CHAPTER TWO

Change Process and Models

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A model for change is a simplified representation of the general steps in initiating and carrying out a change process. It is rooted in solid research and theory. Managers and consultants, when demonstrating the competencies of an OD practitioner, are well-advised to rely on a model for change as a compass to show them the direction in which to lead the change effort and change process. But, as Stewart and Kringas (2003, p. 675) note, "The change-management literature contains a bewildering variety of understandings of, and approaches to, change." Collins's (1998) work usefully contrasts two basic types of models. The first, which might loosely be called the rational model, emphasizes the importance of planning, problem solving, and execution. The second approach, more sociological in orientation, explores changing rather than change and emphasizes the uniqueness and contextual richness of each situation.

In this chapter we review numerous models for changing rather than change—essentially, the change process. Finally, in the last section of the chapter, we point readers to other change models found in the literature and distill some key issues associated with change.

AN OVERVIEW OF KEY MODELS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

The change models that we share rely primarily on a normative, re-educative, and innovative approach to behavioral change. They are (1) the critical research model; (2) the traditional action research model; (3) Appreciative Inquiry; and (4) an evolving view of the action research model.

While mainstream OD practitioners have long relied on action research as the change model underpinning their efforts, recent research and practice underscore the need to modify the model and provide guidance for doing so (Burke, 2002). At the same time, much work has focused on analyzing common characteristics of successful change efforts so as to derive a change model from them.

The Critical Research Model

Critical research (CR) stems ultimately from Marxist practices. The key idea underlying CR is similar to a dialectic approach to change in which opposing positions are used to power change. Critical research assumes that every organization or group has an *ideology*, a more or less consistent rationale about how decisions should be made, how resources should be used, how people should be managed, and how the organization should respond to the environment in which it functions. In a classic definition, Katz and Kahn (1978) describe ideology as "generated to provide justification for the organization's existence and functions" (p. 101). In one sense, an ideology is a step above culture, and "culture is the manifestation of ideology, giving `life' to ideology" (Lang, 1992, p. 191).

A natural tension develops between what people believe should be happening and what they believe is actually happening. The basic thrust of CR is to identify this discrepancy and use it to power change. Because individual perceptions differ within groups, CR builds an impetus for change by dramatizing these differences between the organization's ideology about what should be and actual situations contradicting its ideology that thereby underscore the need for change. Critical research heightens the tension by pointing out inconsistency.

Although critical research has not been widely used in mainstream OD, interventions such as Beckhard's (1997) confrontation meetings can lend themselves to it. (A confrontation meeting brings together two conflicting groups to discuss their differences and to arrive at ways of working together more effectively.) Critical research views conflict between ideology and actual practices as constructive, leading to self-examination and eventually to change. The steps in applying critical research (CR) to a change effort are listed in Exhibit 2.1.

Perhaps a simple example will underscore how the model works. Suppose the leaders of an organization have long underscored their commitment to strong customer service. In annual reports, executive speeches, and company advertising, the company's leaders pledge that they are willing to do anything to satisfy a customer. The ideology of the company is thus centered on customer service as the most important single commitment of the organization.

But then suppose that employees in the company's call center are well aware that the company is not honoring warranties on a defective product. They have been told to "find others ways to satisfy customers than by honoring the warranties."

Exhibit 2.1. The Critical Research Model

1. Describe the ideology. (How do people believe the organization or group should be functioning?)
2. Identify situations, events, or conditions that conflict with the ideology. (What is actually happening?)
3. Identify individuals or groups desiring progressive change. (Who wants to challenge the ideology and/or actual situations to create an impetus for progressive change?)
4. Confront proponents of the ideology with conflicting situations, events, or conditions.
5. Devise a new ideology or action steps to correct inconsistency.
6. Help the client establish a timetable for change.
7. Implement the change.
8. Ask the client to monitor the change, identifying opportunities for continuous improvement as necessary.

