# Change, Transition and the Practice of Adaptive Leadership

CompassPoint Nonprofit Services

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# COMMUNICATION AGREEMENTS

1. **Be fully present** and choose for yourself when and how to participate. This is always an invitation, never an invasion; an opportunity, not a demand.

2. **Try on new ideas and perspectives**. Open your mind to new ideas. Be open to change; change does not imply blame or criticism of the past.

3. **Okay to disagree**. Avoid attacking, discounting or judging the beliefs and views of yourself or others – verbally or non-verbally. Instead, welcome disagreements as an opportunity to expand your world. Ask questions to understand other people's perspectives.

4. **Speak from the "I."** Be self-focused. Speak your truth. Be willing to experience and express discomfort. Accept and expect non-closure.

5. **Step up participation**. Honor different beliefs and encourage empowerment by making a space for all voices, experiences and ideas to be heard and shared. Talking does not equal participation. Generous listening is a form of participating. If you speak a lot, try listening more. And it you tend to sit back and listen, consider speaking up more.

6. **Be aware of intent and impact**. It is possible with the best of intentions to have a negative impact. Be open to learning and seeing "hard realities with soft eyes." Turn from reactive judgment to compassionate inquiry.

7. **Confidentiality** is often defined as "what's said in the room stays in the room" and we agree not to discuss what happens here in a way that would identify any individual or organization. There is another dimension to confidentiality that includes "asking permission" to share or discuss any statement another person makes of a personal nature. It helps to remember that the story belongs to the teller, not the listener.

# Change, Transition and the Practice of Adaptive Leadership



*We delight in the beauty of the butterfly,  but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty*.   –Maya Angelou

# Change and Transition



There is an important difference between change and transition. *Change* is an external event. It's situational. It's the retirement of a founder or executive director, the closing of a long-term program, a merger or reorganization. *Transition* on the other hand, is the internal, psychological process people go through as they internalize and come to terms with the change.

According to research by Peter Senge (author and Director of the Center for Organizational Learning), over 70% of all organizational change efforts fail. Why? Because organizational attention, most often, is focused solely on the external event. What is often ignored or downplayed is how to lead people through transition. Getting people through transition is essential if the change is actually going to work.

*According to William Bridges, it isn't the changes that do you in. It's the transitions.*

# Reflecting on Change

As you work toward your organizational priorities, what are some of the <u>changes</u> that will occur in your organization? These might include things like different staffing structures, new approaches to fundraising, restructuring the board, reaching out to new community partners or working differently with existing partners.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

# PRIVILEGE AND OPPRESSION
## DEFINITIONS

**POWER:** Power can be defined as the ability to cause or influence an outcome. It is not the ability to control a situation, control is always limited.

**PREJUDICE:** A judgment or opinion that is formed on insufficient grounds before facts are known or in disregard of facts that contradict it. Prejudices are learned and can be unlearned.

**STEREOTYPE:** An exaggerated or distorted belief that attributes characteristics to members of a particular group.

**OPPRESSION:** The combination of prejudice and institutional power which creates systems that perpetuate discrimination against some groups (often called **"target groups")** and benefits other groups (often called **"dominant groups").**
Some examples of oppressive systems are **racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, classism, ageism, and anti-Semitism**. These systems privilege dominant groups and exert control over target groups by limiting their rights, freedom, and access to basic resources such as health care, education, employment, and housing.

**Four Levels of Oppression/"isms" and Change:**
**Personal**: Values, Beliefs, Feelings
**Interpersonal**: Actions, Behaviors, Language
**Institutional:** Rules, Policies, Procedures
**Cultural:** Beauty, Truth, Right

**PRIVILEGE:** Privilege operates on personal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels and gives advantages, favors, and benefits to members of dominant groups at the expense of members of target groups. In the United States, privilege is granted to people who have membership in one or more of these social identity groups:
White people (also, white-skinned* people); Able-bodied people; Heterosexuals; Males; Christians; Middle or owning class people; Middle-aged people; English-speaking people.

**INSTITUTIONAL POWER**: The ability or official authority to decide what is best for others. The ability to decide who will have access to resources. The capacity to exercise control over others.

**\*\*Definitions adapted from: © Leaven 2003 Doing Our Own Work: A Seminar for Anti-Racist White Women © Visions, Inc. and the MSU Extension Multicultural Awareness Workshop\*\***

# Privilege and Oppression (continued)

"We can define privilege as: **a set of unearned benefits given to people who fit into a specific social group.** Society grants privilege to people because of certain aspects of their identity. Aspects of a person's identity can include race, class, gender, sexual orientation, language, geographical location, ability, and religion, to name a few." - *EverydayFeminism*, Sian Ferguson

| Type of Oppression | Target Group | Non-Target Group |
|---|---|---|
| Racial | People of color | White people |
| Class | Poor; working class | Middle and Owner Class |
| Gender | Women | Men |
| Sexual orientation | Lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual | Heterosexual people |
| Ability | People with disabilities | People without disabilities |
| Religion | Non-Christian | Christian |
| Age | Children, Youth, and Elderly people | Adults |
| Educational Privilege | People without college degree | People with college degree |
| Immigrant status | Immigrant | U.S.-born |
| Language | Non-English | English |

*Chart adapted from USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work

"**Privilege is the other side of oppression.** It's often easier to notice oppression than privilege. It's definitely easier to notice the oppression you personally experience than the privileges you experience, since being mistreated is likely to leave a bigger impression on you than being treated fairly."

