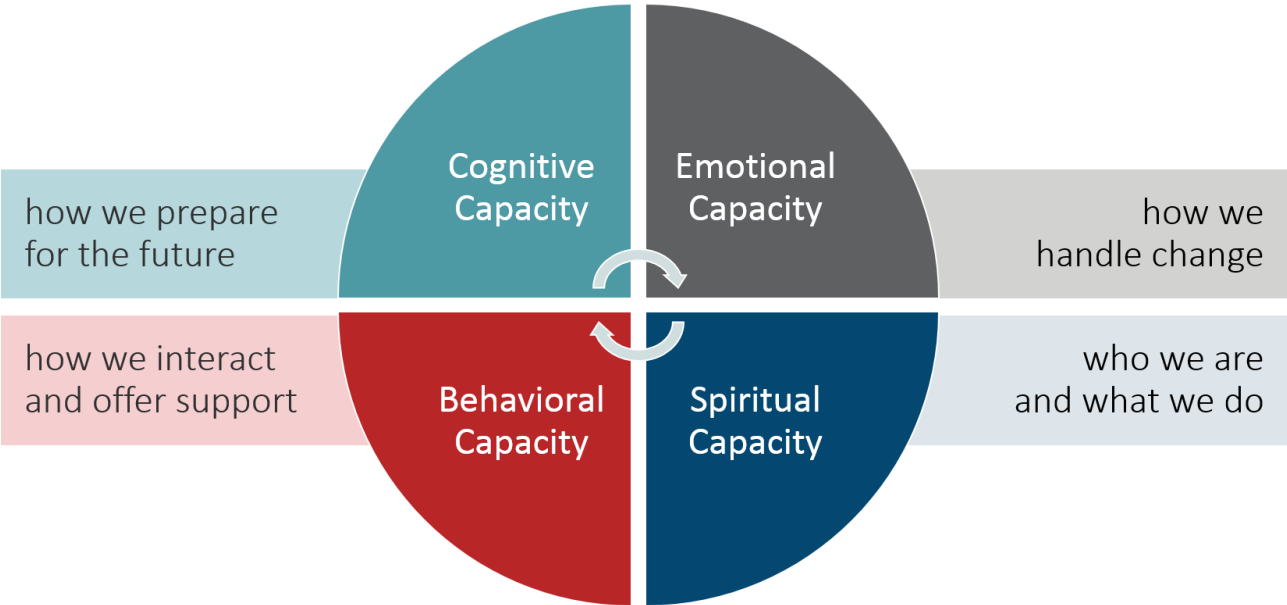
The Alliance will be developing trainings around these 40 skill sets. The skill-sets will be reviewed and assistance offered with an assessment and the development of a “Change Leadership Plan.” Support will be provided to help implement the plans.

Change doesn’t happen overnight. It takes time and directed efforts for individual leaders and their leadership teams to become proficient in the application of the principles of change leadership. This manual provides a way to initiate that process.

Many change leaders and many leadership teams may find it beneficial to use this manual. It offers a structured way to review the many principles of individual and team change leadership and offers a format for developing a plan for improvement.

“The ability to build a team that appreciates their collective skill-sets and that can cooperatively share them is a vital skill-set for every change leader.” This is a quote from one of the skill-sets on spiritual capacity. This manual can help us to do that.

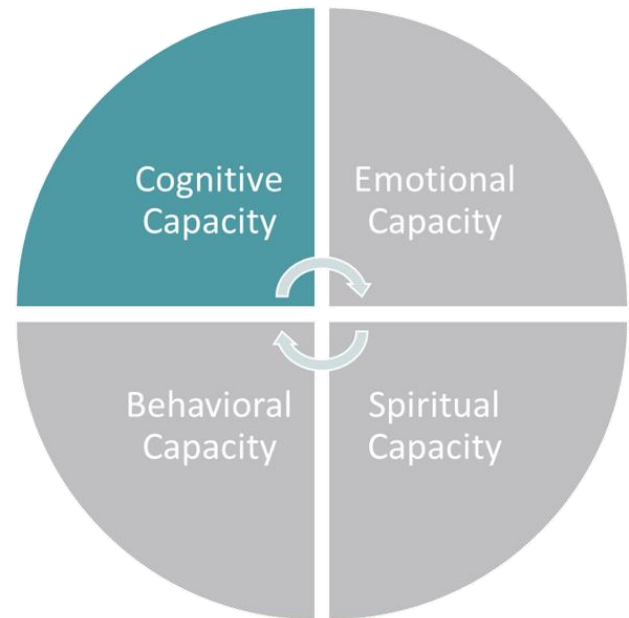
rEvolutionary Change Leadership Model



Cognitive Capacity—How We Think

Skill-Sets Involved:

- Develop a Vision
- Communicate Ideas Clearly
- Seek Systemic Solutions
- Consider All Options
- Plan for Tomorrow
- Integrate Different Ideas
- Form Win/Win Partnerships
- Use Creative Thinking
- Change Before Urgency
- Organize Your Resources



How we prepare for the future

Develop a Vision

When the future seems to be unknown it can seem somewhat frightening. We all prefer clarity. Our vision will provide our organization with the clarity that everyone needs. Our vision lets everyone know we aren't afraid of the future.

Our vision is our way to imagine the future as something we prepare for and not something that will threaten us. Our vision says, "This is what is coming and this is how we will prepare for when that future becomes the present."

We can all tend to get caught up in the many things that might happen in our current environment. We can get distracted and distressed by any changes in the ways our funding works or by any new expectations being placed upon us.

There will be many such distractions that could cause us distress in the years ahead if we don't have a clear vision. Our vision allows us to move beyond the distractions and distresses and helps us to focus, instead, on our preparations.

Our vision enables us to focus our energy on working together to prepare for the future. Our vision articulates the skills and capacities we will need for future success and challenges everyone to commit to help us to develop them.

When we can see and share the skills and capacities we will need to develop to be successful in the future everyone will sense that we know where we're going and that the plan we develop will manage to get us where we need to go.

Our vision will often challenge us to adjust and change. Identifying and articulating the adjustments and changes we will need to make will help us to initiate engaging conversations. That is one important purpose of a vision.

We want to initiate engaging conversations with all our staff and Board about the future. Preparing for the future needs to be a shared enterprise. Everyone best supports those plans and goals that they have helped us to create.

The adjustments and changes that we need to make will usually require some adjustments to our identity and to our culture. Changes and adjustments to identity and culture are very difficult and require high levels of engagement.

Our vision will help us to encourage those engagements. It will help us to get everyone talking about and preparing for the same things. It will help us set the agenda and then get everyone ready to work on implementing our agenda.

There are two kinds of stress: eustress and distress. Eustress is productive stress. It produces positive energy. Distress deprives us of positive energy. When our vision identifies the future we plan for we create positive energy.

Communicate Ideas Clearly

Our vision must support our mission and our mission must synchronize with our vision. When we adjust and change our vision in order to account for our preparations for the future, we will often also have to revise our mission.

Our mission says both who we are as an organization and what we are charged to do. When we engage in a process that adjusts and changes the answers to those two identity elements, we have to communicate that clearly.

We have to find simple ways to state why we are being asked to change. We need to review our existing vision and mission. We want to review how they both came to be. We also want to show how they have evolved over time.

Very few organizations have maintained the exact same vision and mission since their founding. The history of our organization will usually show many shifts, adjustments and changes. We want to share that history of our story.

Stories usually evolve over time to keep pace with the evolving needs of our communities. We were usually founded to meet a specific community need. Most organizations adjust and change their identity elements over time.

Our current vision and mission will have the greatest power for our staff and Board. But stating that it can evolve and that it has adjusted and changed in the past will grant us the permission we will need to evolve it once again.

Gaining permission to evolve and agreeing to support the adjustments and changes are separate processes. Our staff and Board will usually agree to support those changes and adjustments only after they fully understand them.

That's why it's so important to communicate these ideas clearly. We want to state: 1) this is where we began, 2) this is how we have evolved since then, 3) this is what we are being asked to do, and 4) this is what we need to do now.

We want to turn these four steps into a new, simple story that we will teach our leaders to share many, many times in support of our new vision and our new mission. We must be careful to never repudiate our past in this process.

There was nothing wrong with what we have done in the past. We responded to the most urgent community needs as best as we could. Community needs evolve over time. And we have always evolved with those changing needs.

We want to work toward an understanding of those new needs so we can get to an agreement to support our new vision and our new mission. Our identity is the source of our purpose. We want to build support for our new purpose.

Seek Systemic Solutions

The nature of our work often leads us to form habits for solving problems one at a time. In times of great change these habits can cause us to fail to see how many of our problems are systemic, how they are dynamically interconnected.

Solving problems one at a time is often referred to as tactical problem solving. And solving problems as though they are dynamically interconnected is often referred to as systemic problem solving. We want to seek systemic solutions.

In times of great change tactical solutions may often cause us to create new, unintended problems from any solutions we implement. If we fail to see that most of our problems are interconnected we often can't actually solve them.

Strategy is the effort we put forth to change our organizational behavior to improve the elements of our competitive advantage in support of our mission. Most strategic change initiatives call for us to implement systemic solutions.

Systemic solutions are almost always needed whenever we update our vision and our mission. The systemic nature of the changes we will implement will often call for us to fundamentally change some of who we are and what we do.

That's why this change model is called a rEvolutionary change model. It says that rEvolutionary change is more than an adjustment. It is a change that may have an impact on everything we do and may change how we do everything.

We won't get to that level of change through tactical problem solving. We need to seek systemic solutions. We can't implement systemic solutions until we understand exactly what we need to achieve through our change initiative.

We have to know what specific skills and capacities we need to build into our organization to help to prepare us for our future success. Tactical solutions focus on our here and now and systemic solutions focus on our future states.

Issues related to staff retention, staff training and support, change leadership approaches and service delivery designs are all dynamically interconnected. We want to approach them all as parts of one systemic solution we can find.

When we know what our leaders will have to be able to do and what our line staff will have to be able to do and how our organization will have to work with other organizations we can develop systemic solutions to get us there.

The future is only frightening when we can't see it clearly. When we can see it clearly we can prepare for it. We don't have many futures to prepare for. We only have one future. Our entire organization has to move toward it together.

Consider All Options

In times of relative calm we know our issues and the ways we should respond to them. We do what we've always done because we know it will work for us. In times of great change what we've always done can just stop working for us.

We might think it isn't working just because our staff aren't doing it right. We might think that if our staff would just do it right everything would still work. But sometimes it won't work anymore because things have changed so much.

If the severity of the presenting needs of those we serve should increase very dramatically, for example, we may have to decide to change what we do if we want to be able to successfully respond to the increases in presenting needs.