In this simplistic example, the difference between the company's ideology (a strong commitment to customer service) and actual practices (refusal to honor warranties) provides the basis for an obvious, and troubling, difference between "what the organization's leaders say they want" and "what the organization's leaders actually do." That difference, if used to best effect, can provide an impetus for change.

Critical research has captured a large following among educators, and particularly adult educators, in recent years. It lends itself well to considering the political issues involved in change and relies on the differences of opinions among groups of people as a way of leveraging change.

The Traditional Action Research Model

Action research has long been the foundation for many change efforts. It is properly regarded as a philosophy, a model, and a process. Like any change model, action research is a simplified representation of the complex activities that should occur in a change effort if it is to be participative, engaging, and empowering for those affected by it. The model serves as a compass to consultants facilitating change. While it does not tell consultants, managers, or workers exactly what to do in paint-by-the-numbers fashion, it does provide a process whereby the consultant and client can jointly inquire and decide what change is required. It helps consultants track where they are and where they are going. While the action research model has been depicted in different ways, the depictions of it share common characteristics. Figure 2.1 illustrates a general model of action research.

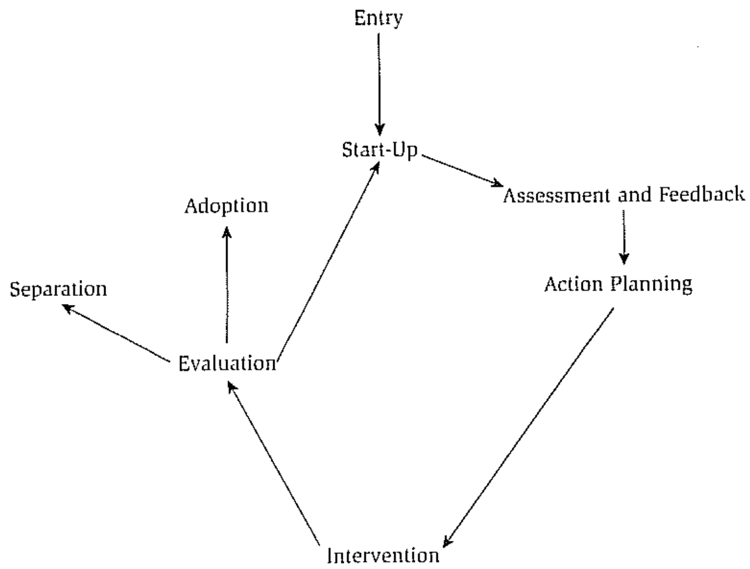

Figure 2.1. The Traditional Action Research Model

From G. McLean & R. Sullivan (1989). Essential Competencies of Internal and External OD Consultants (p. 14). Unpublished manuscript. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Action research may also be understood as a process, a continuing series of events and actions. In a classic description, French and Bell (1990, p. 99) defined this interpretation of action research in this way:

> "[It is] the process of systematically collecting research data about an ongoing system relative to some objective, goal, or need of that system; feeding these data back into the system; taking actions by altering selected variables within the system based both on the data and on hypotheses; and evaluating the results of actions by collecting more data."

As a process, action research is thus a cycle in which research is followed by change activities, the results of which are fed into further research. In that respect, action research (as used in OD) is sometimes confused with the related notion of action research (as used in education), where experience with classroom-based activities becomes the foundation for continuous improvement in delivering education.