- *EverydayFeminism*, Sian Ferguson

**\*\*There are MANY more interlocking forms of oppression and systems of power which reinforce them. We recognize we have not listed examples of every form of privilege, system of power, and/or types of oppression\*\***

# The Three Phases of Transition



The New
Beginning

The
Neutral
Zone

Ending,
Losing,
Letting go
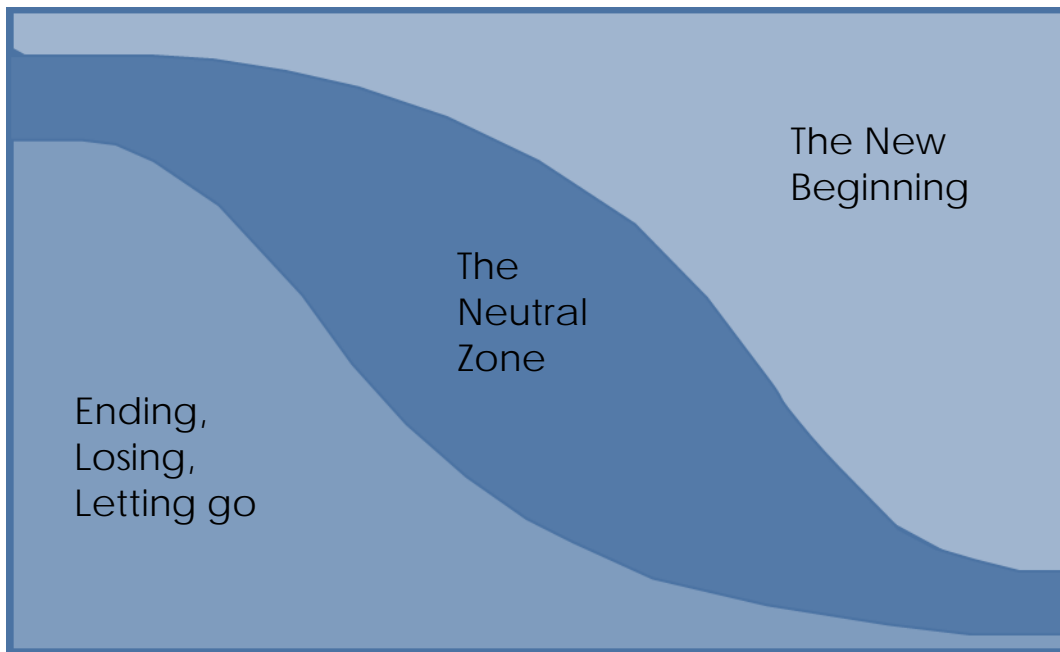
 Source: William Bridges, Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change,
(Da Capo Press, 2nd Edition 2003)

The first phase of Transition is called the "Ending."  It involves letting go of old ways and old identities. This is a time when people often are dealing with loss.

The "Neutral Zone" is the in-between time when the old is gone but the new isn't fully operational.  It is when the old way of doing things is gone, but the new way doesn't feel comfortable yet.  It is the psychological "no-person's land" between the old reality and the new one.

The "New Beginning" is when people develop their new identify, experience new energy, and discover a new sense of purpose that makes the change begin to work.

*Transition starts with an ending and finishes with a beginning.*

# Reflecting on Transition

Thinking about one of the changes you listed on page 3, reflect on the transition that it requires of you and others in your system. Remember that transition is experiential.
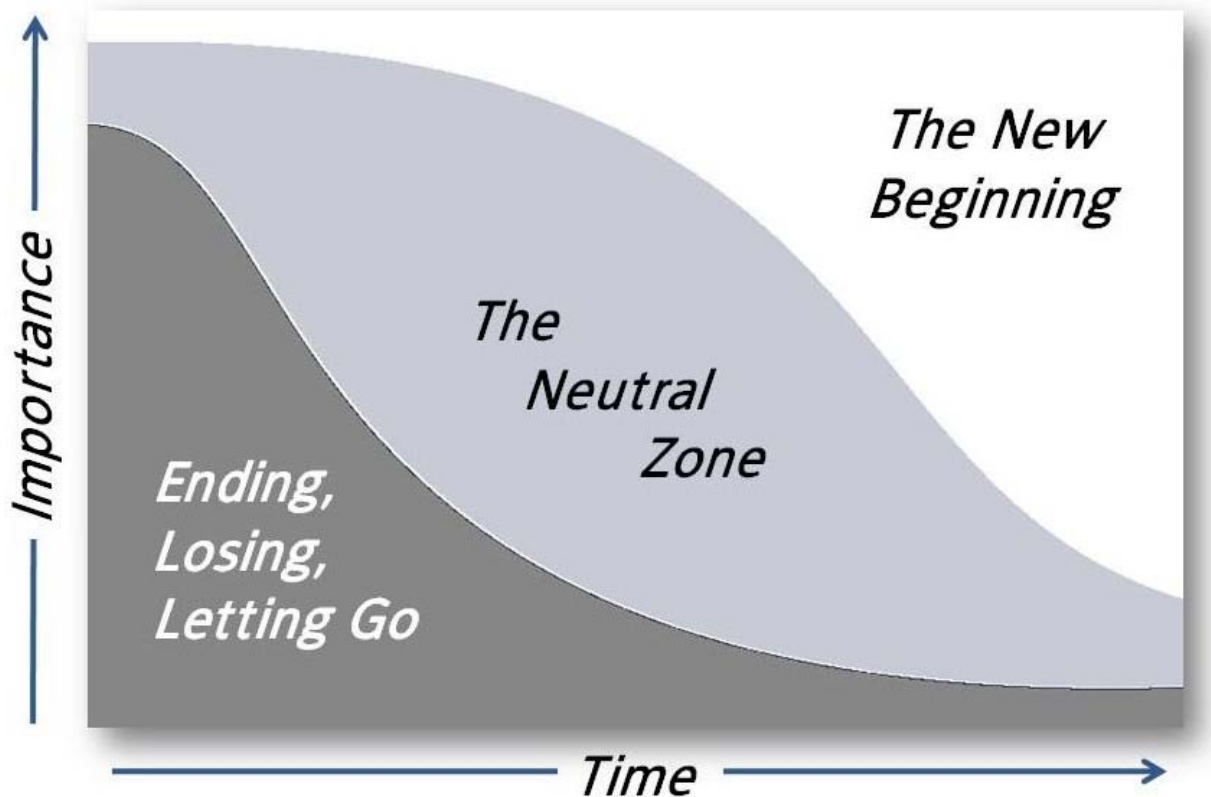
Common emotions in each phase include:

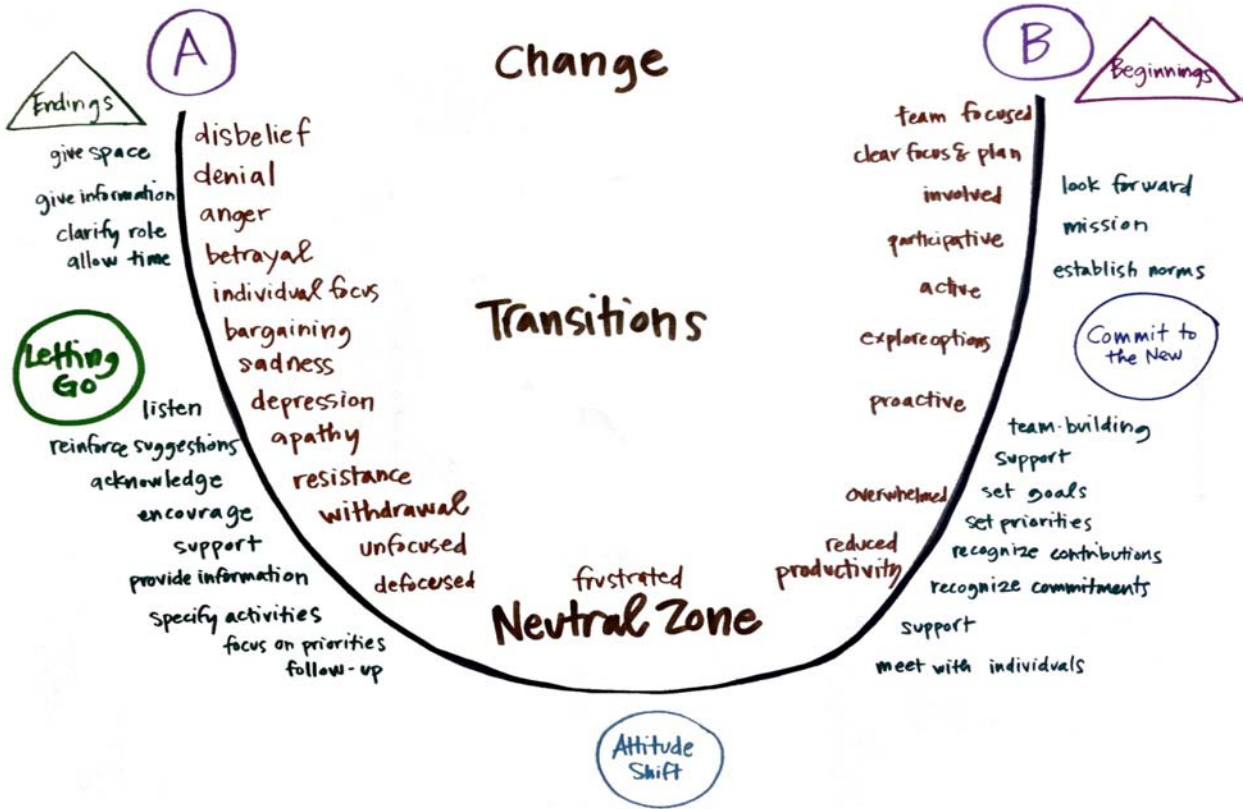| Endings | Neutral Zones | Beginnings |
|---|---|---|
| Denial, Shock, Anger, Frustration, Stress | Ambivalence, Skepticism, Acceptance | Impatience, Hope, Enthusiasm |

Knowing that people often flow back and forth between these stages during times of transition, where do you place yourself today? Place an **X** it on the image below.

Where do you think other people who are affected by the change are? Place an **O** on the image below for where you think they are.

Share your thinking with your team.

# Another Look at the Three Phases of Transition



Change

Transitions

Neutral Zone

**A** — Endings

disbelief
denial
anger
betrayal
individual focus
bargaining
sadness
depression
apathy
resistance
withdrawal
unfocused
defocused
frustrated

give space
give information
clarify role
allow time

Letting Go

listen
reinforce suggestions
acknowledge
encourage
support
provide information
specify activities
focus on priorities
follow-up

**B** — Beginnings

team focused
clear focus & plan
involved
participative
active
explore options
proactive

overwhelmed
reduced productivity

look forward
mission
establish norms

Commit to the New

team-building
support
set goals
set priorities
recognize contributions
recognize commitments
support
meet with individuals

Attitude Shift

Source: Beckie Masaki, developed for the Strong Field Project Leadership Development Program

Given how people are currently experiencing the change (inside the U), what are some of the leadership and management qualities do you need to draw upon (outside the U) to lead the system through the change?

# Managing Endings: A Checklist

(Excerpted from <u>Managing Transitions</u>, by William Bridges (Da Capo Press, 2nd Edition 2003)

| | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|---|---|---|
| Have I studied the change carefully and identified who is likely to lose what – include what I myself am likely to lose? | | |
| Do I understand the subjective realities of these losses to the people who experience them, even when they seem to me to be overreacting? | | |
| Have I acknowledged these losses with sympathy? | | |
| Have I permitted people to grieve and protected them from well-meant attempts to stop them from expressing their anger or sadness? | | |
| Have I publicly expressed my own sense of loss, if I feel any? | | |
| Am I giving people accurate information and doing it again and again? | | |
| Have I defined clearly what is over and what isn't? | | |
| Have I found ways to "mark the ending"? | | |
| Am I being careful not to denigrate the past but, when possible, finding ways to honor it? | | |
| Have I made a plan for giving people a piece of the past to take with them? | | |
| Have I made it clear how the ending we are making is necessary to protect the continuity of the organization or conditions on which the organization depends? | | |
| Is the ending we are making big enough to get the job done in one step? | | |

# Managing the Neutral Zone: A Checklist

(Excerpted from Managing Transitions, by William Bridges (Da Capo Press, 2nd Edition 2003)

