Article

Why Leading Transformation Successfully Requires a Shift of Leadership Mindset

(Task I.D.2)

This article explains why transforming leadership mindset is a critical requirement of all successful transformational change efforts.

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Leadership mindset and style set the overall tone for organizational culture and performance, including how change efforts are run. Command and control, the most common leadership style, does not work for transformational change, yet most leaders and organizations rely exclusively on it. In this article, we will introduce a new leadership style—co-creating—and demonstrate why it is paramount for transformational success.

A co-creative change leadership style often catalyzes these conditions for successful transformation:

- *Organizational alignment with local control of local decisions*
- *Massive information dissemination in all directions os the entire organization can participate intelligently*
- *Easy integration of chang eplans across hierarchical and functional boundaries*
- *Common and aligned change goals throughout the organization*
- *Constant learning and course correcting and change plans*
- *Credible leaders people trust as they march into the unknown*

There are three prevalent types of change occurring in organizations today. Each type calls for very different change strategies, change methodologies, and change leadership mindsets. (For a complete description of the different types, see *Beyond Change Management: Advanced Strategies for Today's Transformational Leaders*, Anderson and Ackerman Anderson, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, 2001.)

In developmental and transitional change efforts, the desired state and the process for achieving it can be known and defined from the start, and the "people impacts" from the changes are minimal. Consequently, these types of change can be "managed" with a great deal of control.

In transformation, however, the desired state is NOT known at the beginning. The destination and the process for getting there emerge as the leaders make best guesses, implement them, learn, course correct, make new best guess, implement those, etc.

Adding further to the unpredictability of transformation are the huge human impacts: often, people's fundamental ways of thinking, behaving, and working must change along with the organization's culture. For these reasons, transformational change cannot be managed or controlled. The process can be facilitated, but only if the change leaders set aside their command and control ways and become more "co-creative."

Co-Creating: The Required Shift of Style

Co-creating refers to working with people and circumstances, whereas command and control refers to gaining power over and control of people and circumstances. We define co-creating as "people working together, across boundaries, to produce WIN-Win-Win results."

By "WIN-Win-Win" results, we mean results that serve both the individual people or business units (I win/you win), as well as serve the larger systems involved (the partnership, team, organization, and larger community). Mutually pursuing the larger system's "win" is the key that shifts peoples' worldviews from each individual trying to gain "power over and control of" others or circumstances to serve their own needs, to each individual working with the circumstances at hand and each other in support of the common outcome.

Don't get me wrong; operating co-creatively to lead transformation requires much more human skill than simply having shared vision. Leading co-creatively requires great self-awareness and one's own personal transformation to being free of the ego's habits of commanding and controlling. It compels leaders to let go of the mechanistic, military model of organizations (hierarchy, separation of departments), and instead to see organizations as inter-connected, evolving human systems.

When leaders operate co-creatively during change, they:

- Put the priority of the larger organization first, not their own self-interests or political agendas

- Smoothly integrate change initiatives across departments, regions, or business units

- Share information about the case for change, the change strategy, and the future state design (withholding information only limits people's contribution)

- Allow for local control of decisions by sharing power and authority

- Remove unnecessary hierarchy or barriers to performance

- Maximize participation and involvement so the whole system mobilizes the change collectively

- Operate with clear roles and accountabilities because they see that usurping each other's power only weakens the organization's overall capacity to change

These are many of the human requirements of successful organizational transformation. You cannot force people to march into the unknown with blind faith, or force them to change their mindset, behavior, or way of working. You can, however, co-create with them in such a way that they desire to contribute to the transformation's success in all ways possible because it serves something they want to produce! Change leaders will never get such commitment from "command and control."

There is a tremendous dilemma embedded in this discussion: how can change leaders transform their organizations if they have not yet transformed their own mindset and style? Clearly, they cannot. However, this is not a chicken and egg issue; mindset change does not need to precede the organization's transformation. They

can occur together.

Organization development consultants should attempt to ensure that every transformational change strategy includes plans for shifting leadership mindset. With their knowledge of personal change, organization development consultants can be key players in supporting this most vital change leadership breakthrough.

When change leaders employ command and control as their dominant change leadership style, they often:

- *Cause resistance*

- *Adhere to preconceived change plans instead of course correcting as needed*

- *Don't allow the necessary local control of change decisions*

- *Alienate employees by not sharing information*

- *Neglect the human, emotional transition phases of transformation*

- *Lose credibility by not modeling the behavior and culture change they are advocating*

- *Overlook communicating critical change information*

- *Fail to intrinsically motivate and build a critical mass of support*

About the Authors

Dean Anderson and Linda Ackerman Anderson are the co-founders of Being First, Inc., a results-oriented change leadership development and transformational change consulting firm working with visionary leaders of the Fortune 1000, government, and large non-profit organizations. For twenty-five years, Being First has been assisting executives to maximize their ROI from change, transform their cultures to high performance, and build their organization's change capability. Being First provides a complete change solution, including change strategy development, change methodology and tools, training, coaching, consulting, and hands-on change project support. A Deloitte and Touche research study once named the Being First Change Methodology the most comprehensive in the world.

Mr. Anderson and Ms. Ackerman Anderson are co-authors of two cutting-edge books on change, Beyond Change Management: Advanced Strategies for Today's Transformational Leaders and The Change Leader's Roadmap: How to Navigate Your Organization's Transformation. They co-author *The Change Management* column for Workforce Performance Solutions magazine, as well as the e-newsletter, *Results from Change*, which is distributed to change leaders and consultants worldwide.

Mr. Anderson and Ms. Ackerman Anderson speak internationally about the people and process dynamics that are key to succeeding at transformational change. They can be reached at info@beingfirst.com or **970-385-5100**.

About Being First, Inc.

BEING FIRST, INC. is a highly specialized change leadership development and transformational change consulting firm, serving Fortune 1000 companies, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and change consultants worldwide.

We partner with our clients to achieve breakthrough results. We provide a fully integrated solution of consulting, training, coaching, change methodology, and tools; everything our clients need to radically improve outcomes. We are experts in unleashing extraordinary human performance, transforming culture to enable that performance, and developing leaders to lead those transformations.

Outcomes

- **Maximize ROI** by achieving the tangible business results you are after from change; faster and with less cost to your business and people

- Build your organization's **change capability and skill** so you can consistently reap the benefits of successful change, now and in the future

- **Transform your people and culture** to truly unleash breakthrough performance

- Develop your managers and leaders into **competent change leaders** who know how to lead all aspects of change, including the people and cultural dynamics

- Develop your internal consultants into **expert change consultants**

Services and Products

- **Web-based Change Methodology, Products, and Tools** for every task in your change effort. Test drive **The Change Leader's Roadmap™** at www.changeleadersroadmap.com

- **Change Strategy Development and Process Planning** for complex transformation

- **Change Leadership Development and Coaching** for senior executives, change sponsors, change process leaders, change project teams, change consultants, mid-managers, and frontline targets of change

- **Change Consulting** that ensures you get the best change solution implemented by an engaged group of stakeholders

- Change Consultant Development to build your in-house skills

- Executive Team Development that builds cohesion, alignment, and commitment

- **Assessments:** Change Project Audit, Change History Audit, Change Readiness and Capacity, Change Sponsorship, Change Leadership, and Change Team Performance

- Results from Change e-Newsletter at www.resultsfromchange.com