One way to think about the traditional action research model depicts it as eight steps in any change effort. This traditional depiction is based on the steps originally presented in Burke (1982) and in *Essential Competencies of Internal and External OD Consultants* (McLean & Sullivan, 1989). The steps are as follows:

Step	*Brief Description*
1. Entry	The need for change in an organization becomes apparent. A dream is articulated. Someone or a group of people in the organization look for help in facilitating change toward the realization of the dream.
2. Start-Up	The change agent (consultant) enters the picture, working to discover what might be done, contracts with the client, and gains commitment to proceed.
3. Assessment and Feedback	Information is gathered and validated about a desired positive future and gives decision-makers and those having a stake in the change process feedback that can be used to design change action.
4. Action Planning	The change agent collaborates with decision-makers and stakeholders to muster all their creativity to agree on a preferred future state along with innovative first steps.
5. Intervention	The action plan is implemented, monitored, and continually adjusted and embellished as the situation warrants.
6. Evaluation	The change agent helps decision-makers and stakeholders assess the change effort's progress and organizational learnings to illuminate next steps as the previous phases are repeated.
7. Adoption	Members of the organization maintain the new state as resulting changes are integrated into daily work life.
8. Separation	The change agent prepares for closure and departure. She or he works to disengage while ensuring that improvement or transformation will continue after her or his departure. This step is possible because the knowledge and skills of the change agent have been transferred to the organization.

Although the length and depth of each step may vary across change efforts, the steps are usually present in one form or another. In long-term change efforts—as many are—each step in the model may actually turn into the whole model in miniature. For example, when it is time for action planning, the consultant may use all or some of the generic action research model phases. In other words, that step alone may call for a start-up phase, followed by assessment, action planning, and an evaluation component once or several times during the action planning process. The steps will be discussed in Part Two of the book.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is the most exciting development in thinking about change in recent years. In one of the last conversations with the authors, Dick Beckhard, the person who coined the phrase "managing change" in the 1950s, told the authors of this chapter that he believed that AI held within it the most promising future for OD. Like the action research model, AI is a way of being, a model, a conceptual framework, and a process to guide change. Originally conceptualized by Case Western Reserve professor David Cooperrider (see Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987), it has captured much attention in recent years (see, for instance, Cooperrider, 1990; Cooperrider, 1995; Cooperrider, Barrett, & Srivastva, 1995; Cooperrider & Passmore, 1991; Cooperrider, Sorensen, Whitney, & Yaeger, 1999; Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008; Watkins & Mohr, 2001). If the action research model can be regarded as comparable to the chip inside the computer that drives change efforts, then the Appreciative Inquiry model can be regarded as a different—but complementary—chip.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an OD approach and process to change management that grows out of social constructionist thought. AI is the "cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them" (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008, p. 3). Instead of starting out to solve problems—a typical focus of traditionally trained managers, steeped in a philosophy of management by exception—AI focuses on what is going right, what is motivating, what is energizing, and what are the key strengths of a setting. Instead of asking the question, "What is going wrong and how do we solve that problem?" AI begins by asking, "What is going right and how do we leverage that strength to achieve quantum leaps in productivity improvement?"

Applying AI thus requires a paradigm shift from focusing on what is going wrong to what is going right and then trying to leverage what is going right into new, higher-level visions of a positive future. AI is both a philosophy and has a 4-D method that can be applied: Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny. See the AI 4-D Cycle in Figure 2.2. To learn more about AI, see Chapter Seven.