When we are forced to change because what we are being asked to do has changed we often try to use variations on what we've done before. But some changes will call for us to respond in ways we have never considered before.

This is when we need to consider all options. We might even need to change the way we think about the issue in order to find a systemic solution. We might need to reconsider everything we do and the ways we do everything.

Sometimes we can't just adjust. Sometimes we have to transform what we do. Sometimes we have to reconsider the basic assumptions behind we do and how we do it. We prepare for this by studying the results we now need to get.

If the results we need to get are quite different from the results we have been asked to produce in the past we will probably have to change what we do to allow us to get new results. This can be very important for us to understand.

Sometimes we have to develop a completely different approach if we want to get those new results. Some find it easier to break old habits and consider all options when we imagine that we're completely redesigning all of what we do.

We are in the middle of a results-directed revolution. It's no longer enough to do what we have always done. Whatever we do has to produce measurable, desired results. We usually need an action plan to guide us to get the results.

The development of our action plan should include many discussions that consider all the different ways we might go about changing what we do and how we do it to allow us to get the results we are now expected to deliver.

Few ever get measurable, desired results if the approach we are using wasn't specifically designed to ensure that we will get those results. This is the test we all must teach for now: develop the action plans to get the desired results.

Plan for Tomorrow

Classical strategic planning approaches will often ask us to scan our current environment and develop a three-year plan to respond to that environment. We are asked to look at our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

But in times of great change classical approaches can break down. If we spend three years implementing a plan that will respond to the current environment, we will be three years behind the futures curve when it is fully implemented.

Today's strategic plans have to be guided by a futures forecast. We have to have a sense of what skills and capacities we will need to have to be successful three years down the road and then spend our three years preparing for that.

There are many who are available to assist us as we look to develop a futures forecast. But many leaders have an intuitive sense of what is coming. We can hear it in what others say and see the trends unfolding in the work that we do.

We should listen to the voices of those who make referrals to us. They will say what they need the most. We will see those needs in the referrals themselves. If we are unable to meet those emerging needs we know where to develop.

Futures forecasting is just a different way of responding to what we see in the environment. But it moves us from the distractions of funding and philosophy and focuses on emerging trends. It focuses on the future skills and capacities.

Listen to what everyone is saying is coming in our field. Listen to the widely held concerns. Gather as many different ideas as you can. Read the literature. Read the editorials. Talk with elected public officials. Find emerging trends.

Here's what we know. Most expect less federal, state and local money and are preparing for that. Most want to purchase results, not services. Most want to contract with fewer providers who can offer a full array of integrated services.

Most are looking to find ways to ensure safe children, stable families, strong communities and reduced levels of poverty. It doesn't matter what we do in the human services arena, this is the future agenda we all must prepare for.

The future will focus on stabilizing families and strengthening communities. Children will be served in the context of families. We will all be expected to share in a measure of the responsibility to help families to rise out of poverty.

If we are currently organized to produce these results, then our future is secure. If we are not, then we will have to develop action plans to make sure that we can get ready to produce these results within the next three years.

Integrate Different Ideas

Whenever we are looking to build a team, form an action plan, design a strategy or clearly communicate an idea, we will almost always want to be able to integrate different ideas from many persons to ensure our success.

No leader knows enough to thoroughly consider and then include everything we need to consider and include for what we do in times of great change. We bring our perspective and our ideas to the table but we need more than that.

Many understand it is easier to integrate our own ideas than it is to integrate different ideas from many sources. In order to integrate ideas from others we have to be willing to change some of our ideas to integrate different ideas.

That requires an openness that is not natural for some leaders. Some leaders might believe that they have the best perspective on an issue. Some believe it is their job to persuade others that their perspective is the right perspective.

Sometimes, surely, that will be the case. But more often, we might have a good perspective but not a complete perspective. Change leaders want to assume that their own ideas can be improved by integrating different ideas.

Our perspectives come from our life experiences. They lead us to conclusions that make sense to us. But different experiences lead to different conclusions. We want to be able to openly consider many possible different conclusions.

Sometimes our life experiences leave us with rather large gaps in our ability to fully understand some issues that we may have to address. Many leaders may not have experienced the effects of poverty on their own lives, for example.

Our perspectives on poverty will be greatly enhanced if we can integrate some ideas on poverty from many persons who have experienced poverty in their own lives. Issues become more understandable with personal experiences.

The same is true for issues related to race and equity. Persons of different races often have had many different experiences. The same is true of persons of different cultures. We want to gather and integrate many new perspectives.

If we were helped to rise in our profession by others who were very much like us, we might assume that all of our promotions came exclusively from our own merits. We may have certain blind spots regarding some issues of equity.

Different perspectives can be very valuable for us to consider. The patterns of thought that can be gathered from different life experiences may provide us with insights that we should integrate into the systemic solutions we seek.

Form Win-Win Partnerships

Many leaders are somewhat competitive by nature. Many leaders want to win. And some leaders want others to lose. Change leaders usually minimize any competitive instincts and look for ways to develop win/win partnerships.

A partnership is a relationship that is intended to accomplish something or to provide something. We enter into all partnerships for a reason. We know that we are not able to do something on our own and so we seek help from others.

This is true of leadership efforts within our organizations and of leadership efforts between our organization and other organizations as well. Leaders develop reputations that will either serve them well or make things difficult.

If we are seen as being highly competitive it may be difficult for us to inspire the trust we will need to form partnerships. Any leader who is seen as “out to win” will find it very difficult to form both internal and external partnerships.

All prospective partners will consider our motives. If they believe we have both our and their best interest in mind, they will be inclined to trust us more. Everyone knows that one-sided relationships are not something to be desired.

Sometimes we fail to ask a prospective partner what they need to get out of a partnership. It is a mistake to ever assume what a partner needs to get. We should always ask what would make the partnership a winning one for them.

Most win/win partnerships form following dialogue. Both sides offer a set of needs they have to meet. Few partnerships will meet all the desired needs. But most partnerships will have to be able to meet some of the desired needs.

We share power in all win/win relationships. Some leaders have difficulty sharing power. Change leaders understand that sharing power is a sign of respect. And most win/win relationships are formed from mutual respect.

And sharing power allows the dialogue we have to be much more genuine and productive. Both sides have perspectives that have to be considered in the formation of the partnership. We have to want to help our partners to win.

Inside our organization we want to fully understand the needs of our staff. We want our staff to win. We want to help our staff to meet their vital needs. And we hope that they will, in return, help us to meet our most vital needs.

Outside our organization we want to be seen as truly caring about both the needs of those we serve and the needs of those who might help us to meet those needs. We have to be willing to share the agenda to meet vital needs.

Use Creative Thinking

One skill that is often used to characterize successful change leaders relates to their ability to “think outside the box.” The box they show an ability to think “outside of” refers to their capacity to break long-standing patterns of thought.

We remember our successes and our failures. We tend to remember very well what we decide was the “formulas” we used that led to successes and failures. We have a tendency to believe that our past results will predict future results.

That may be true or not. We may fail to consider all of the variables involved when we assess our successes and our failures. When some critical variables change, our ability to predict our future success or failure may be diminished.

What worked before may not work now because of those variables that have changed. Sometimes those patterns of thought won’t ever work for us again as they did before. We have to know when to replace our patterns of thought.

The replacement of any long-standing patterns of thought is often difficult to even consider. We can develop a strong trust in our thoughts. They can give us real comfort. We can believe that if we ever change them we may then fail.

Fear of failure is a burden for all leaders. But in times of great change we are more likely to fail because we don’t change our patterns of thought than if we do. We often have to use creative thinking to enable us to get “out of the box.”

Creative thinking helps us to break away from those existing patterns of thought. It allows us to consider new ideas about an issue and new ways to respond to it. Creative thinking will often start with the phrase, “What if...”

That’s a powerful phrase. It signals a willingness to consider all options. It says, “What has worked in the past isn’t working for us anymore. Let’s try something new.” That level of permission often unleashes creative thinking.

The staff who work with us are usually aware of the need to show respect to the leader. If the leader says we will “stay the course,” all will try to do that. But if the leader signals a willingness to be creative good things can happen.

We can hear some great ideas that many have thought and may have shared amongst themselves but never shared with the leader because no permission had yet been given to consider alternative patterns of thought on the issue.

Some may say that permission isn’t needed for creative expressions. In an ideal world, that may be true. But in times of great change there is often a measure of fear and permission is often needed to start creative thinking.

Change Before Urgency

Many believe that leaders only change when they have no other choice. That may be the case for some leaders but it is seldom the case for change leaders. Change leaders know that waiting until urgency to change is very dangerous.

It usually takes three years to develop the new skills and competencies we will have to introduce. If we wait to begin this until we have no other choice, we may find that the music will have stopped and we have no chair to occupy.

There are some leaders who adopt a cautious “wait until clarity” approach to change. The level of clarity they may want may never come to them. If they wait for someone else to tell them what to do they are waiting for an excuse.

Some wait because they fear to take responsibility for difficult and important strategic decisions. But leaders are ultimately responsible for those decisions. We cannot avoid making those decisions that will prepare us for the future.

It is true that we usually want to share some measure of the responsibility for these decisions with our leadership team and with our Board. But when the story is told, it is the leader who will be seen as having been right or wrong.

We can't avoid accountability. Change leaders want to accept accountability for their difficult and important strategic decisions. They gather information and make the best decision that they can make ahead of the time of urgency.

They will develop a vision, communicate it clearly, seek systemic solutions, consider all options, integrate different ideas, form win/win partnerships, use creative thinking and organize their resources as they plan for the future.

Often these abilities depend upon self-confidence. We have to trust ourselves enough to believe that we are in the best position to make these decisions. We have to trust that we can make the right decisions when they need to be made.

When we trust ourselves others will trust us. That trust is very important for effective change leadership. Urgent changes often threaten trust. But changes made before urgency can inspire the confidence of others that we will need.

Change in times of uncertainty brings out either the best or the worst in us. We inspire others to believe in our vision when we can show how our vision is proactive. Everyone respects change that's clearly ahead of the futures curve.

We should never fail to consider caution. Change is, after all, about managing risks. And all decisions in times of great change carry risk. We can manage the risks and still make decisions if our vision is sound and if we are confident.

Organize Your Resources

We are now beyond the era where everyone is expected to “do more with less.” We are now entering an era where everyone will be expected to “do different with less.” We have to adjust to the new “different with less” rules.

Some have said that the best way to accommodate to the new “different with less” rules is to evaluate all our human and financial resources. The resources we now have should be listed and all of our resources should be reconsidered.

We could manage this reconsideration by looking at each of the resources and deciding if we still need them. But many believe the best way to manage this is to imagine we have no resources and then add only the resources we need.