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Have I done my best to normalize the neutral zone by explaining it as an uncomfortable time that (with careful attention) can be turned to everyone's advantage? | | |
| Have I redefined the neutral zone by choosing a new and more affirmative metaphor with which to describe it? | | |
| Have I reinforced the metaphor with training programs, policy changes, and financial rewards for people to keep doing their jobs during the neutral zone? | | |
| Am I protecting people adequately from inessential further changes? | | |
| If I can't protect them, am I clustering those changes meaningfully? | | |
| Have I created the temporary policies and procedures that we need to get us through the neutral zone? | | |
| Have I created the temporary roles, reporting relationships, and organizational groupings that we need to get us through the neutral zone? | | |
| Have I set short-range goals and checkpoints? | | |
| Have I found ways to keep people feeling that they still belong to the organization and are valued by our part of it?  And have I taken care that perks and other forms of "privilege" are not undermining the solidarity of the group? | | |
| Have I set up on or more Transition Monitoring Teams to keep realistic feedback flowing upward during the time in the neutral zone? | | |
| Have I seen to it that people build their skills in creative thinking and innovation? | | |
| Have I encouraged experimentation and seen to it that people are not punished for failing in intelligent efforts that do not pan out? | | |

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Have I worked to transform the losses of our organization into opportunities to try doing things a new way? | | |
| Have I set an example by brainstorming many answers to old problems – the ones that people say we just have to live with?  Am I encouraging others to do the same? | | |
| Am I regularly checking to see that I am not pushing for certainty and closure when it would be more conducive to creativity to live a little longer with uncertainty and questions? | | |

# Managing the New Beginning: A Checklist

(Excerpted from Managing Transitions, by William Bridges (Da Capo Press, 2nd Edition 2003)

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Am I distinguishing in my own mind, and in my expectations of others, between the start, which can happen on a planned schedule, and the beginning, which will not? | | |
| Do I accept the fact that people are going to be ambivalent toward the beginning I am trying to bring about? | | |
| Have I taken care of the ending(s) and the neutral zone, or am I trying to make a new beginning happen before it possibly can? | | |
| Have I clarified and communicated the *purpose* of (the idea behind) the change? | | |
| Have I drawn an effective *picture* of the change's outcome and found ways to communicate it effectively? | | |
| Have I created a *plan* for bringing people through the three phases of transition – and distinguished it in my own mind from the change management plan? | | |
| Have I helped people to discover as soon as possible the *part* that they will play in the outcome of these changes, and how that outcome will affect the part they currently play within the organization? | | |
| Have I ensured that everyone has a part to play in the transition management process and that they understand their part? | | |
| Have I checked to see that policies, procedures, and priorities are consistent with the new beginning I am trying to make so that the inconsistencies aren't sending a mixed message? | | |
| Am I watching my own actions carefully to be sure that I am effectively modeling the attitudes and behaviors that I am asking others to develop? | | |
| Have I found ways, financial and nonfinancial, to reward people for becoming the new people I am calling upon them to become? | | |
| Have I built into my plans some occasions for quick success to help people rebuild their self-confidence and to build the image of the transition as successful? | | |

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Have I found ways to celebrate the new beginning and the conclusion time of the transition? | | |
| Have I found ways to symbolize the new identity – organizational and personal – that is emerging from this period of transition? | | |
| Have I given people a piece of the transition to keep as a reminder of the difficult and rewarding journey we all took together? | | |

# Margin to Center

**The Center:**
Individuals and groups that receive and benefit the most from structural privilege.
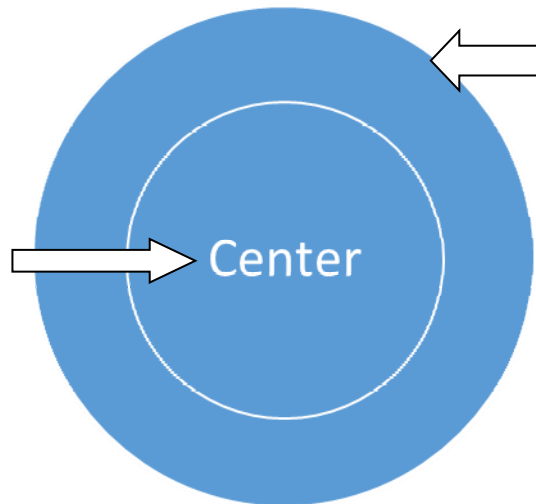
**The Margin**:
Individuals and groups that experience the most structural oppression and marginalization.

Center

# An Organization's Center

**The Center:**

Where the power of the institution is (board of directors, managers, etc.); where decisions are made, budgets are decided, people are hired and fired, programs are approved, boundaries are set, etc.; where structures of accountability are designed and implemented.
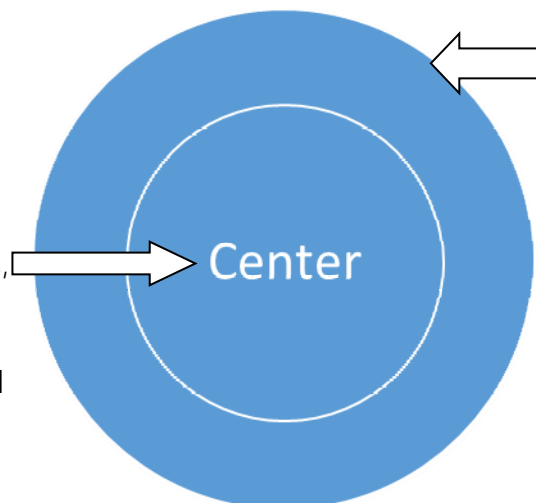
**The Margin**:
Staff, volunteers, and clients/community who have limited or no authority on the structures and policies of the institution.

Center

# Margin to Center Reflection
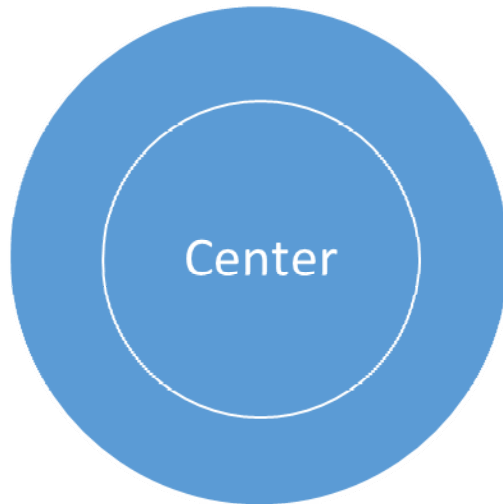


1) Take a moment to reflect on key staff (and Board*) of your organization - where they are located in this circle and why.