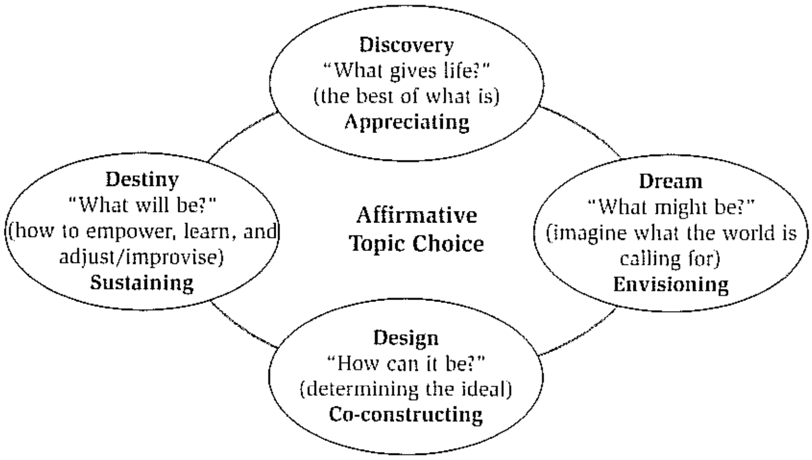

Figure 2.2. AI 4-D Model

THE EVOLVING VIEW OF THE ACTION RESEARCH MODEL

Burke's Change Model for Leaders of Change

Burke (2002) reviewed the change process. In doing so, he posited what might be regarded as the seeds for evolving the action research model. What is exciting about this new view is that it gets away from the traditional action research model, which implicitly describes any change process as functioning as a drawn out and somewhat simplistic process.

Unfortunately, recent experience suggests that so many change efforts are going on at the same time in many organizations that a linear change approach no longer works. One reason is that so many concurrent change efforts lead to a crowding out effect. They burn people out and drive people crazy because it is not possible to remember everything going on at once.

One of the author's clients stated the case well. His organization was installing self-directed work teams, a customer service improvement effort, a Baldrige Award effort, a continuous improvement effort, a business process reengineering effort, a process improvement effort, and a statistical process control (SPC) improvement effort. He remarked, "If we have just one more change effort in this plant, the whole place is going to sink into the ground." Against that backdrop of too many simultaneous change "projects" going on, a project-based approach to change is no longer workable. What is needed is a new model to guide change that does not assume a beginning, middle, and end to a change effort. Instead, change efforts are regarded as continuing and are regarded from a whole systems standpoint.

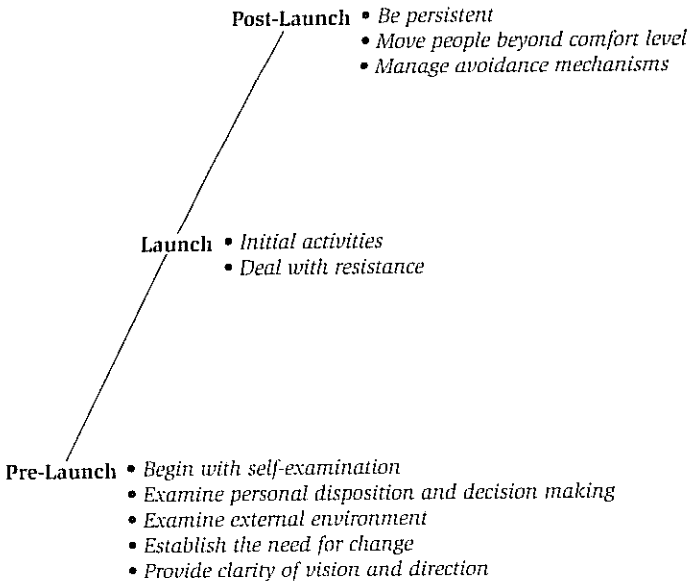

Figure 2.3. A New View of the Action Research Model

Burke (2002) describes the phases of change as pre-launch, launch, and post-launch. The model is written as a guide for change leaders. Change efforts are regarded as proceeding like spirals rather than circles to depict their ongoing chaotic nature—and the view that what is learned from each phase of a change effort can be rolled into subsequent phases. In this way, organizations are transformed into learning organizations that "learn" from experience. The new view of the action research model is depicted in Figure 2.3. It is briefly summarized below. "An interesting paradox about organization change," notes Burke (2002, pp. 246–247), "is that we plan as if the process is linear when in reality, it is anything but linear."

Pre-Launch. The pre-launch phase occurs before the change effort begins. It establishes the foundation for a successful change effort. Without it, a change effort is likely to fail—or be short-lived—as other, more pressing daily crises demand attention. Pre-launch begins effectively when leaders follow the famous advice of Socrates to "know thyself" and start with self-examination. As Burke points out, leaders should be aware of their own tolerance for ambiguity, their need for control, and their understanding of how feelings affect behavior. They should reflect on their personal dispositions and the decision-making processes they generally use—as well as their own values and motives for change.