The process of organizing our resources by listing only those resources “most needed” is a new exercise for many. We have tended in the past to think of all resources as incremental. We add new resources as financial realities permit.

But this “zero-based” resource process suggests we start with no resources and only add resources we “have to have.” This is one “different with less” rule. We build a future around resources that our organization needs most.

When we reconsider resources in this way we may discover that we no longer need some of the resources that we have always depended upon. And we may also discover that we need some resources that we have never had before.

Few will pay us more so we can get those resources we decide we now need. We will have to stop doing some things we have always done so we can begin to do some new things that we have not done before but we now need to do.

Once we decide the resources we need most we can then begin the process of deciding how we should deploy these vital resources. It is not enough to just decide what resources we need, we also have to decide how to use resources.

Over time it is possible that many of our human resources have been used to attend an endless stream of meetings, for example. Some of our meetings may be very productive but many of them may only remain because of our habits.

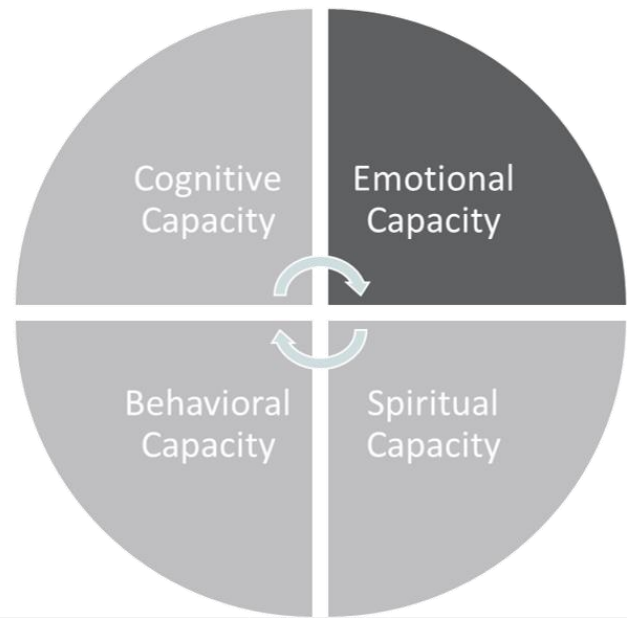
We want to reconsider all our resource usage habits in this assessment. We want to retain those habits that help us to prepare for our future and replace those that do not. This may also cause us to reconsider our job descriptions.

There are parts of every job description that serve our past better than our future. We want to redesign job descriptions wherever certain parts of them don't fit with the vision we have developed for the future of our organization.

Emotional Capacity—What We Feel

Skill-Sets Involved:

- Know Your Limitations
- Respond to Challenges
- Embrace Emerging Talent
- Share the Spotlight
- Safe and Secure
- Practice Calming Yourself
- Regulate Your Emotions
- Calm and Well
- Listen to Stories
- Embrace Alternative Perspectives



How we handle change

Know Your Limitations

Leaders need to know their strengths. But leaders also need to know their limitations. And they need to accept some limitations. We can find ways to improve upon some our limitations but sometimes we can't overcome them.

Limitations are part of who we are. We can learn to be more patient. We can learn to be more forgiving. But we may not be able to learn to be proficient in an area that defies us. Everyone has limitations that they just can't overcome.

That's what teams are for. We want to surround ourselves with other leaders who have strengths in areas where we have limitations. Some leaders may try to act as though they are proficient in areas where they have true limitations.

This often causes problems. Our teams will know where our limitations lie. They will respect us if we acknowledge our limitations and if we defer in areas where we clearly have limitations. But they won't respect us if we don't defer.

This is often where some leaders develop reputations for arrogance. Some leaders try to do everything themselves. They don't understand delegation. Some hold "the reigns of power" and don't defer even when that is called for.

Our teams know when they are valued. And they also know when they are not valued. Allowing team members to assume an "expert role" in areas where they are particularly proficient will offer them both respect and motivation.

Failing to do so may cause them to disengage. We all have a tendency to identify with our strengths. We may believe that our areas of strength are the most important areas of leadership. But all areas of strength are important.

We have to respect our strengths and the strengths of our team. But we also have to know and accept both our limitations and the limitations of others. Leaders have to give their permission for everyone to have some limitations.

We are not all gifted public speakers, for example. Many leaders may not be proficient in matters related to technology, budgets, writing, strategy, data analysis, quality improvement, personnel management or staff training.

It's only important that some member of our team is proficient in each of these areas and that they are given permission to help us in these areas. Leaders cause undue stress to their teams when teams aren't allowed to lead.

Accepting that change leadership is all about creating interdependencies is a very important concept. In times of great change we all need as much help from others as we can gather. Knowing our limitations is a big part of this.

Respond to Challenges

Someone once wisely said that leadership in times of great change is all about managing challenges in a context. One of the characteristics of “times of great change” is the constant bombardment of new challenges we must respond to.

We have to respond to those challenges. But it helps when we discover the patterns of connection between those challenges. We don’t want to react to challenges as though they were not connected if, in fact, they are connected.

Sometimes the challenges are all a part of a systemic shift. We want to try to understand the systemic-shift nature of the challenges we are facing. If we respond to them each in isolation we will increase our levels of frustration.

Changes in patterns of funding, referrals, regulations or expectations are often directly connected to shifts in philosophy, priorities or community needs. We want to identify the driving forces that are connecting the challenges we face.

That’s the only way to “get ahead of” the challenges. When we understand the forces that are driving the challenges we can begin to anticipate the future challenges. It is the surprise nature of challenges that cause the most stress.

Most of our challenges are driven by forces that we can come to understand. When we understand the driving forces we can anticipate the challenges and develop reasoned responses. This will help to increase our confidence levels.

The ways we respond to challenges are directly connected to our vision. Our vision needs to be able to identify and explain the driving forces. Most things happen in a context. Managing challenges in their context helps us to feel safe.

“Getting ahead of the challenges” calls for us to see the direction the driving forces are moving. That’s where futures forecasting comes into play. When we see the direction and share it with our staff, we all can feel more confident.

Some leaders say, “We have to do something.” But we are only reacting when we decide to do “something” without managing the challenge in its context. We don’t want to just react. We want to be able to plan and then respond.

Change leaders have to be able to handle surprises. But they work very hard so they can anticipate challenges and plan for them. When we can plan for a challenge it is a change. When we simply react to a challenge it is a crisis.

Repeated points of crisis are what sustain high levels of stress. We have to respond to challenges. But we don’t want to waste time and energy reacting to challenges when we can anticipate them and proactively plan for them.

Embrace Emerging Talent

The old saw says that two minds are better than one. The thought behind that piece of collective wisdom suggests that two perspectives are better than one. And many perspectives offer us alternatives that may improve our responses.

Change leaders tend to be aware of the talent in their organization. They tend to know both the existing talent and the emerging talent. Existing talent often hold positions of leadership. Emerging talent often enjoy respect from peers.

Emerging talent often possess raw energy and creativity. They often haven't been in the organization long enough to become engulfed by its culture. They can see things in different ways because their perspectives tend to be unique.

We want to hear and consider their creative ideas. Some of their ideas will be raw, untested and may seem hard to implement within our existing patterns of thought. But sometimes we need to disrupt existing patterns of thought.

Sometimes we need new ideas to challenge our existing assumptions. We develop our assumptions from our experiences. Our emerging talent may have had experiences that are quite different from those of our existing talent.

We want to consider the assumptions that they bring to the table. In times of relative calm, when things are moving at a much slower pace, we may tend to surround ourselves with talent that thinks very much like we tend to think.

In times of great change we want to encourage new perspectives to disrupt our patterns of thought so we can consider things we have never considered before. This disruptive process may unsettle us but it will often help us too.

We want to resist our natural tendency to explain why their ideas won't work. We want to explore each idea as though it may offer a perspective that we have failed to consider in the past but that we may need to consider now.

Sometimes it helps when the change leader sets up regular meetings with emerging leaders. Some change leaders bring questions to these meetings and ask the emerging leaders to offer their thoughts and share suggestions.

Many find that these "listening sessions with emerging leaders" are very helpful for change leaders to experience. The idea is to encourage a sharing of thoughts without regard to practicality. We are just looking for perspectives.

The new perspectives that may be found can then be brought to meetings with existing leaders. The same questions can be asked and the new perspectives can be shared. Often many of these perspectives will improve our responses.

Share the Spotlight

Leaders all have both strengths and weaknesses. One weakness that some leaders have is the need to be the center of attention. “We have learned that the only way we ever get an idea approved is to present it as the boss’s idea.”

That may work in times of relative calm but it won’t work in times of great change. Change leaders have an intuitive sense that it is important to be able to share the spotlight, share the credit and allow good ideas to be recognized.

Sharing the spotlight can be difficult for some. Those steeped in traditional leadership patterns may have very hierarchical views about sharing “credit.” “It is my organization and I am responsible so I will approve whatever we do.”

The organizational leader is ultimately responsible. This is true. But when leaders hold the “reigns of power” and “hog the spotlight,” they aren’t helping their organization develop their leaders. We need shared ownership for that.

Everyone best supports that which they help to create. And when someone helps us to create something, they should be recognized for that. We all work harder when we know that our hard work will be appreciated and recognized.

Sharing the spotlight helps us promote shared ownership, builds commitment and generates a lot of positive energy. These are all things we have to have if we hope to proactively respond to the many challenges we will face everyday.

The central question for leaders to address is, “Do I feel grateful or do I feel threatened when other leaders are seen as being vital to the success of this organization?” Those who feel threatened will endanger their organizations.

Those who feel grateful will empower other leaders. Sharing the spotlight also entails sharing authority. Change leaders will establish a framework for decision-making. Everyone knows the decisions they are expected to make.

And everyone feels free to make the decisions they are expected to make and knows that they will be held accountable for those decisions. When decisions are good they will be praised and when they are bad they will learn from that.

The permission to make decisions in your areas of responsibility is the most important part of sharing the spotlight. Recognition is important. But being able to make decisions is essential. When we can make decisions we can lead.

And when we can make decisions we can also share that decisions making with others. That’s how change leadership organizations develop present leaders and how they, in turn, help to prepare the next generation of leaders.

Safe and Secure

Every change leader needs to be aware of both what they need to help them to feel safe and what they need to help them to feel secure. It is difficult to meet the demands of change leadership when a leader does not feel safe and secure.

Safety relates to both physical and emotional safety. If we don't feel physically and emotionally safe it will be very hard to lead effectively. If we don't feel safe we may be anxious and afraid and we may sense threats that aren't there.

Security has two levels. We have to be able to meet our own basic needs for food, shelter and clothing. But we also have to be able to meet our physical, mental and spiritual health needs. We have to feel well in order to lead well.

