When asked "would you rather work for change, or just complain?" 81% of the respondents replied, "Do i have to pick? This is hard."

Understanding & Overcoming Resistance to Change

by

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Prelude & Agenda

I will first:
- ❏ Define our discipline – organization development (OD); and
- ❏ Explain our philosophy – process consultation (PC).

…and then:
- ❏ Discuss the change process; and
- ❏ Describe the sources of resistance to change and how to overcome them.

What is organization development?

- *OD is the strengthening of those human processes in organizations which improve the functioning of the organic system so as to achieve its objectives.*
  - Gordon Lippitt

- *OD is a planned process by which an organization utilizes its resources to bring about controlled change for the purpose of improving its service or product.*
  - Bob Hartl

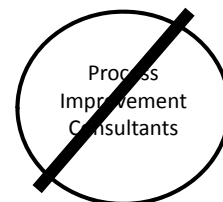## Philosophies of Consultation (Ed Schein)

- ➢ The expert

- ➢ The physician model

- ➢ Process consultation ("helping")

Organizational Culture & PC Legend Edgar Schein (with Hartl)

We are not:

Process Improvement Consultants
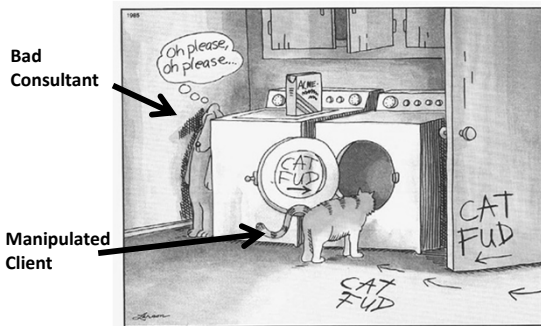
We also are not:

Efficiency Experts

When consulting we try to:

- Establish what our friend Schein describes as a "helping relationship."
- Then, we "help" clients figure out and resolve their organizational challenges.

Process consultants do not lead or manipulate clients.

Bad Consultant

Manipulated Client

The major premise is:

One can only help a human system help itself.

- Ed Schein

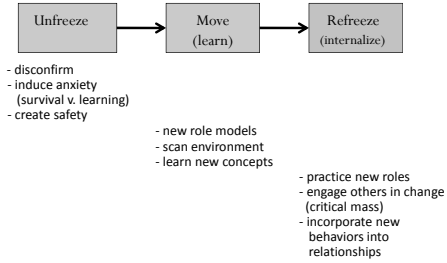## "Resistance to change" takes different forms, but we know it when we see it.

But why do people resist change?

- The simple answer is "because they are afraid."
- If we can understand the source of this fear, perhaps we can reduce or eliminate it.
- That understanding can be found in a model that shows how human systems change.

The Mechanism of Change
(Lewin's model as expanded by Edgar Schein)

Unfreeze → Move (learn) → Refreeze (internalize)

- disconfirm
- induce anxiety
  (survival v. learning)
- create safety

- new role models
- scan environment
- learn new concepts

- practice new roles
- engage others in change
  (critical mass)
- incorporate new
  behaviors into
  relationships

Learning anxiety is "resistance to change."

Learning anxiety means the fear of:

– Loss of power/status

– Temporary incompetence

– Punishment for incompetence

– Loss of personal identity

– Loss of group membership

- Schein

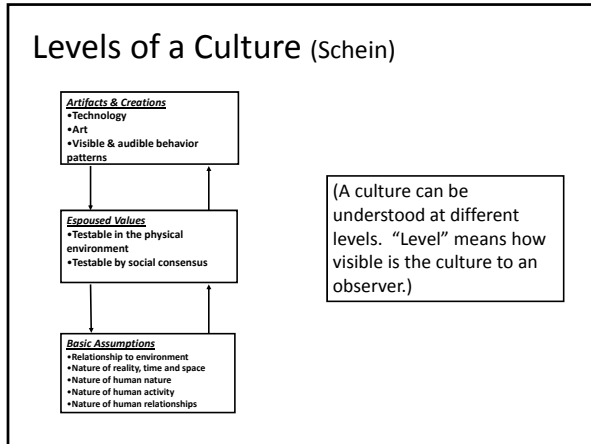For change to occur, survival anxiety must exceed learning anxiety ("resistance to change").

Survival Anxiety   Learning Anxiety

Reduce learning anxiety don't increase survival anxiety.