Burke (2002, pp. 252–257) suggests considering several additional issues during the pre-launch phase:

- *The external environment*: Leaders should gather information about the environment that necessitates change. What is the business case for change? Why is change warranted to address current crises or seize future opportunities?
- *Establishing the need for change*: When leaders communicate the compelling case for change to others in the organization, they build a sense of urgency and reduce resistance to change.
- *Providing clarity of vision and direction*: The direction of the effort must be clear. What objectives are to be met by the change and what will success look like? A clear vision must be established and communicated so it is embraced by key stakeholders and others in the organization.

Launch. The launch phase is the beginning of the change effort. It begins with communication to key stakeholders inside and outside the organization about the need. This is what some leaders call "making the business case," and the case for change must be made by credible people who will be believed. Communication must be provided in many channels, since people are so bombarded with messages that they are unlikely to pick up on one short message provided in a single medium.

According to Burke (2002, pp. 258–260), the key issues to address in the launch phase are

- *Initial activities*: An event that will seize attention helps to fire imagination and enthusiasm.
- *Dealing with resistance*: Identify likely sources of resistance and try to address them before they can arise and destroy the impetus for change.

A major challenge in a long-term intervention is to maintain communication about the change effort. Stakeholders must be reminded what is being changed, why it is being changed, how the change effort is proceeding, and what benefits are being realized from the change effort (Rothwell, 2001).

Post-Launch. Post-launch involves sustaining a change effort over time. That can be particularly frustrating. The reason is that events in a change effort, even when successful, may appear to be spiraling out of control.

Burke (2002) recommends that CEOs follow the advice of Heifetz (1994). He has three suggestions. First, be persistent. Second, help people in the organization move beyond their comfort levels while keeping stress to a minimum. And third, be prepared to manage the predictable "avoidance mechanisms" that can surface during a change effort. These include "blaming other people, scapegoating, and appealing to authority figures for answers" (Burke, 2002, p. 261).

NEW ACTION RESEARCH CHANGE MODEL: PERPETUAL AND INSTANTANEOUS POSITIVE CHANGE

Change consulting in the 21st Century requires a new model—a model that works in an environment of rapid, chaotic change. Many consultants today are frustrated by the time required for the traditional action research model, but it should not be abandoned. The response in our practice has been to create a model that responds more adroitly to the growing complexity of the consulting world, but is based on the founding principles of the field.

Edgar Schein (1999) writes:

> "Consultation projects evolve in complex ways. One cannot really identify simple sequential patterns, such as 'scouting,' 'entry,' 'contracting,' 'diagnosis,' and 'intervention.' Instead what happens is that one finds oneself intervening initially with contact clients, then with intermediate clients, then with primary clients who may engage one in a project that involves a whole new set of contact and primary clients, all the while thinking about ultimate and unwitting clients to ensure that their needs and issues are not ignored or marginalized. In each relationship, consultants must perpetually diagnose and gear their interventions carefully to build and maintain helpful relationships." (p. 219)

We reviewed hundreds of models that are being used in the field today. One we particularly liked was Warner Burke's. It seemed to supply a foundational framework to integrate into our traditional eight-phase model. We feel a high level of confidence that what he was learning was on target for the burst of change happening in a typical organization's life. Using his framework of pre-launch, launch, and post-launch, we came up with the model shown in Figure 2.4.

The model reflects the most current research around change agent competencies. It provides architecture to frame what we do as change technologists. The model is not a technique to be followed but a change framework that drives what we do. This framework becomes a philosophical foundation that comes alive only with your personal and creative application.

Each phase of our new change model is discussed in depth by well-known experts in Part Two of this book. Here we will provide a brief overview of each phase. We call them phases because, unlike steps, different elements blend with others in myriad ways. As we have noted above, change efforts are seldom sequential, so keeping the overall framework in mind is important.