Emotional safety can be a challenge in these times. We all have some doubts. We all wonder if we are worthy of the task before us. We can be challenged by moments of indecision. We can be threatened by changes in the environment.

We can be concerned by indications of wavering support from others. We may see a pathway into the future that may not yet be supported by either our staff or our Board. We can wonder if the challenges of leadership are worth it.

Most leaders have wondered these things at some point in the last few years. We all have to find ways to feel safe when what we are proposing is resisted or attacked. We want to see resistance as a normal part of change processes.

Sometimes the ideas of others are threatening to us and sometimes our ideas are threatening to others. Change leaders know that they have to feel safe and secure before they can help those who serve with them to feel safe and secure.

Leaders often serve at a great emotional price. Sometimes leaders fail to meet their own needs. This has always been a tendency but this is a very dangerous tendency in these times. Leaders need to work to meet their wellness needs.

Whether the needs are physical, emotional or spiritual, we have to see the value of addressing our needs. When change leaders address their own needs they give permission and encourage everyone else to address their needs too.

Safety and security are both individual and collective needs. Whenever teams commit to helping one another to meet their safety and security needs, this commitment often helps enhance their collective sense of safety and security.

An organization that commits to meeting the safety and security needs of their leaders, of all those who serve with them and of all those they seek to serve will be seen as a good place to work and a good place to receive support from.

Practice Calming Yourself

Here's a frequently repeated scenario. An executive leader is at an outside meeting and learns about a planned state-level change that will alter the way services are accessed, funded and delivered. The executive gets very agitated.

The executive returns from that meeting and calls a meeting. The leadership team members who attend that meeting leave in an agitated state caused by the news the executive leader has shared. They then meet with their staff.

Their staff then leave that meeting quite upset and a few of them overreact to something that happens within their program. The news of this overreaction then reaches the executive leader who overreacts to the staff's overreactions.

That night a flurry of critical incident reports are written about the behavioral overreactions of a number of the youths in treatment units. And the executive leader, the members of the leadership team and the staff then feel miserable.

This scenario represents a dynamic that has been repeated many times in organizations over the last few years. This scenario allows us to see all these connections in a way we might not understand as we were experiencing them.

We see the interconnectedness of everything that happened. Extreme stress causes reactions that can cascade throughout any organization. Each reaction causes further reactions. Eventually everyone involved is quite overwhelmed.

This whole sequence of events began with the way the executive leader reacted to bad news. The organizational reaction would have been different if the leader had taken a moment to calm down and decide what should be done.

When executive leaders act in ways that others perceive as filled with fear, frustration, anger or doubt, all staff involved will absorb the emotions of the executive leader. We simply can't afford to initiate the chaos that cascaded.

This is not to say that executive leaders cannot ever feel afraid, frustrated or doubtful. We all feel that sometimes. This is to say that everyone is watching for those emotions and they are dangerous to display when we are not calm.

Experienced change leaders will practice calming themselves when they are agitated and will find ways to get calm before they decide how to respond to bad news. It is best to have a solution in mind before we ever call a meeting.

Few can calm themselves in times of great stress unless they practice this calming process, unless this calming process is seen as important. This is one of the most important skills for change leaders to practice and then master.

Regulate Your Emotions

The normal emotional range for leaders has been extended in recent years. In times of relative calm our challenges were less stressful and the surprises that we encountered were fewer and far less significant. That has all changed now.

Change leaders today have to become proficient in regulating their emotions so they can respond with a plan instead of reacting from a base of emotions.

This “emotional regulation” has been heavily researched over the last decade.

We have found that we can’t really change our behaviors until we are able to uncover and then address the underlying patterns of thoughts and beliefs that underpin our behaviors. We experience, believe, think and then we behave.

Many of the beliefs and thoughts that can drive our behaviors are not a part of our conscious mental processes. We want to practice discovering the patterns of beliefs and thoughts that drive us so we can consciously process them.

We can all develop a “siege mentality” in times of great change. We can all be triggered into reactive patterns when we think things like, “Here we go again,” or, “This is really bad,” or, “This is a lot more than I can possibly handle now.”

These thoughts can occur so fast that we can be unaware that we have even had these thoughts. But these thoughts can drive our reactions after we have them. These patterns of thoughts are often backed by our patterns of beliefs.

Many have come to believe, for example, that human services are less valued that they once were. Many believe that there is a conspicuous effort to defund and deemphasize all human services. There is some evidence to support this.

But there is far more evidence to support a belief that the initiative is really intended to change the nature of human services design and delivery. It is true that there is less support for simply paying for the delivery of services.

We are now expected to produce durable results from the services we deliver. Evidence suggests that those who can work within a system of care and help those that they serve to be more stable will be funded, valued and supported.

We are better served when we believe we can be valued and supported and when we use our conscious thought processes to plan for and implement the changes that will ensure the future safety and security of our organization.

Then it is much easier for us to regulate our emotions. Then we are far less likely to react to challenges and surprises. At the base of emotional regulation is a calm confidence that says, “We understand this and we can handle this.”

Calm and Well

The goal of change leadership is to design our organization's work to promote and produce stability for everyone involved. We need to ensure that everyone we serve and everyone who serves with us can feel safe, secure, calm and well.

We may understand the need to feel safe and secure far better than we may understand the need to feel calm and well. We all live in stressful and anxious times. Many of us have accommodated to the high levels of stress and anxiety.

Many now believe that high levels of stress and anxiety are "the new normal." We can't accept that. We have to work just as hard to help everyone to feel calm and well as we work to help them to feel safe and secure. This is normal.

We want to focus our efforts around helping everyone to feel safe and secure most of the time and calm and well some of the time. It is true that most of us can't feel calm and well until we can first feel safe and secure most of the time.

But we can't stop with efforts to promote safety and security. Most of those we serve will have experienced high levels of trauma in their lives. So it is very important to begin with a considerable emphasis on safety and security.

But if we hope to produce durable results from our efforts we have to follow that up with an emphasis on feeling calm and well. Many report that they haven't felt calm in a long time and that they seldom work on their wellness.

We have to be able to find some calm in our lives if we hope to be able to make good decisions, solve problems, communicate, see things as they are, learn from our mistakes, form relationships and practice emotional regulation.

All of these "normal developmental processes" are dependent upon an ability to feel calm some of the time. Finding a sense of calm is a natural ability for some. But it is a process that requires considerable practice for most of us.

We have to encourage practice in the art of finding calm and establish the value of finding calm by the ways we provide our leadership. Calm always begins at the top. If it doesn't begin there everyone is stressed and anxious.

Wellness is not very well understood. We often hear leaders say, "What is wellness anyhow?" There are clear wellness factors: forgiveness, gratitude, hopefulness, love, belonging, care and concern and respect are just a few.

Self-care, self-awareness, self-respect, appreciation and self-confidence are suggested as other important wellness factors. When we introduce these factors into our lives we can also begin to replace "control" with "kindness."

Listen to Stories

Our lives are filled with stories. In so many ways the stories are a blessing for us. Change leaders need to ask for and listen to many stories everyday so we can hear the needs those who serve with us and the needs of those we serve.

We share more than we may ever understand when we tell a story. We share the narrative but we also often share the meaning and the lesson of the story. We share if we believe the story is completed or if the ending is still unfolding.

As change leaders we are often called to help someone to find a better ending for their story. Most stories will share both a journey and a destination. We share our hopes and dreams and our fears and frustrations within our stories.

Most stories share the pain of the journey. Some of that pain is past and must be processed. Some of that pain is very current. We need to try to discover where we can help reduce any current pain. This will often drain our energy.

Change leaders intuitively understand that their available energy is finite. We have to devote some energy to planning, some to building a team, some to articulating our vision and some to listening to and responding to the stories.

Our staff will bring us many stories that request our help. We have to learn to prioritize those requests because we can't do everything for everyone all the time. So we want to try to identify any systemic aspects of the needs we hear.

As change leaders we want to focus on addressing the systemic aspects of the needs we identify from the stories. Sometimes we can identify a key systemic adjustment that we can make that will manage to help us to meet many needs.

Many organizations that are just beginning to transition from child-centered approaches to more family-focused approaches, for example, often find that they need to build more case management capacities into their organizations.

This is a systemic response that will help us to meet the needs of those who serve with us and the needs of those we serve. Without expanding our case management capacities we may not be able to successfully meet many needs.

But we tell stories too. The stories we tell are more important than we realize. Everyone will listen to our stories, remember our stories, repeat our stories and interpret our stories. We need to consider this whenever we tell stories.

We should tell those stories that will help everyone experience the future that we envision. The stories we tell should challenge everyone to consider new patterns of beliefs, new ways of thinking and new ways of doing what we do.

Embrace Alternative Perspectives

We will need to devote a lot of energy to seeking alternative perspectives from outside our organization when we are developing our future vision. Our own organizations may have developed set views on what we do and how we do it.

Going outside our organization to those who purchase services from us and to those who have developed a perspective on what is happening nationally may prove to be very helpful to us. National perspectives are essential to consider.

Our field is clearly moving in a certain direction. When we can understand that direction we can prepare for it. Looking at what other states have done in given areas can be helpful too. All states watch what other states are doing.

Sometimes we may believe that our state is very unique. Of course, in a certain sense, every state is unique. But we want to be aware of what others are doing. And we also want to be very aware of what our state is doing too.

Seeking the perspectives of those who purchase services from us can be very helpful. They know what they are looking for. And they know what they have problems accessing at the present time. We need to know and respond to this.

This information will give us ideas about what skills and capacities we need to build into our organization. If we fail to embrace the alternative perspectives, we will do so at our own risk. We have to adjust whenever we need to adjust.

Once we have developed a vision from the state and national service delivery perspectives we have gathered, we then have to take those perspectives to our staff and begin the process of sharing what we have learned with them.

Many who are experienced in change leadership believe that we embrace alternative perspectives from the outside to develop our vision and then we embrace alternative perspectives from the inside as we prepare our response.

This school of thought believes it is the province of executive leadership to propose the vision, the province of the Board to approve the vision and the province of the staff to help decide "how" the vision should be implemented.