Direction of Change →
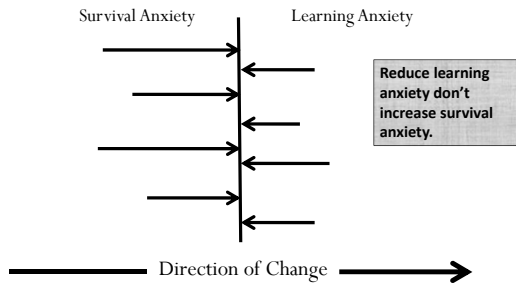
Ultimately, learning anxiety is influenced by an organization's culture.

What is organizational culture?

A pattern of basic assumptions – invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration – that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

- Schein

"I don't know how it started, either. All I know is that it's part of our corporate culture."

Levels of a Culture (Schein)

Artifacts & Creations
•Technology
•Art
•Visible & audible behavior patterns

↑

Espoused Values
•Testable in the physical environment
•Testable by social consensus

↑

Basic Assumptions
•Relationship to environment
•Nature of reality, time and space
•Nature of human nature
•Nature of human activity
•Nature of human relationships

(A culture can be understood at different levels. "Level" means how visible is the culture to an observer.)

However, leaders cannot simply create or install a new culture!

- *Culture is a learned thing; it does not result from someone announcing it.*

- *It is the residue of success.*

  - Ed Schein

An organization's culture evolves.

- Founding Stage:
  ❑Founder dominates
  ❑Reinforcement through success

- Adolescence:
  ❑Culture as source of identity
  ❑Pressure to conform

Cultural Evolution (2)

- Midlife:
  ❑Sub-groups form based on differentiation.
  ❑Subcultures are created and help organization evolve in new directions.
  ❑Sub-groups may conflict and integration of efforts can be lost.

Cultural Evolution (3)

- Maturity/Decline:
  ❑External environment evolves/changes.
  ❑Some elements of the culture are no longer functional (or become dysfunctional).
  ❑Rapid adaptation is difficult (because efforts are no longer integrated or aligned).
  ❑Elements of culture may have to be changed.

  - Ed Schein

Understanding culture has become increasingly complex.

- Schein says the concept of <u>a</u> corporate culture is no longer adequate/complete because:

  – All organizations have at least three generic subcultures.

  – As organizations become more influenced by globalization, national cultures play a bigger role.

  – As work has become more complex, occupational micro-cultures have become more relevant.

The Challenges Presented by Subcultures

- They may misunderstand each other.

- Subcultures hold different assumptions.

Different National Cultures

XYZ Pretty Good Healthcare System

Remote Sites

Operators

Exec's

Engineers

M1

M2

- They have trouble listening.

- Their efforts can become misaligned.

Cultural islands improve understanding across subcultures.

- A cultural island is an environment in which people suspend the need to maintain face.
- They explore their tacit assumptions, especially those about authority & intimacy.
- One easily created cultural island is a "dialogue."

Dialogue is not:

- a problem-solving tool
- a decision-making system
- a forum for persuasion or argumentation

Why use dialogue?

- To learn what we and others think
- To get beneath the cultural assumptions that limit our understanding
- To create collective knowledge
- As a basis (or foundation) for addressing issues that we may have previously considered problems

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Anatomy of a Dialogue Circle

Dialogue Process (Adapted from Schein)

❑ Make all your remarks to the campfire; do not look at each other.
❑ Do not feel obligated to ask others for clarification even if you haven't understood them.
❑ Do not feel obligated to answer questions that someone asks you directly.

Another Type of Cultural Island

Atul Gawande's concept of the checklist.

Specifically, how do cultures change?

- *Charismatic leaders*
- *Drastic changes (e.g., bankruptcy, mergers, etc.)*
- *Evolution through hybrids (drawn from subcultures)*
- *Managed change*

                                        - Schein

Managed Culture Change (Schein)

- *Disconfirm around the business problem, not the culture.*
- *Define desired behaviors in concrete, specific terms.*
- *Identify where cultural assumptions aid or hinder the new behaviors.*
- *Use strong elements of the culture to change undesired elements.*
- *Identify culture carriers of undesired elements and change them.*
- *Identify change targets; encourage scanning & trial and error; provide support; provide role models.*
- *Create supportive reward and discipline systems to stabilize the changes.*

What must leaders understand?

*Because organizations are sets of sub-cultures, leaders must always accept that **nothing will change until they understand the culture of the group** in which the behavioral changes are to be made.*

*In that regard, they **must be willing to accept help in deciphering culture.***

*Leaders must also understand that they are part of the organization, and that any changes in the organization **will inevitably involve changes in themselves.***

                                        - Schein

Dick Beckhard's Formula for Change

greater than...

D x V x F > R

D = Dissatisfaction with the status quo

V = A vision of what might be possible

F = First step toward that vision

R = Resistance

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