2) First place yourself on the circle using a dot.

3) Next place at least two other dots representing key staff (and Board members) that are in the center of your organization.

4) Now place at least two other dots representing key staff (and Board members) that are at the margins of your organization.

5) Bonus: Think of an example of something that people in the center and people at the margins view differently. (For example, professional development; compensation; Board meetings.)

6) Debrief with your partner.

*If you don't know your organization's Board members well enough to place them on the circle, then just use staff examples for this exercise.*

# Adaptive Leadership

*"The most common cause of failure in leadership is produced by treating adaptive challenges as if they were technical problems."*

<div align="right">

*The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*

</div>

**Technical Problems**

Technical problems tend to be those that we have encountered before and have experience, resources and understanding to successfully solve.

- May be very complex and critically important
- Solutions come from authority/experts
- Solutions grounded in current structures, procedures, and ways of doing things (cultural norms)

*Example:*
Every office manager this social justice nonprofit law firm has hired recently has left after twelve months. Consequently, the organization will run its third office manager hiring process in the last three years.

Responses:
- Rewrite the Job Description
- Revamp the hiring process
- Revisit our recruitment and outreach strategy
- Send the office manager's supervisor to a CompassPoint Class
- Examine our HR support systems

**Adaptive Challenges**

Adaptive challenges are those that we usually have not encountered before and a clear solution is not apparent.

- Solutions require changes in people's priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties
- Expertise of people in authority not good enough
- Others must be mobilized in problem solving
- Evolutionary and involves individual and organizational loss
- Some trial and error
- Generative thinking

**Distinguishing Between the Two:**

| Kind of challenge | Problem Definition | Solution | Locus of Work | Type of Work |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Technical** | Clear | Clear | Authority | Optimize Execution |
| **Technical and adaptive** | Clear | Requires learning | Authority and stakeholders | Both "fixes" and experimentation |
| **Adaptive** | Requires learning | Requires learning | Stakeholders | Experiments and Smart Risks |

*Let's recast the example from above; notice the changes:*

*Example:*
Every office manager this social justice nonprofit law firm has hired recently has left after twelve months. Consequently, the organization will run its third office manager hiring process in the last three years.

Analysis:
- Administrative and support staff are often treated as "second class citizens" by the attorneys.
- Board, Senior Leadership Team, and attorneys form an almost all white group; administrative/support staff are mostly women of color.
- Organization underpays and undervalues those without professional degrees, licenses, or other certifications.

In this new example, the organization still has technical problems: they need to review their HR systems and rethink the position description—but there is a lot more to it than that. They also have race, gender, class, power, and privilege dynamics that are tremendous barriers and will derail their plans if not addressed. A few of the adaptive challenges are:

- Systems and practices that perpetuate oppression
- A culture of privilege
- Organization does not fully resource their values.

# Adaptive challenges tend to need a mix of technical fixes and adaptive leadership.

## 10 Adaptive Flags

1.  **No Known Solution** – There is a gap between the current reality and aspiration that you don't have the skills or knowledge to close.

2.  **People Would Rather Avoid the Issue** – Balancing two ideas is not possible; therefore, working on the challenge creates tension and conflict.

3.  **Reason and Logic Alone Won't Get You There** – There are competing values at play or there is a gap between what people say and what they do. Is there an issue that you/your team/your organization continually talks about but can't solve?

4.  **Recurring Problem** – Challenge reappears after the fix is applied. Have you tried to fix a problem the same way multiple times but it keeps coming back?

5.  **Emotional Response** – Working on this challenge makes people feel uncomfortable; they experience an emotional response such as a feeling in their gut or a knot in a muscle. When does an emotional response shut down an issue?

6.  **Failure to Resolve Competing Priorities** – You are being asked to do more with less instead of making tough trade-offs.

7.  **Moving Forward Feels Risky** – Making progress on this challenge means putting your reputation, relationship, and job at risk.

8.  **Casualties** – In order to move forward, some people may be left behind.

9.  **People Must Work Across Boundaries** – No one person or group can fix the problem alone.

10. **Progress is not Linear** – There is no direct path to get to a better outcome; trial and error is necessary.


Source: +Acumen's *Adaptive Leadership: Mobilizing for Change* on-line course

# Adaptive Challenge Case Study #1

### Humans for Housing

Humans For Housing (HFH) is a nonprofit organization located in New York City that has existed for almost 30 years. Its mission is to build affordable rental housing for low income households. It is a $10 million organization and has 50 employees. While HFH builds most of its homes in the Bronx and Queens (cheaper real estate), the majority of its revenue comes from donors who live and/or work in Manhattan. Since the vast majority of the housing units are built in the Bronx and Queens, and are created for families with low incomes, almost every single family moving into these houses have people of color (POC) heads of household. And yet, of HFH's twenty person Board of Directors, 85% (17 out of 20) are white, and most of those seventeen are white males. Within the six person Management Team on staff, there is only one POC. Most of the program staff are POCs who spend the majority of their time with the housing residents in the Bronx and Queens; the fundraising staff is comprised almost entirely of white women who spend the majority their time doing major donor fundraising in Manhattan.

In recent months, there has been an increase in tensions among HFH staff. Morale seems to be a little lower than normal; turnover seems to be a little higher than normal. Themes from exit interviews with departing staff have revealed strained relationships with supervisors and friction between program and fundraising staff as the top reasons why people are leaving. Moreover, staff at all levels have expressed frustration that the Board, while incredibly effective at raising the dollars needed to build housing units, seem "disconnected" with the mission.

The management team has reviewed the data from the exit interviews and met several times to discuss next steps. They care deeply about staff morale and while they understand that there are natural ebbs and flows to overall morale, they also want to be proactive and address staff needs.