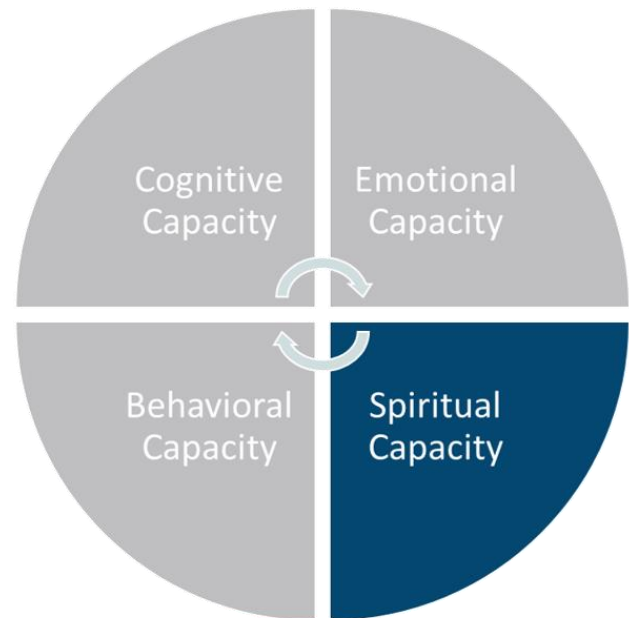
Ideally, the change leadership team is considered as a part of the executive leadership that actually proposes the vision. We will need their support and their commitment to implement any changes that our vision might suggest.

But we need the support and commitment of our line staff as well. We need them to share their perspectives on how we should implement our vision. And we need to find ways to embrace their perspectives whenever we can.

Spiritual Capacity—Who We Are

Skill Sets Involved:

- Find Some Balance
- Always Respect Yourself
- Follow Your Values
- Accept Impenetrable Boundaries
- Meet Your Needs
- Consider Equity Issues
- Manage Your Thoughts
- Know Yourself Well
- Praise Others Often
- Accept Offered Support



Who we are and what we do

Find Some Balance

We are not just what we do in our work life. We are a lot more than that. But we can forget this. We can lose our sense of balance in our lives. We can get so caught up in the stresses of our work that we can forget who else we are.

This can be very dangerous for us both personally and professionally. We have to remember to reserve some time and energy for other parts of our life that are not connected to our work. Those parts are very important to us too.

Someone once said that at the end of our lives very few leaders will wish they had attended a few more meetings. Very few will wish they had spent more time at their work place or had taken more work calls while they were home.

Many may say, however, that they may wish that they had attended more of their children's sporting events or helped with their homework more often or shared more evening meals with their family. There's a message here for us.

Many feel, with some justification, that there are too few hours in a day and that there are just too many things to get done every day. There are many ways to initiate a reconsideration of this. One way is to look at what we do.

Sometimes it helps if we start with the non-work items we should do. How many hours each week do we need to fulfill our non-work commitments? Try scheduling those items first and then look at what we need to do for our work.

It sounds simplistic but if we have too many things to do at work each day we have to decide which things we are doing that aren't worth the energy it takes to do them. We want to consider what we do and how we do whatever we do.

If we aren't spending enough time with our family, we have to find a way to subtract some hours from our work commitments so we can spend more time to meet our family obligations. Some say that we can't schedule relationships.

But sometimes we simply won't be able to find time for some balance until we find a way to work it into our schedule. That is a better approach than saying we can't find time for our family. Leaders lead better when they have balance.

And let's be honest. When we aren't spending enough time with our family we are distracted by that and we are resentful of that. Distracted and resentful leaders often make mistakes. It's better to take the time to be with our family.

Time management is an important skill for change leaders. The center of the time management skill is an ability to prioritize needs. We have to know what's important and make sure we make time for what's most important.

Always Respect Yourself

When we try to be all things to all persons we usually end up being very few things to very few persons. And few are satisfied with that. There are many conflicting demands for leaders today: leadership is a paradoxical challenge.

This “profusion of demands” can impact our self-image if we let it. But our job is not to please everyone. The first calls of leadership today are to know our charge and to respect ourselves. But what do those two terms mean?

Knowing our charge is about knowing what we have to accomplish. It’s about understanding what we have to do and what we need to change. It’s about knowing when we have to disrupt the status quo to ensure future viability.

Often one element of self-respect is connected to how others perceive us. Everyone has a “self-image” and an “other-image.” Our sense of self-respect can be jeopardized when the two images are out of synch with one another.

All leaders tend to strive for a consonance between these two images. Many believe a dissonance between these two images clouds our self-image. Many also believe a consonance between these images contributes to self-respect.

A dissonance is always a greater possibility in times of great change. We can hear comments like, “You have changed. You would never have done that before.” This can cause a disquiet within us that can disturb our self-image.

Comments like this are often shared after we have made a difficult decision that is in the best interest of our organization but may disadvantage some staff or programs. Many leaders have valued what we have called “loyalty.”

Many leaders have “protected” some staff members who had once helped our organizations even after those staff have stopped contributing. Many leaders also protected programs in this way. Many have been “carried” out of loyalty.

Change leaders know that we can no longer afford to protect or carry staff or programs that are no longer contributing to the goals and future plans of our organization. This is necessary but can be very difficult for everyone involved.

For leaders who have always valued the protection of their staff and programs this disruption of the status quo can sometimes disturb self-image, disrupt a sense of self-confidence and jeopardize the respect they feel for themselves.

If we believe we have made the right decision we have to resist these threats. The “other image” will become consonant with our “self-image” once our staff understand that the decisions we made were difficult but were also necessary.

Follow Your Values

We always want to follow our values. But sometimes we also want to spend some time clarifying our values. We can get trapped up in a wicked set of weeds if we have no values to guide our decisions in times of great change.

But we want to remain reflective about our values and not become “stubborn proponents” of values we haven’t clarified in quite a while. Values are directly connected to beliefs and sometimes we might need to reconsider our beliefs.

We may need to clarify our values when circumstances arise that cause us to reconsider some beliefs. We should never abandon our values simply out of expediency. But sometimes our beliefs evolve and we reinterpret our values.

Many leaders have long embraced values related to child safety, for example. Many leaders have devoted their lives to assuring that children who had been removed from “dangerous situations” could have a safe place to grow up.

Then some of the thinking of our field changed. Some core beliefs of our field changed and some core values of our field adjusted. Our field became much less child-centered and much more family-focused. This caused clarification.

Many came to believe that children needed to grow up in families. A strong body of research backed up this new belief. And the value shifted to assuring that we would help families to become more stable and safely stay together.

If we clarified the value that underpins both beliefs it would say, “We all want what’s best for children.” When framed this way everyone could follow the values they believe. Sometimes the clarification is as important as the value.

Clarifying a value is not the same as abandoning a value. It has been said that a value, once truly embraced, is never really abandoned. But we often may need to consider altering the interpretation or the application of our values.

Our values don’t exist in a vacuum. They serve as a guide for the world in which we operate, with all its complexity and confusion. Our values are truly necessary to guide our thoughts and our decisions in times of great change.

Our vision, our values and our mission form the foundation for everything we do and everything we represent. All three need to have the capacity to remain fresh and alive within us as we navigate through the seas of transformation.

We want to discuss our values all the time. We want to revisit them and explore their application. We want to ask what our values mean and what our values call for us to do and not do. But we always want to follow our values.

Accept Impenetrable Barriers

Change leaders usually understand the importance of developing the capacity to break through barriers. Many see this as a vital capacity for us in times of great change. We need to be able to set goals and find ways to achieve them.

We usually follow a formula for this: we convert the barrier into a problem to be solved and we analyze that problem and identify a pathway to resolution. We may believe that all barriers can be penetrated quickly using this formula.

All barriers can't be penetrated quickly using this formula. Some barriers are impenetrable now. Some barriers defy this formula of quick conversion into resolution. Change leaders need to accept that some barriers are complex.

We need to accept that there are some barriers that will remain for a time regardless of what we do. There are some challenges that we cannot quickly overcome. There are some problems that we cannot resolve in a few months.

This ability to identify impenetrable boundaries is, in itself, a very important skill for us to develop. We have a finite amount of energy. Change leaders must be very wise in the ways they choose to expend their "change energy."

Sometimes we can get stubborn and continue to plow large amounts of energy into trying to penetrate a barrier that we can't penetrate at that time. There may be other barriers we have to penetrate before we can penetrate this one.

Most barriers, regardless of their size or scope, can eventually be penetrated through a series of successive approximations toward the goal. Sometimes we have to move toward the goal one step at a time. Sometimes it will take years.

Many organizations are working toward becoming more trauma-informed, for example. We may offer trauma training for our staff and then wonder why the training has not made a quick impact on the daily practice of our organization.

Those who have long labored in this area know that the process of converting any organization into a trauma-informed organization is a multi-year process. It requires a change in many deep patterns of beliefs, thoughts and behaviors.

If we try to break through complex barriers quickly we often find the barriers to be impenetrable. They are usually impenetrable because of the depth of the issues involved. We need an ability to identify and adjust to the depth issues.

Some believe there are no impenetrable barriers. When we divide deep issues into a long series of solvable problems, there are few impenetrable barriers. But we set ourselves up if we believe that deep issues can be quickly resolved.

Meet Your Needs

We can't meet our needs until we can identify them. Some have suggested that the first step toward identifying our needs is to know ourselves very well. Few of us spend sufficient time thinking about who we are and what we need.

We may spend most of our time, instead, getting to know our staff and what they need or those we serve and what they need. These are surely important things for us to know. But we are important too. We have to recognize that.

A failure to understand our own identity and our own needs may not be a sign of selflessness. It may, unintentionally, be seen as a sign of selfishness. Or at least that is how it can be perceived by those we work with on a daily basis.

Whenever we know others and their needs better than we know ourselves and our needs we will find that we are very disadvantaged as change leaders because we are all compelled to find some ways to meet our most basic needs.

We may meet our needs proactively because we know ourselves and because we understand what we need or we may meet our needs reactively because we haven't thought about who we are and we aren't aware of what we need.

We don't want to be the leader who organizes everyone to always ask about the mood of "the boss." That is what can happen when the executive leader isn't consciously aware of who they are and what needs they have to meet.

When we are not self-aware we can be driven by both a desire to achieve our goals and by some other thoughts that may limit us. We may fail to realize that some of those thoughts are standing in the way of us achieving our goals.

The thoughts we can have often relate to self-doubt, personal pain, indecision, frustration, resentments, a sense of loss, some declining motivation and anger. These thoughts can lead to sleeplessness, irritability and abuse of substances.

Whenever we find ourselves in this "tunnel," we need to go back to the basics. We need to return to the questions of who we are and what we need. And we need to develop ways to proactively meet our needs to ensure our own health.

There have been few times in our history that have presented more challenges for executive leaders. The stress levels are exceedingly high for everyone. We can't simply "gut it out" and ignore the stresses and strains of our work world.

Change leaders need to do whatever they can to ensure that they can be as mentally and physically and spiritually healthy as possible. It all starts with knowing who we are, what we are trying to do and what we personally need.

Consider Equity Issues

Most persons in leadership positions believe they earned their way into their positions. Most probably did to some extent. But along the way someone also probably reached out to us, mentored us and helped us to get to where we are.

We want to reflect on that. We all stand on the shoulders of those who helped us to get where we are today. We want to reflect on who helped us, how they helped us, why they helped us, what they taught us and how they taught us.

