

Why Do We Resist Change?

Distinguishing Between Technical and Adaptive Change

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The Summit for Courageous Conversation
September 30, 2008



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Systemic Equity Leadership

Systemic equity leadership—a departure from traditional views of educational leadership—insists on the importance of understanding systems and developing leadership skills to disrupt systems that produce inequitable results.

Backdrop

- What are our roles in disrupting patterns of racial disparity?
- What changes are we willing to undergo to improve student performance?

Let's Talk About Change

Think of a time when someone resisted a change you tried to make in your system:

- What did the change entail?
- Who resisted the change and why?
- How did you feel about the resistance?
- What did you do, if anything, to overcome the resistance?



Why Do People Resist Change?

- People by and large do not resist change—they resist:
 - Loss
 - Incompetence
 - Disloyalty



The Process of Becoming Different Involves Loss

Identity

- Values
- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Reputation
- Competence

Comfort

- Habits
- Order
- Expectations
- Certainty/Reliability
- Security

Time

Job

Resources

Life

The Loss of Original Identity

Challenging and re-defining

- Who I am, what I believe
- What makes my life or my work meaningful
- What I know how to do

engenders a sense of **incompetence** about new processes, content, and behavior

- Examples?

The Process of Becoming Different Can Involve Disloyalty

The notion of the loss of one's identity and becoming uncomfortable may feel like abandonment of and **Disloyalty** to:

- People
- Concepts and Ideas
- Practices

- Examples?

Technical and Adaptive Problems

- Technical problems can be solved in agreed upon ways with current know how.
- Adaptive problems require stakeholders to change their values, beliefs, and behaviors.
- A common leadership mistake is to treat adaptive problems as if they were technical.

Distinguishing Technical and Adaptive Problems

<u>Type</u>	<u>Problem Identification</u>	<u>Solutions</u>	<u>Who's Responsible for the Work</u>
Technical	Clear	Clear	Authority
Technical and Adaptive	Clear	Requires Learning	Authority and Stakeholder
Adaptive	Requires Learning	Requires Learning	Stakeholder > Authority

Adapted from Cambridge Learning Associates

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Characteristics of Adaptive Change

- Change is necessitated by the difference between what exists and what is envisioned.
- Minimizing that difference requires learning.
- The learning is difficult as it requires determining what is essential and what is expendable.

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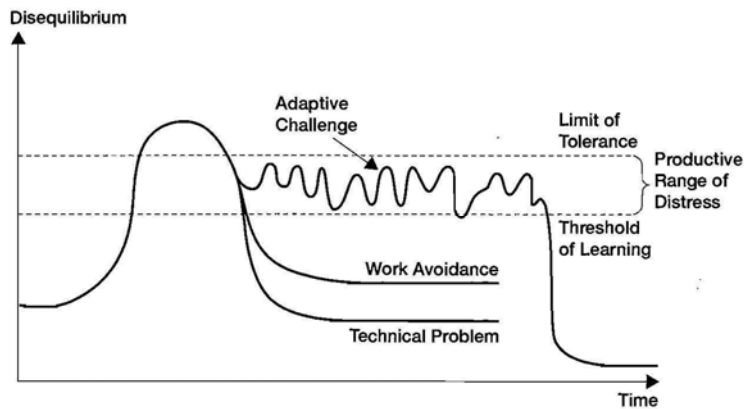
Characteristics of Adaptive Change

- Discarding the expendable involves acquiring new competence and re-negotiating loyalty.

Characteristics of Adaptive Change

- Those with the problem are the problem—and they are the solution.
- Adaptive change requires a longer time frame than technical change.
- Adaptive change is experimental.
- Adaptive change creates disequilibrium and precipitates avoidance.

Technical Problem or Adaptive Challenge?



Source: Ronald A. Heifetz and Donald C. Laurie, "Mobilizing Adaptive Work: Beyond Visionary Leadership," in Jay A. Conger, Gretchen M. Spreitzer, and Edward E. Lawler III, eds., *The Leader's Change Handbook: An Essential Guide to Setting Direction and Taking Action* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998).

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- Think of a leadership challenge you are facing related to race and education.

Within this challenge, which problems are technical and which are adaptive?

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Work Avoidance

- Attack
- Scapegoat
- Divert Attention
- Externalize the Enemy
- Marginalization
- Seduction
- Collusion
- Kill the Messenger

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Exercising Leadership

- Re-frame the issues
- Give back the work
- Orchestrate the conflict
- Use what's in the room
- Think politically

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West Wind's Belief Statements

- The equity agenda in our system of K-12 public education is urgent and progress is not linear.
- Inequities in our system of K-12 public education are intricately tied to issues of power.
- Systems are perfectly designed to get the results they are getting.

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West Wind's Belief Statements

- Each of us perpetuates systemic inequities in education.
- Leadership is a subversive act to transform systems.

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Five Leadership Actions

- Be diligent in continuously examining self.
- Observe and Analyze Before Acting on Your Interpretations.
 - Employ the lens of Critical Race Theory.
 - Think systemically.
 - Engage multiple perspectives.
 - Suspend disbelief.

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Five Leadership Actions

- Imagine equitable systems.
- Intervene:
 - Reframe the issues.
 - Give the work back.
 - Orchestrate conflict.
 - Use what's in the room.
 - Think politically.
- Persist in the work; protect progress.

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Contact Us!

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