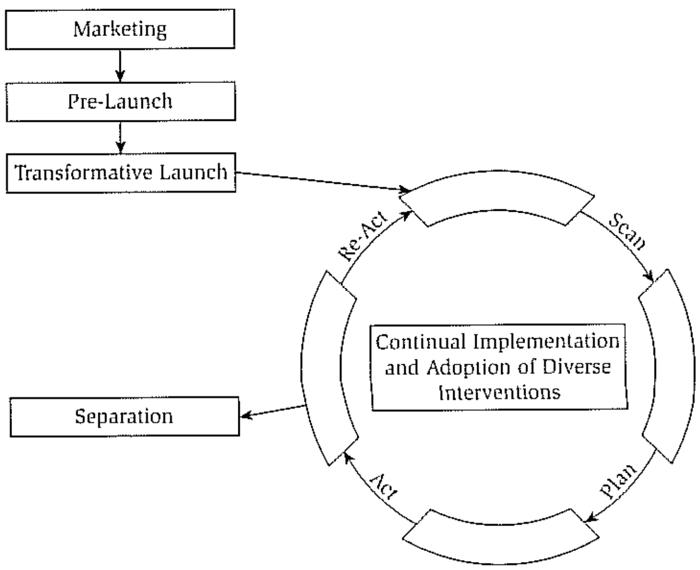

Figure 2.4. Sullivan/Rothwell Change Process Model

Marketing

In our competency research, only the category of self-awareness ranked more important than marketing. Yet OD practitioners often stumble over themselves when it comes to marketing and selling. Marketing competencies may include being:

- Aware of systems wanting to change;
- Known to those needing you;
- Able to match one's competence with a potential client's profile;
- Credible in conveying one's qualifications;
- Fast in grasping the nature of the system;
- Perceptive in identifying appropriate decision-makers;
- Able to form connective interpersonal relationships instantly; and
- Able to understand customer requirements and sell results that will meet those requirements, rather than a process such as team building or whole system transformation.

We believe that internal change agents must also attend to marketing. Often they do not publicize their successes in their own enterprises and are thereby robbed of the credit they richly deserve. All organizations want a present better than the past and a future better than the present. OD is all about doing just that. So the need for OD services exists. It's up to the OD consultants to identify the need and help those in decision-making positions to see the benefits of an OD solution.

One good way is to help decision-makers become aware of the kinds of competencies you possess and have demonstrated. Selling after the sale is a useful strategy. One can schedule periodic sessions with current clients to assess results, and at the same time suggest ways one can provide help in the next iteration of the change process. Dr. Alan Weiss's chapter on marketing will open a window to countless useful resources. Your challenge will be to spend the time and discipline to learn how to be a competent marketer of your professional services. Change facilitation is needed today more than ever and will be needed tomorrow even more.

Pre-Launch

Pre-launch begins when consultants clearly have clients committed to work with them. The marketing, selling, and entry issues are complete. It ends when the psychological and non-psychological contract, relationship connecting, and clarification of expectations are completed. There is an old adage in the field that says that if anything goes awry in the change effort, it can usually be traced back to this phase.

Peter Block has had much to say about the importance of relationships in the early phases of a change effort. He says that the core competency in consulting is how to contract with clients. This is the heart of his most popular book, *Flawless Consulting* (Block, 2000). For Block, contracting is about treating the relationship as significant and central. He believes one must continually process and re-set the relationship. Modeling competency in relationship development will also go a long way toward helping the client deal with key relationships. After all, it is our intention to transfer our competence to the client system.

Our research over the years has led us to believe that the ability to initiate and maintain excellent interpersonal relationships is paramount to success in the pre-launch phase and is essential to a successful engagement. The consultant and the client must like each other and must be able to continually and honestly clarify expectations.

An indication of a solid relationship is this: When the consultant has been away from the organization for awhile and returns, he or she is greeted with warmth and smiles by all. This is unlike the story that we heard about an internal consultant: When people saw him coming down the hall, they would slip into the first open office to avoid him. In summary, a strong measure of an effective consultant is the quality of the relationships that remain at the end of engagements.