When we reflect we may remember some of the reasons that we were helped. Sometimes it was because someone saw a talent in us, or found something in common with us or saw that we had some skills that they wanted us to share.

As change leaders, we want to commit to reshape our organizations to be able to equitably do that same kind of supporting, mentoring and guiding towards mobility with everyone who works with us and with everyone that we serve.

We want to cast a wide net as we look to reshape our organizations to help us to respond to equity issues. We don't just want to help those who are like us. We want to get our organization to commit to think about helping everyone.

Our charge as change leaders is transformation. This is both an organizational charge and a moral charge. We want to make a positive difference in the lives of the persons who serve with us and in the lives of all those we seek to serve.

We want to offer everyone those same opportunities that were once offered to us. We want to offer everyone some choices and opportunities. Sometimes the greatest need within those we serve is a chance to get a better paying job.

Sometimes the greatest need for those who serve with us is a chance to get on a promotional track, the chance to show someone what they can do, a chance to be hopeful that, as a result of their hard work, they, too, could "move up."

We want to inspire a cultural commitment. Everyone has a mentor. Everyone is a mentor. Everyone reports on what they do to help others to "rise" in their lives. Everyone who helps others is recognized for the things they have done.

This kind of cultural commitment within our organizations can produce some transformational results. It can increase the levels of commitment to the goals of our organizations and increase levels of motivation to achieve those goals.

This is one way to help everyone to become a co-owner of our vision. We aren't playing favorites. Everyone is a favorite. We aren't choosing sides. Everyone is on our side. And everyone has an equitable chance to succeed.

Manage Your Thoughts

Many of us aren't consciously aware of what we are thinking about very often. It isn't that we can't be aware of our thoughts. We can. It's just that most of us have not trained ourselves to be consciously aware of our thought processes.

We can train ourselves to become consciously aware of our thoughts. Once we learn how to do this we can begin the journey to find ways to effectively manage the thoughts we have. This is very important for all change leaders.

We can begin this discovery process by picking a time when we can be alone. We want to turn everything off that will distract us. Turn off our radio and our phone and just focus on becoming aware of the thoughts we are having.

Just let your thoughts roll. Don't do anything but become more aware of your thoughts. Most report that they are amazed by the thoughts they are having. We will find we think many different thoughts in a relatively short time span.

Sometimes the thoughts we discover are replays from the experiences of our day. We will revisit conversations. We will re-experience some emotions. We will sometimes make a connection and move to some thoughts from long ago.

We are beginning to understand something very important when we become aware of how our thought passageways work. Our minds remember so many thoughts from our past times and we will return to some of them many times.

We remember and think about many good things that have happened to us and we will also remember many bad things that have happened to us. We want to focus on whether our thoughts tend to be on good or bad memories.

When we are upset or fatigued or anxious we may have a tendency to have more troubling thoughts. We may also have a tendency to get caught in a loop of the troubling thoughts that can repeat themselves in our minds many times.

These are the thoughts that we most want to learn to bring into our conscious awareness. When we are under stress we can find ourselves locked in a loop of negative perseveration around a set of issues. This can cause us distress.

When we become consciously aware of these thoughts we can manage them. The best way that many have found to manage these troubling thoughts is to substitute some more positive thoughts to consider instead of those thoughts.

Many have said that we can choose to either manage our thoughts or we can allow our thoughts to manage us. The most important thoughts to manage are our troubling thoughts. Those are the thoughts that can disrupt our lives.

Know Yourself Well

This is a persistent theme in change leadership. It is important because so many persons depend upon the performance of change leaders. We define the agenda and then we agree to accept the responsibility for everyone's success.

Some tell us that leaders can't depend upon others to give us feedback on our performance. They say those who work for us are organized to tell us what they think we want to hear. They say that isn't always the case but it often is.

They point out that our jokes are not as funny as many would have us believe and that all our ideas are not as insightful or as wise as some suggest they are. They say we can get feedback but the feedback we get isn't necessarily true.

They suggest that unless we assign the responsibility to tell us the truth to someone within our organization, we may never get the kinds of constructive feedback we need to allow us to make the best decisions that we can make.

They suggest that there are other ways we can get the feedback we need. They suggest we need to become experts at reading nonverbal signals so we can understand when someone is saying that they agree when they really don't.

They suggest that this is how we can understand when we are being humored and how we understand when there is anger in the room so we can address it. This is the way they say we should understand when our team is very anxious.

It is true that the better we know ourselves the better we are able to read the nonverbal signals of others. But many believe that if we truly know ourselves well, we won't have to depend on these indirect methods of getting feedback.

These persons suggest that change leaders who know themselves well can get honest feedback from everyone, only their funny jokes will be laughed at and only their best ideas will be thought of as insightful. Let's explore these ideas.

The assumption behind these ideas is that when we are humored, when our bad jokes are laughed at and when our mediocre ideas are applauded it is only happening because our staff believe that we don't know ourselves very well.

When we don't know ourselves very well we might come across as being a bit insecure and in need of special handling. The assumption here is that when we know ourselves well we can ask any question and get an honest answer.

This is probably a better way for change leaders to think. We want to be open, honest and transparent. And we have to be able to get the information that we need directly from everyone. It all begins with knowing ourselves well.

Praise Others Often

Some organizations have cultures that praise others often and some cultures only punish others often. There are many cultures in between, but clearly the organizations that praise others often will fare better in the times ahead of us.

Let's face it there aren't many easy jobs in our organizations these days. Most of the jobs we have to offer are very demanding and carry a measure of stress. We can get persons to "fill" these jobs but that's not what we really want to do.

We need everyone in every position in our organization to bring energy and commitment to their job every day. Those organizations with a dedicated workforce will have a competitive advantage in recruitment and retention.

These elements lead to a dedicated workforce: fair wages, doable jobs, strong leadership, effective training and support, clear expressions of vision, and a culture that's open to change, encourages feedback and praises others often.

All of these are important but recognition and praise are often listed as the key "job satisfiers." Let's explore why this is so important. No one wants to receive false praise. And no one wants to be praised by insincere gimmicks.

The power of praise comes from understanding our job responsibilities well and from having been trained and supported well enough to be able to know how to do the job well, liking the job and then being praised for doing it well.

There are a lot of steps and skills involved in all of that. We want to offer real praise through every important step. We want to praise efforts to understand the job responsibilities and praise every effort to learn how to do the job well.

We want to praise progress on learning the job, praise developing proficiency in doing the job and then praise the developed ability to do the job well. And we want to praise those who provide the support that will make this happen.

And we want to praise any and all efforts of everyone involved to develop and practice customer service. Those who become proficient in customer service will become the gold standard of staff performance in the times ahead of us.

We need to praise others often to let them know that we are aware of what they are doing and that we sincerely appreciate what they are doing. We may be the face of our organization but our staff will be our voice and our hands.

Praising others often costs us nothing. But the returns on praising others often are huge. It lets our staff know that we are aware. It lets them know that they are valued. And it validates all their efforts to support our vision.

Accept Offered Support

Some leaders are not comfortable with accepting support from others. We all have to get over that. We won't be able to fulfill our responsibilities as change leaders unless and until we can accept support from those who serve with us.

The days when leaders could operate as "rugged individualists" are over. The challenges we will be given by our organizations and by our communities will all be too complex and interdependent to be approached as individual leaders.

We will need a team to accomplish our internal systems changes and we will need the coordinated efforts of many teams to accomplish community-wide systems changes. We all have to learn to provide and accept offered support.

Providing and accepting offered support are both skills. To provide support we have to learn how to offer support as a servant leader. We have to learn to be more humble than proud and to see ourselves as a part of a unified effort.

This is true whether we are providing support within our organization or as a part of a community-wide effort. Hierarchical conceptions of leadership will only hold us back. We need to develop collaborative and partnership views.

Those collaborative and partnership views will also help us to understand the appropriateness and necessity of accepting offered support. Our teams of the future will be organized for "collective capacity." Everyone will bring a talent.

Future teams will assess the needs of their organization or community and will gather the skill-sets that they need to successfully meet their mutually defined goals. Everyone at the table will be there to represent a vital talent.

And we have to learn how to appreciate, access and integrate all these vital talents. The ability to build a team that appreciates their collective talents and is willing to share those talents is a vital skill for all change leaders to develop.

Whenever we accept the offered support from a team member in a specific skill-set area, we are endorsing their skill in that area. We are establishing that "this person will help to lead us through our discussions of this topic."

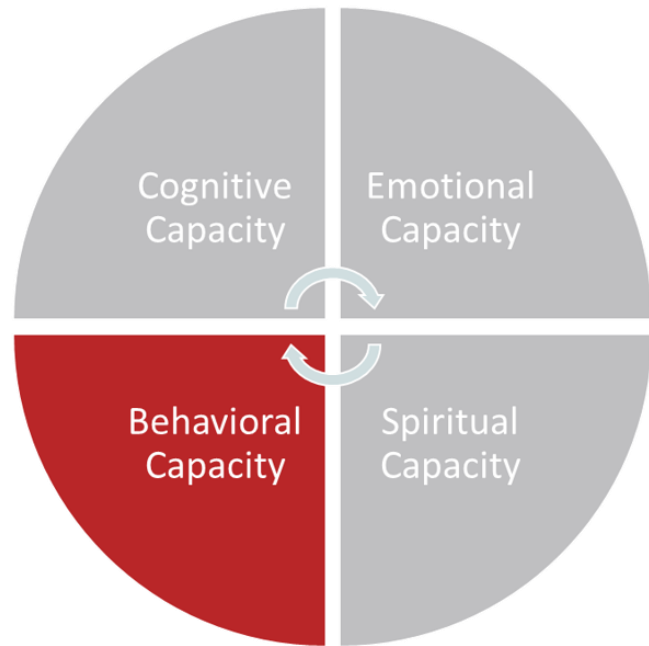
This requires us to develop a measure of comfort in deferring to the expertise of our team members. For some this is natural. For others this will be a major shift. Some will ask, "What if we don't have one vital skill-set that we need?"

Most say we have a simple choice: go out and recruit someone to bring that vital skill-set that we need or select someone from our team to develop that skill-set and then get them the best training possible to help them to master it.

The Behavioral Capacity—What We Do

Skill-Sets Involved:

- Consider Your Behaviors
- Encourage Constructive Feedback
- Follow Good Advice
- Train then Delegate
- Build Strong Teams
- Expect Positive Results
- Encourage Mutual Respect
- Learn from Mistakes
- Allow Some Mistakes
- Embrace Change Leadership



How we interact and offer support

Consider Your Behaviors

If we have been the executive leader of an organization for a considerable period of time we may have become progressively less aware of our behaviors as the years passed. New leaders tend to be very conscious of their behaviors.