# Adaptive Challenge Case Study #2

## Peer to Peer Recovery Services (PPRS)

Peer to Peer Recovery Services (PPRS) is a nonprofit organization located in San Francisco that just celebrated its 40th anniversary. Their mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals, families, and the community affected by alcohol and drug abuse and mental health issues by providing compassionate, effective prevention, treatment and recovery services.

It is a $3 million organization and has 25 employees. PPRS was founded *by* people in recovery *for* people in recovery. A number of the original founders have stayed with the organization and two are on the management team along with 2 other managers who have been with the organization for about 5 years. Everyone on the management team is in recovery. The program staff, counselors and other service providers are a mix of people in recovery and not in recovery.

As PPRS has grown, it has been successful in getting government contracts. With the compliance requirements that come with contracts, the organization needed to develop more sophisticated data management and client tracking systems. It also needed to hire more staff with experience in mental health and drug and alcohol treatment programs. Most of the newer staff have certifications and degrees in the field, are *not* in recovery themselves and are much younger than the founders and management team. They are mostly women and the management team is mostly men.

Recently, PPRS received notification from the county that to renew the contract <u>all</u> the counselors will need to be certified. Most of the older peer counselors are not certified and will need to pass a certification exam to keep their jobs. They are angry and fearful that they might not pass and will be forced to leave. They resent the younger staff who seemingly undervalue the decades of experience that they bring. Younger staff believe that the quality of the services is at risk if the peer counselors are not certified as they are.

There has been a number of staff arguments: The founders and longer-tenured staff feel that the organization is drifting from its mission of peers helping peers and that the younger staff do not understand recovery like they do. The younger staff are frustrated and think that the older staff are stuck in their ways and that the programs have not kept pace with changes in the field. Both groups have very different views of what's best for the clients.

# Adaptive Leadership + Margin to Center

Thinking about the change you have been discussing as a team, what technical aspects need to be attended to? What is/are the actual adaptive challenges?

| Technical Fixes |
| --- |
| |

| Adaptive Challenges |
| --- |
| |

| From Center: What do you need to decenter your perspective? | From Margin: What do you need to move your Adaptive Challenge to the center? |
| --- | --- |
| | |

# Assessing the Change

Thinking about the change from your organization that has been in your mind all day, do you think it is a technical problem, or an adaptive challenge?  What technical aspects need to be attended to? What adaptive flags do you see?

| Technical Fixes |
| --- |
| |

| Adaptive Flags |
| --- |
| |

| Naming the Challenge |
| --- |
| |

# The Wheel of Change
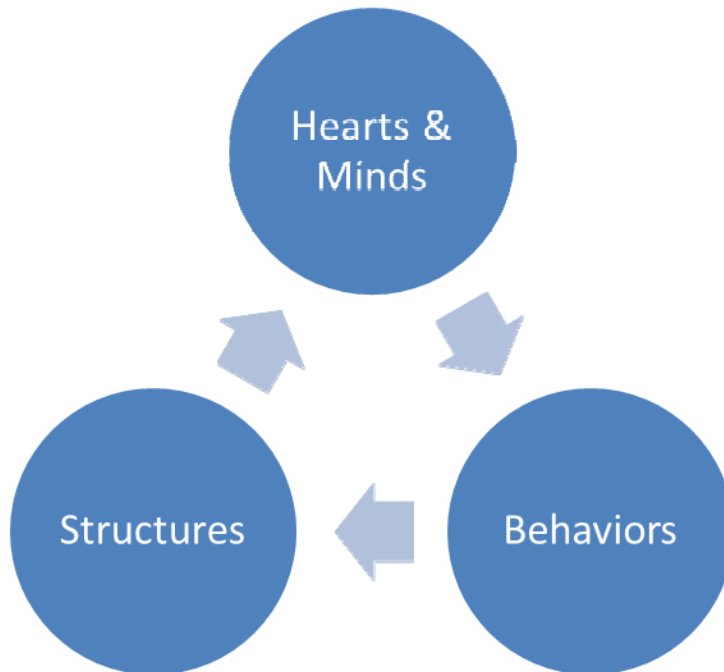


Above all, **transformation is systemic change— a conscious attempt to address all the key factors that make a human being, an organization, or a society what it is.** The Wheel of Change is a key transformational model that helps us to identify and address the main elements of any human system.

The Wheel of Change asserts that to create true change, transformation, we must work with three domains of human beings and their systems:

- **Hearts & Minds**
- **Behavior**
- **Structures**

HEARTS & MINDS:
Hearts & Minds refers to all that goes on inside us individually and collectively: the things we feel, our beliefs, our thoughts, the stories we tell ourselves about how things are, the philosophies and ideas that shape our understanding of reality, what we want (our dreams and aspirations), and what we believe to be possible or impossible. If we want to make change, we must change the way we think and feel.

BEHAVIOR:
The second domain is Behavior. Based on what's going on in our hearts and minds, we make choices to act—or not act—in certain ways.

For example, when we feel inspired, we will likely act more boldly than when we feel discouraged. If staff in an organization feel trusting of one another, they will deal more skillfully with critical issues than in organizations where there is low trust. If we want to make change, it is not enough to only change the way we think and feel. The inner shifting of Hearts & Minds must be translated into real changes in our habits, the conversations we have or choose not to have, and the norms and agreements by which groups operate.

STRUCTURES:
Lastly, we turn to the domain of Structures. This includes all of the things in our external environment. American culture has traditionally placed great emphasis on the individual and the individual's capacity to make things happen—the self-made man, the rags-to-riches stories and the notion of pulling yourself up by your bootstraps, the emphasis on individualized self-help, etc.

This frame of individualism can blind us to the enormous impact of structures and systems on our lives. The external aspects of our lives often frustrate or overwhelm our best intentions to change.

Organizational structures and systems are strong and entrenched; when left unaddressed, they will defeat the good will and efforts to make change by the people who work there.

At a societal level, there are interlocking structures that reflect and reinforce power, and challenge our ability to effect change. Our work to create better housing becomes limited by employment. The struggle to get better jobs for people is undermined by unequal access to quality education. Attempts to better educate our children are impacted by everything from poor nutrition to an eroding tax base to unenlightened educational policies. And efforts to successfully address all of these structures run headlong into the continuing and omnipresent existence of racism.