When we are new we work to establish ourselves. We are conscious of what we do and how everyone reacts to what we do. We are studying the natural alliances within our organization and looking for the levers we need to pull.

Change leaders never lose that “looking for the levers” perspective. They will continue to act as though they were new to their organizations. They will remain interested in studying natural alliances and in creating new alliances.

“Considering your behaviors” is one of the key differences between traditional leaders and change leaders. Traditional leaders may focus on their words but change leaders know everyone will define them by watching what they do.

If we should say that showing respect is a value for our organization and if we then act in disrespectful ways, no one will accept that respect is a value for us. Consistency between the spoken word and observable behaviors is important.

Change leaders tend to plan for the establishment of their values within their organizations by defining those behaviors that they will consistently engage in and those behaviors that they will steadfastly avoid. This is a very wise plan.

Many have said that organizations ultimately only end up doing what the organizational leader says we should do. But in today’s world this has been revised to say that organizations only do what the organizational leader does.

There are many times when we can find ourselves in situations where it appears that we have to choose between competing values. Change leaders will identify the paradox and ask other leaders to offer their thoughts on this.

In this way, when we engage our other leaders in a discussion on the apparent choice between values we will often, together, be able to find a middle ground that respects both values. In the process both values will have been affirmed.

Change leaders will consider the behaviors of their other leaders as well. We want to make sure that all of our leaders, who are representing us, behave in ways that are consistent with all the values we have set for our organization.

Behaviors matter. We can never afford to forget that. If we should behave in ways that are not consistent with our values we should always apologize. A change leader who makes a mistake and apologizes for it affirms the value.

Encourage Constructive Feedback

All of our ideas won't be good. And all of our decisions won't be sound. We have to accept that fact. Sometimes the best gift that our staff can offer to us is the opportunity to improve an idea or a decision before we have presented it.

There is a lot that has to happen before we can ever receive such a gift. Those who are defensive about their ideas or decisions won't receive many gifts. We won't get constructive feedback unless and until we ensure everyone's safety.

Ever been in a room after an executive leader has lashed out at constructive feedback? It's not a pretty sight. The room goes silent. All eyes are downcast. And everyone in the room is thinking, "Thank God that wasn't my feedback!"

It will be a long time before that group ever offers any constructive feedback again. Change leaders know they can't do this. We have a lot of power. We can't use our power that way. We have to encourage constructive feedback.

Most change leaders try to encourage constructive feedback by suggesting that some feedback that might have been offered in private be shared with the team. This way we give our permission to share this feedback with the team.

These second-hand permissions won't be necessary when we have clearly established that it is safe to offer constructive feedback. But if we are just establishing this safety, second-hand permissions are sometimes necessary.

It is often helpful to have a discussion about what constitutes "constructive" feedback. Some team members may enjoy being in the attack mode. Some may attack a proposed idea or decision just because they enjoy attacking it.

We can establish that if anyone offers constructive feedback we also expect to get an idea on how to improve the idea or decision. That will reduce most "attack mode" feedback. And we do want to hear all ideas on improvements.

We encourage constructive feedback because we believe that our team can help us to improve any idea that we have. When we enter any dialogue with this belief we will usually get that result. And that is the result we need to get.

In times of great change we can't afford an "individual pride of ownership" for ideas or decisions. We want to encourage a "collective pride of ownership" for ideas and decisions. And we have to encourage feedback to get us there.

When we grant permission for others to feedback on our ideas and decisions we also get permission to offer feedback on the ideas and decisions of others. We will need that because all the team ideas and decisions need feedback too.

Follow Good Advice

Sometimes following advice can be a tricky business. There are surely times when we can get advice that is not connected to any ulterior motive. But often the advice we get is intended to get us to go a certain way for a certain reason.

If we ask those who give us advice to share any “hidden agendas” they may have or to share any specific reasons why they may be offering us this advice we are usually in a better position to consider the “goodness” of the advice.

What we want to do is to bring any “hidden agendas” that might exist into the open. There is nothing wrong with everyone having an agenda. We all have agendas. What we want to discourage is the “hidden” nature of some agendas.

Hidden agendas work against the formation of cohesive and cooperative teams. They tend to encourage the breaking down of our teams into “camps.” We want to discourage that. We want to discuss all the agendas in the open.

Transparency starts at the top. If any executive leader wants to encourage an open discussion of all agendas, then that leader will also have to share all of their agendas with their team. Sometimes this can be a tricky business too.

Sometimes we have to say that there are elements of our agenda that we will discuss with the team as soon as we are able to discuss it. There are times, for example, when an agenda item may rest for a time exclusively with our Board.

We can legitimately say that without failing a transparency test. But we have to return to that agenda item as soon as we are able to do so. When we are transparent we can also insist that our team members also be transparent.

Once we have established the transparency within our team it is much easier for us to follow good advice. What constitutes “good advice?” Any advice that offers us a perspective we would never have considered before is good advice.

Advice that shares with us some thoughts and concerns that our staff may have but we were unaware of is good advice. Advice that says a budget that was drafted may have been based on some faulty assumptions is good advice.

Advice on a meeting we may need to attend, advice on the wording we may want to use in an announcement, advice on what to avoid when filling a position, advice on what to avoid when discussing a topic is all good advice.

When we establish transparency in discussing the various agendas we’ll often find that a lot of the advice we receive is good. Transparency opens the door and lets the fresh air in and makes “hidden agendas” far less likely to occur.

Train then Delegate

What's the purpose of building a team if we aren't willing to train them? And what's the purpose of training a team if we aren't willing to delegate to them? Teams are in our future. Teams are the best way to respond to rapid change.

The first piece of training that we want to offer our teams is on the continuous nature of change. We want to select team members who are nimble and who can adapt to change. Team members have to be comfortable with ambiguity.

We need idea generators. We need team members who can "think outside the box" and offer us creative options. We don't want to hear what won't work we want to hear the ideas that could work. We also want to have critical thinkers.

We want a risk-manager who can analyze the risks. We want a team-builder who has ideas on how to engage everyone. We want a training expert who can train on any topic. We want someone who understands service delivery.

And we want a relationship expert, someone who can watch the relationships and advise us on who we need to support and how we should support them. We need a communicator who is good with words and crafting our messages.

And we need someone who understands budgets and how all the budgets fit together. And we need someone who understands data analysis, who can get us reports on our performance. And we need a good human resources expert.

Those are the roles we need to fill. Once we have selected for these roles and trained them in their responsibilities we want to teach them to respect each another's talents and how to work together as a team. And then we delegate.

We establish that everyone has a role. We define the roles. We clarify which decisions we will make ourselves. We establish which decisions we make as a team. And we establish which decisions each member of our team will make.

Some decisions we make we will make and then share with the team. Some decisions require the input from the team before they are made. This is the "decision tree." After a discussion, this becomes how we will make decisions.

That's how we set the stage for delegation. Everyone knows their role and what's expected of them. Everyone knows "who" makes "what" decisions. And in this framework we are suddenly nimble enough to adapt as needed.

The keys to this formula are the individualized training, the identification of specific roles and responsibilities, the "decision tree" and the appreciation of everyone for everyone else's unique talents. These teams create our future.

Build Strong Teams

The prevailing thought on change leadership teams is that the person who leads the organization should also direct the efforts of the change leadership team. But “directing the efforts” is not a code for “controlling all the efforts.”

Whenever change leadership teams exist only to respond to the wishes of the organizational leader they really can't function as a change leadership team. A true change leadership team shares the decisions and shares in the leadership.

It is accurate that the organizational leader is responsible to see that a vision is developed, that an agenda is defined and implemented, that accountability for assignments is established and that results are measured and analyzed.

But change leaders also know that the best way to build a strong team is to share the development of the vision, the setting of both the agenda and the accountability for assignments and the measurement and analysis of results.

In a very real sense true change leadership teams will direct all the change efforts of the organization in full partnership with the organizational leader. The change efforts that our teams oversee require genuine shared ownership.

This is where the art of change leadership comes into play. There is a clear difference between being the change leader and being a member of a change leadership team. The change leader isn't just a boat being pushed by waves.

The change leader has to be a driving force. This can sometimes seem to be somewhat paradoxical. We can ask, “How can we be a driving force and still manage to share the decisions and the leadership?” We have to answer this.

Change leaders have to be strong enough to set a tone and disruptive enough to move the organization from the status quo without being overwhelming, dominating and harsh if they want to build strong change leadership teams.

Many believe the key to resolving this paradox is found in the character of the change leader. We can be strong by being clear and firm. But if we are strong and clear and harsh and use aversive discomfort to motivate it won't work.

Members of our change leadership teams will ask themselves, “Can we trust this leader?” By this they often mean, “Is this leader consistent and balanced and does this leader act from a base of anger?” Those answers will define us.

We won't be able to build strong teams if we can't be trusted. If we are calm and confident and share our power from that calm confidence and behave in ways that inspire trust we can safely build strong change leadership teams.

Expect Positive Results

Some leaders learned over the years to expect and accept disappointments. When we expect and accept disappointments we are actually deciding that what we do isn't isn't very important and that our results don't really matter.

There was a time when we could get away with thinking that way. But those times are gone. In the future our success will be defined by the results we can produce. If our results are disappointing we will have to change what we do.

It is true that we can never get the results we need until we design what we do and how we do it to get those results. For many this means they will have to redesign what they do and how they do it so they can get the positive results.

"Expecting positive results" is one of the most vital cultural elements for all organizations in these times. If this vital element is not yet fully installed within our organizations we have to quickly expend the energy to install it.

This all begins with a clear statement of the results we are expected to achieve and the adoption of measurement tools to allow us to track our progress. We want to track the results that are most vital for our success as an organization.

We don't want to track 1000 results, just those results that are vital to our success, perhaps three or four for every program or service that we offer. We'll know what those vital results are because we will hear them all the time.

Then we want to create a dashboard where results are displayed and analyzed by our change leadership team every month (or every week if we are tracking as a response to a crisis of some kind). We should then expect positive results.

When we get the positive results that we expect we should celebrate and thank everyone for their efforts. When we don't get the positive results we expect we should make the changes that will allow us to get positive results.

The keys to this process are the celebrations when we do get the results and the organizational changes we implement whenever we don't get the positive results. A failure to get positive results may occur for many different reasons.

Perhaps we haven't implemented our designs properly. Perhaps we don't yet have the skills to implement them properly. Perhaps some of our staff may be resisting the new approaches. Perhaps our design needs to be reconsidered.

The analysis of our results is very important. This analysis will lead to our responses. And whenever we don't get the positive results that we expect we have to respond. We don't want to learn to live with our disappointments.

Encourage Mutual Respect

Some organizations seem to thrive on infighting. It doesn't take very long to sense that when you find it. Sometimes organizations have been fighting for so long that their staff come to see fighting as just the way that they operate.

Organizations that have established patterns of showing mutual disrespect will have great difficulty surviving in the times that lie ahead. Mutual patterns of disrespect work against what we need to do and the ways we need to do it.

Change leaders will always find ways to encourage mutual respect within their organizations. They begin with their change leadership team. They have to be very respectful towards one another and appreciate each other's talents.

There can be disagreements. There are always disagreements among persons with passion and commitment. But change leaders have to train their change leadership teams on ways to disagree and not attack and to remain respectful.

There is great pressure on change leaders to set the example for this mutual respect. Whenever there are long established patterns of infighting within an organization it is probable that this has been both permitted and promoted.

Sometimes this happens in many subtle ways. And sometimes the ways are more overt. If the organizational leader permits an attack by members of the leadership team on another member the permission may seem to be subtle.

But if the organizational leader should sometimes personally disrespect some members of the leadership team to other members of the team the permission would be considered overt. Both of these permissions are hurtful to the team.

Organizations that thrive on disrespect are toxic. When we can't respectfully work together we may also tend to sabotage one another. We can never hope to implement a proactive vision for the future if we sabotage one another.

Change leaders encourage mutual respect with their change leadership team and then they push that out through their team members to the rest of their organization. What we permit we promote and we don't permit disrespect.

When we permit patterns of disrespect between our staff members we can reasonably expect that those same patterns of disrespect will also be inflicted upon those we serve. Disrespect is a threat to every level of service we offer.

We want to lead and be seen as leading a respectful organization. Every effort that we put forth to encourage mutual respect will come back favorably to our organization in the commitment of our staff and in the quality of our services.

Learn from Mistakes

We can learn in a many different ways. We can learn from classroom training, from reading books or articles, from getting good advice from someone with more experience and from trying new ideas that we come up with on our own.

But no learning has the power of the learning that can come from the mistakes we might make. Some mistakes we might make can be seen almost instantly as a mistake. Some mistakes take time for the extent of our mistake to unfold.

Following a mistake many are filled with a sense of dread. We can feel upset and embarrassed at having made the mistake or we can be shocked, sad and depressed because we had never seen that what we did was even a mistake.

Most don't think of mistakes as gifts but some do. They understand that there are some things we wouldn't learn, some skills we wouldn't develop, some ideas we wouldn't understand if it weren't for some mistakes we have made.

Of course everyone hopes that no one will ever be hurt as a result of a mistake that we might make. And we would prefer that we hadn't made the mistakes that we have made. But our mistakes all contribute to making us who we are.

Some have difficulty admitting to their mistakes. Some try to lie and cover them up. Some try to forget them and act as though they never happened. But change leaders tend to understand the learning potential of their mistakes.

Change leaders must take calculated risks all the time. The cautious will wait until everything is crystal clear. But change leaders know that sometimes we have to make important decisions based on the best available information.

If we are afraid we will make a mistake we may be paralyzed when we need to decide. We may be unable to act and, as a result, we will let others make those decisions for us. Change leaders prefer to make those decisions themselves.

We want to share our decisions whenever we can. But we'll have to make some decisions on our own. We want to gather advice whenever we can. But sometimes there is no time. Then we have to decide and accept responsibility.

Some decisions we may have to make may represent a choice between two or three options, none of which may be favorable. The textbooks don't prepare us for that. But the history of our past mistakes often prepares us very well.

Mistakes can make us sensitive to nuances. They can cause us to analyze and prepare in very thoughtful ways. They can help us to understand those key moments when we have to choose. They can help us make some wise choices.

Allow Some Mistakes

All of us have had to go to our boss at some point in our careers and admit that we had made a big mistake. It's important for us to remember what that experience was like and to remember what we had hoped our boss would do.

Let's review that experience. We had made a big mistake. We were scared. Maybe the boss already knew or maybe we were sharing it for the first time. We were wondering if we would be fired. We knew that we could be fired.

We tell the boss about our mistake. And then we wait. Two scenarios could emerge. The boss could say, "We both wish you hadn't done that. It was bad. But it's not the end of the world. Please promise me you won't do that again."

Or boss could say, "How could you be so stupid? How could you make such a dumb mistake? You should be ashamed of yourself. Get out of my sight and I'll tell you tomorrow whether you still have your job. That was just stupid!"

Now the two scenarios may play differently depending upon how serious the mistake was. But even if the mistake was very serious there is never a cause for a leader to adopt the shaming and blaming stance of the second scenario.

What lesson could be learned from approaching a mistake in that way? When mistakes are made and we plan to retain the staff involved we want to focus on the learning from the mistake. Neither scenario asked about any learning.

When leaders are angry our staff remember our anger. There is no learning, just fear. We can learn from our mistakes when we are able to consider the lesson we need to learn without the fear or guilt from shame or humiliation.

Those who are humiliated may use that approach with other staff and with those that we serve. The lesson that they may take from the experience is that mistakes should be punished harshly so the pain will correct the behavior.

This is hardly a lesson that is consistent with the trauma awareness we want to build into our organizations. We don't want our staff members to punish to promote learning. That's not what we want to teach or how we want to teach.

Change leaders see value in learning from mistakes, as a way to understand or as a way to grow. They also know that how we treat the mistakes of our staff may make will be how our staff will treat the mistakes of those that we serve.

We have to know what mistakes we cannot allow: no one can hit, intentionally hurt or have sex with those we serve. That is clear. But we have to allow for some mistakes. Everyone make mistakes. That's how we all learn and grow.

Embrace Change Leadership

Change leaders can be a powerful force for change within their organizations and within the communities where they partner to help make changes. Some change leaders are born with the talents but most work hard to develop them.

Change leadership is both an art and a set of skills. It is not magic. It can be learned. Many have learned these skills in the past and many more will learn them in the future. Many believe change leadership promotes system change.

Traditional forms of leadership seem too slow, too inflexible, too unaware of the dynamics involved in the process of change. Change leadership gives us a way to respond to the dimensions of leadership by seeing them all as as one.

The rEvolutionary Change Leadership Model considers all of the capacities of leadership – the cognitive, the emotional, the spiritual and the behavioral. This “Practice Manual” explores ten skill-sets connected to each vital capacity.

All of the skill-sets may not be of equal interest to everyone. Our hope is that some of the skill-sets will have particular meaning to everyone who leads an organization in a time of great change. We choose the skill-sets to develop.

This manual was designed to be used by both individual change leaders and by their change leadership teams. The thought was to present a series of skill-sets that we could consider and then decide which we will choose to work on.

Every change leader and their team can assess their areas of strength, select a few areas where they decide they want to improve and then work together to develop a plan to improve their team work and to change their organization.

We felt it might help if we offered a clear picture of how the skill-sets work together and compliment one another. Very few will rate highly across the board in all the skill-set areas. We decide where we most need to improve.

The emphasis of this approach is on the choosing of where change leaders and your change leadership team might decide you need to focus most of your energy if you want to improve your collective change leadership capacities.

We, as change leaders, don't have to be good at everything. But we want to build change leadership teams that can, collectively, be strong in most of the areas where we need to be strong. This process offers us a way to do that.

Our hope is that this manual might inspire change leadership development, an understanding of what it actually takes to create a change leadership team and some commitment on the part of everyone to embrace change leadership.

rEvolutionary Leadership Model Assessment Tool

The goals of this assessment are to help you to identify and then to further develop the current natural strengths of (1) yourself as a change leader, (2) the individual members of your leadership team and (3) the team itself and then to (4) choose some new strengths to develop wherever you individually and collectively decide you might need to build some additional capacities.

Start with an honest assessment of your current change leadership capacities. Please rate yourself (1-5, with 1 as low and 5 as high) in each of the following change leadership capacity areas.

Then please have the members of your leadership team rate (1) your current change leadership capacities, (2) their own individual current change leadership capacities, and (3) the current collective change leadership capacities of your team in the following areas:

Cognitive:

Develop a vision. How good are you at developing a clear vision for the future of your organization?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Communicate ideas clearly. How good are you at communicating your mission and a vision?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Seek systemic solutions. How good are you at solving systemic organizational problems?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Consider all options. How good are you at gathering many ideas and then developing action plans?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Plan for tomorrow. How good are you at preparing your organization for tomorrow's needs?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Integrate different ideas. How good are you at integrating many different ideas?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Form win/win partnerships. How good are you at finding ways to form win/win partnerships?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Use creative thinking. How good are you at creatively thinking about different challenges?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Change before urgency. How good are you at knowing when to make needed changes?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Organize your resources. How good are you at organizing your human and financial resources?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Emotional:

Know your limitations. How good are you at knowing and accepting your own limitations?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Respond to challenges. How good are you at effectively responding to serious organizational challenges?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Embrace emerging talent. How good are you at identifying and utilizing the emerging talents of others?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Share the spotlight. How good are you at promoting the talents of others within your organization?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Safe and secure. How good are you at managing to usually find ways to personally feel safe and secure?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Practice calming yourself. How good are you at calming yourself in very stressful situations?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Regulate your emotions. How good are you at regulating your own personal emotions?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Calm and well. How good are you at helping others to regulate their emotions and feel calm and well?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Listen to stories. How good are you at seeing things as others might see them?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Embrace alternative perspectives. How good are you at adjusting when you know you need to adjust?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Spiritual:

Find some balance. How good are you at balancing the many different aspects of your life?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Always respect yourself. How good are you at finding comfort in being who you are?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Follow your values. How good are you being guided in your decisions by a clear set of values?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Accept impenetrable barriers. How good are you at accepting the things you cannot change?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Meet your needs. How good are you at identifying and then meeting your own personal needs?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Consider equity issues. How good are you at identifying and meeting the opportunity needs of others?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Manage your thoughts. How good are you at managing your own patterns of thought?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Know yourself well. How good are you at listening to your "inner self" and then acting on that?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Praise others often. How good are you at showing appreciation for the gifts and strengths of others?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

10)Accept offered support. How good are you at accepting genuine support other persons?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Behavioral:

Consider your behaviors. How good are you at seeing how your actions may affect others?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Encourage constructive feedback. How good are you at encouraging others to give you feedback?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Follow good advice. How good are you at seeking and then following good advice?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Train then delegate. How good are you at training others and then clearly delegating to them?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Build strong teams. How good are you at developing and encouraging other leaders to work together?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Expect positive results. How good are you at getting others to achieve positive results?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Encourage mutual respect. How good are you at building a team that respects their differences?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Learn from mistakes. How good are you at learning from your own mistakes?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Allow some mistakes. How good are you at helping others to learn from their mistakes?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____

Embrace change leadership. How good are you at being seen as an effective change leader?

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____ (5) ____