These three domains continually reinforce each other. While this self-reinforcing cycle tends to keep individuals, organizations and societies resistant to change, fortunately the transformative approach can help us to initiate a self-reinforcing Wheel of Change.

## Hearts & Minds

What is currently in place or will be needed to ensure that these factors are addressed?

Purpose/Vision
- People can connect the change to their deeper purpose for doing this work.
- People share a clear, compelling, and vivid picture of what success will look like.
- People are committed and aligned with the change process.

Beliefs
- People believe that they have some power to influence the change process.
- Potentially-limiting beliefs and assumptions are named and addressed.
- Conditions are created for creative thinking, breakthroughs, and new paradigms to empower the change.

Emotions
- Feelings such as cynicism, resistance to change, anxiety, and anger, which might impede or derail the change, are skillfully surfaced and addressed.
- Positive emotions are inspired to help fuel the change process.
- There is ongoing development of individual and collective emotional intelligence.

Belonging
- There is a collective sense of ownership over the change process throughout all levels of the organization, beginning with top leadership.
- The trust and partnerships necessary for change are cultivated within and across organizational silos.
- Safe spaces are created to name and successfully address significant barriers to trust and belonging – including issues around social identity, inclusion, power, and privilege.

## Behavior

What is currently in place or will be needed to ensure that these factors are addressed?

Norms
- Clear norms/team agreements, tied to the success of the change, are established.
- There is shared commitment and ownership of the norms (especially among top leaders).
- Everyone at all levels of the organization understands how they need to act (and not act) to help implement the change.

Communication
- Top leaders model authenticity and transparency, especially regarding the change process.
- There is an excellent communication plan for the change process that keeps people well-informed and well-engaged.
- There is a flow of honest, timely feedback throughout the organization to ensure the learning critical to the success of the change.

Habits
- There is conscious, sustained practice of new habits (consistent with the new norms).
- There is adequate time for the reflection and evaluation needed for learning.
- There is an environment of acceptance for "mistakes" that is integral to learning.

Skills
- There is a thorough assessment of what skills will be needed to develop or acquire in order to implement the change.
- There is sufficient training in the critical skills needed for successful implementation of the change, including technical skills as well as personal and interpersonal mastery.
- Adequate support is available for those playing key roles in the change process (mentoring, professional coaching, peer coaching, etc.)

# Systems

What is currently in place or will be needed to ensure that these factors are addressed?

Strategies
- There is a well thought-out plan for the successful launch and implementation of the change process.
- Plans include performance metrics to support successful implementation of the change plan.
- Implications of the proposed changes for existing organizational strategies have been thoroughly explored and addressed.

Structures
- Structures that best support implementation of the changes are in place or created as part of the change process.
- Existing organizational structures are assessed for their alignment with the proposed changes.
- Potential implications of the changes for existing organizational structures have been thoroughly explored and addressed.
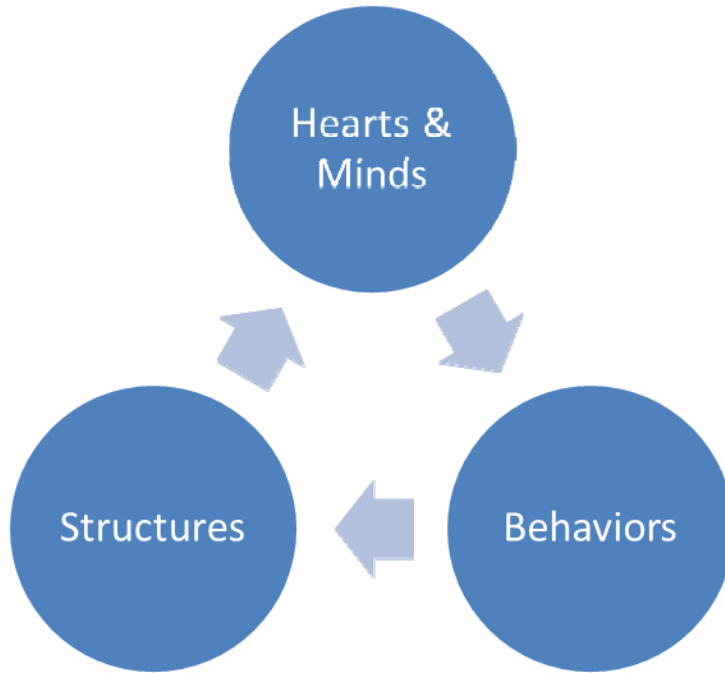
Processes
- Processes that best support implementation of the changes are in place or created as part of the change process.
- Existing organizational processes are assessed for their alignment with the proposed changes.
- Potential implications of the changes for existing organizational processes have been thoroughly explored.
- Existing technology has been assessed to ensure maximum support of the proposed changes.
- New forms of technology have been explored to empower the change and offer possibilities of breakthroughs.
- The potential role of technology in the transformation is fully integrated into the change process.

ADAPTED FROM *WHEEL OF CHANGE PLANNING TEMPLATE*
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# Wheel of Change and You



## Hearts & Minds

| What is changing? | What is <u>not</u> changing? |
|---|---|
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

## Behaviors

| What is changing? | What is <u>not</u> changing? |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

## Structures

| What is changing? | What is <u>not</u> changing? |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

# Wheel of Change + Adaptive Challenge

With your adaptive challenge and change initiative, use the wheel of change to help you think about next steps:

## Hearts & Minds

| What is changing? | What is <u>not</u> changing? |
|---|---|
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

## Behaviors

| What is changing? | What is <u>not</u> changing? |
|---|---|
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

## Structures

| What is changing? | What is <u>not</u> changing? |
|---|---|
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

## Archetypes of typical adaptive challenges:

Diagnosing adaptive challenges can be very difficult. Here are some symptoms to look for:

- people complain when describing what's going on
- experts and authorities can't solve the problem
- failures show up more frequently
- traditional problem solving isn't working
- problem keeps showing up in one way or another

Understanding these archetypes will help you distinguish complex, primarily technical problems from complex, primarily adaptive challenges.

### Archetype 1: Gap Between Espoused Values and Behavior

There is a disconnect between the values we espouse and the practices and policies of the organization. This is where we all contribute to perpetuating the organizational myth and folklore. It is helpful to understand what parts of the organizational system are served by keeping the gap in place.

*Note that this isn't about blame – this is about understanding who will lose what so that you can lead the team to the next question: what will be gained by closing the gap?*

Examples:
- Advocate for collaboration, but reward individual performance
- Advocate for professional development, but refuse to delegate authority or decision making
- Espouse candor, but avoid conflict
- Encourage creativity, but eschew risk taking

### Archetype 2: Competing Commitments

Competing commitments tend to equal difficult choices.

Examples:
- Seek staff with advanced degrees or lots of experience, while setting compensation well below the market
- Receive cuts in funding, while maintaining the same level of service (doing more with less)
- Maintaining commitment to core mission, while seeking funding for things outside our area of expertise

**Archetype 3: Speaking the Unspeakable**

Adaptive challenges need to be informed by a full range of perspectives, including "bad" ideas, controversial ideas, and radical ideas. Taking a systems perspective so that every voice is a legitimate perspective that brings value to the conversation, rather than an individual's annoying opinion, shifts the group's perspective about hearing what is being offered. Look for the 2% truth in every perspective, especially the ones that you find yourself shutting off or attacking in some way.

Examples:
- Courtesy trumps candor
- Healthy conflict almost never happens
- Most conflict is "unhealthy" – i.e., utilizes blame, defensiveness, stonewalling, and contempt
- Dissenting views are not welcome
- People hold positions, not perspectives

**Archetype 4: Work Avoidance**

Organizational systems can often collude around this – and be unaware that it is happening until it is noted. Senior teams must be "brutally honest" with each other when looking at the ways adaptive challenges are being avoided organizationally.

Examples:
- Divert attention
  - Focus only on the technical parts of the challenge
  - Define the problem by what you can fix (tailor's view)
  - Deny the problem
  - Create a proxy fight
  - Bring in a sacred cow
- Displace responsibility
  - Marginalize the messenger
  - Externalize the enemy
  - Delegate the work to someone with no authority

Adaptive leadership requires change, innovation, and creativity. That cannot happen in the comfort zone where there is no incentive to change. People need to be put into "a productive state of disequilibrium."

**Adaptive Culture Characteristics:**

- Willingness to make changes in culturally ingrained behaviors
- Emphasis on identifying problems before they occur and rapidly implementing workable solutions
- Focus on innovation
- Shared feelings of confidence about managing problems and opportunities
- Emphasis on trust
- Willingness to take risks
- Spirit of enthusiasm
- Candor *and* consistency in word and action
- Internal flexibility in response to external demands
- Long-term focus

**Strategies for leaders:**

Adaptive leaders must be fearless in the face of loss – that's not the same as being indifferent or untouched by it. In fact, it's the opposite: it's about allowing yourself to be touched by it in order to model that one can survive the discomfort, pain, and grief of loss.

Name the kinds of losses at stake:
- Job
- Wealth
- Status
- Relevance
- Community
- Loyalty
- Identity
- Competence

*"Of all that we care about, what elements are essential and must be preserved into the future, or will we lose precious values, core competencies, and who we are?"*

- Focus attention on conservation, organizational DNA that must be preserved.
- Distinguish the essential from the expendable
- Renegotiate loyalties and confront legacy practices

Adaptive leaders must champion the assets of an organization that deserve to be carried forward.  This is not the same as preserving sacred cows. It is about being intentional.

- Monitor disequilibrium - keep your hand on the thermostat
- Create a culture of courageous conversations
- Acknowledge interdependencies of challenges
- Distribute leadership responsibility
- Protect troublemakers

## Six key characteristics:

1. **Name the Elephants in the Room**
   - Naming the elephants in the room becomes the norm, not the exception.
   - Model the behavior and protect dissenting voices.

2. **Share Responsibility for the Organization's Future**
   - Nurture shared responsibility. Examples:
   - Develop work plans, goals and metrics to evaluate management team, at least in part, on the performance of the entire organization. If you give bonuses, include organizational performance in the metrics.
   - Look for opportunities to work across functional areas.
   - Share insights, ideas, and lessons across teams.
   - Allow staff to "job shadow" beyond their functional areas.
   - Talk about organizational accountability at meetings.

3. **Expect Independent Judgment**
   - Push authority and decision making as far down into the organization as possible.
   - Ask whether the task or decision you are about to take on could be handled by someone else, and if so, delegate it. Delegate not just tasks, but authority and decision making.
   - Make yourself dispensable.
   - Develop an organizational tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty by being transparent about not having all the answers.

4. **Develop Leadership Capacity**
   - Invest in professional development.
   - Discard authoritarian supervision for "coaching" styles of supervision
   - When advancing people internally, hire from other functional areas.
   - Establish a norm of developing succession plans.
   - Encourage staff to stretch.
   - How is the organization's attitude toward failure getting in the way of people stretching their domains?

## 5. Institutionalize Reflection and Continuous Learning
- Ask difficult, reflective questions as a matter of course:
  - How will we know we're successful?
  - How are we measuring our effectiveness?
  - What are our sacred cows?
  - What's our worst case scenario and how will we deal with it?
  - How do we see ourselves? How do we want to be seen? How are others seeing us?
  - How do we go from good to great?
- Honor risk taking and experimentation
  - Celebrate a spectacular failure
  - Challenge each other to fail intentionally at something
  - Fail at the top first, then invite others to take some small risks
  - Include risk-taking as one of the performance metrics on evaluations
  - Reward risk taking
  - Test several strategies at the same time

## 6. Engage in Systems Thinking
- Seek to understand the interrelatedness of issues as part of an overall system
- When problems and challenges surface, understand how they relate to the whole environment. Look for other places where similar problems and challenges are showing up.

# Additional Resources

*On Adaptive Leadership*

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