Transformative Launch

This phase starts the change process by assessing the situation and planning for action in order to launch a long-term and ongoing effort. In some cases, it's a good idea to start with a bang—a striking catharsis or a euphoric liftoff! In other cases a quiet start can be more effective as a team searches for early wins in a sensitive situation. Ideally, the top team starts with itself. In either case, a flawless beginning can do much to commit the entire top team to supporting engagement and involvement of all parts of the organization.

Some situations require *transformative change*, that dramatic shift in focus and priorities that can occur when conditions are just right. Transformative change is more than step improvement or incremental change. Freeing a caterpillar from an enclosed jar improves its situation, but doesn't change its nature. In transformation, the caterpillar becomes a butterfly. For transformative changes, the launch phase should be a striking and dramatically positive jump into a brilliant future. Exhibit 2.2 outlines some of the distinctions between change and transformation.

The launch phase is time to set a norm regarding the importance of informal channels of communication. This is not the time to change participants' basic learning modalities, and indeed the chances are they could not be changed if we wanted to. The gossip chain, the water cooler bulletin board, and the lunchroom conversations are parts of the informal networks, often where the real conversations are. It is the role of the change agent to bring the informal talk to the OD table. Participants need help trusting a process where truth prevails and they are ready to have a natural and authentic experience with valid data.

We expect a launch to move the organization to a point of no return. The system moves itself to a new state in which it encompasses the essential core competencies of being and becoming a change agent enterprise.

The launch (or implementation) phase we present here is distinctly different from our change model in the previous edition. In the 21st Century, change happens so fast that it seems it is at the speed of imagination. There is seldom time for a long assessment with a change plan.

Today, we see the change cycle requiring a process and philosophy built in for constant reaction and continual planning efforts. It is not a phase of a long-term effort, but rather an ongoing implementation of a myriad of interventions, an endless loop (some would say a spiral) of short-cycle change.

In fact, these days, the traditional assessment and action planning can all happen in three or four days if key stakeholders are in the room. The resistance that took years to unfreeze in the traditional action research model can now be broken in an afternoon if all the right people and information are present.

Exhibit 2.2. Distinctions Between Organization Change and Transformation

Change	***Transformation***
• Single-loop learning (adaptive; errors are corrected without altering the fundamental nature of the system	• Double-loop learning (inquires into and changes existing norms and deeper value foundations; generative learning or learning how to learn)
• Status quo facilitated toward betterment	• Major disruption of the what is and was going to be
• Change in one or a few dimensions, variables, or parts	• Multidimensional, multi-component change and aspects
• Change in one or a few levels (maybe the individual and/or group level)	• Multilevel change (individuals, groups, or whole system)
• Change in one or two behavioral aspects (attitudes, values)	• Changes in all the behavioral aspects (attitude, norms, values, perceptions, beliefs, world view, and behaviors)
• Quantitative change—move the chairs on the deck	• Qualitative change—new ideology or shift in philosophy
• Change in content	• Change in context and underlying structure
• Identity stays the same	• Re-imagined and reformulated identity
• Corrective action	• Destruction of the old way
• Continuous improvement	• Discontinuous change
• Development in the same direction	• Exciting, explosive, fiery, disruptive, dramatic jumps in different directions
• Incremental changes and change that reverts back to the old state	• Irreversible change with arrival of a new state of being
• Change that does not alter the world view, the paradigm	• Change that results in a new world view, new paradigm (The system sees itself through a new window.)
• Micro results and improvement in performance	• Macro results and performance levels never reached before

In Figure 2.4, you can see the launch phase broken out into a sub-model, which we call SPAR: Scan, Plan, Act, and Re-Act. This simple model is universal in application. This kind of change model is not just useful for one's work life but may be used in one's personal and recreational life as well. Client system, family, or little league team—the principles are the same. It can be used in a

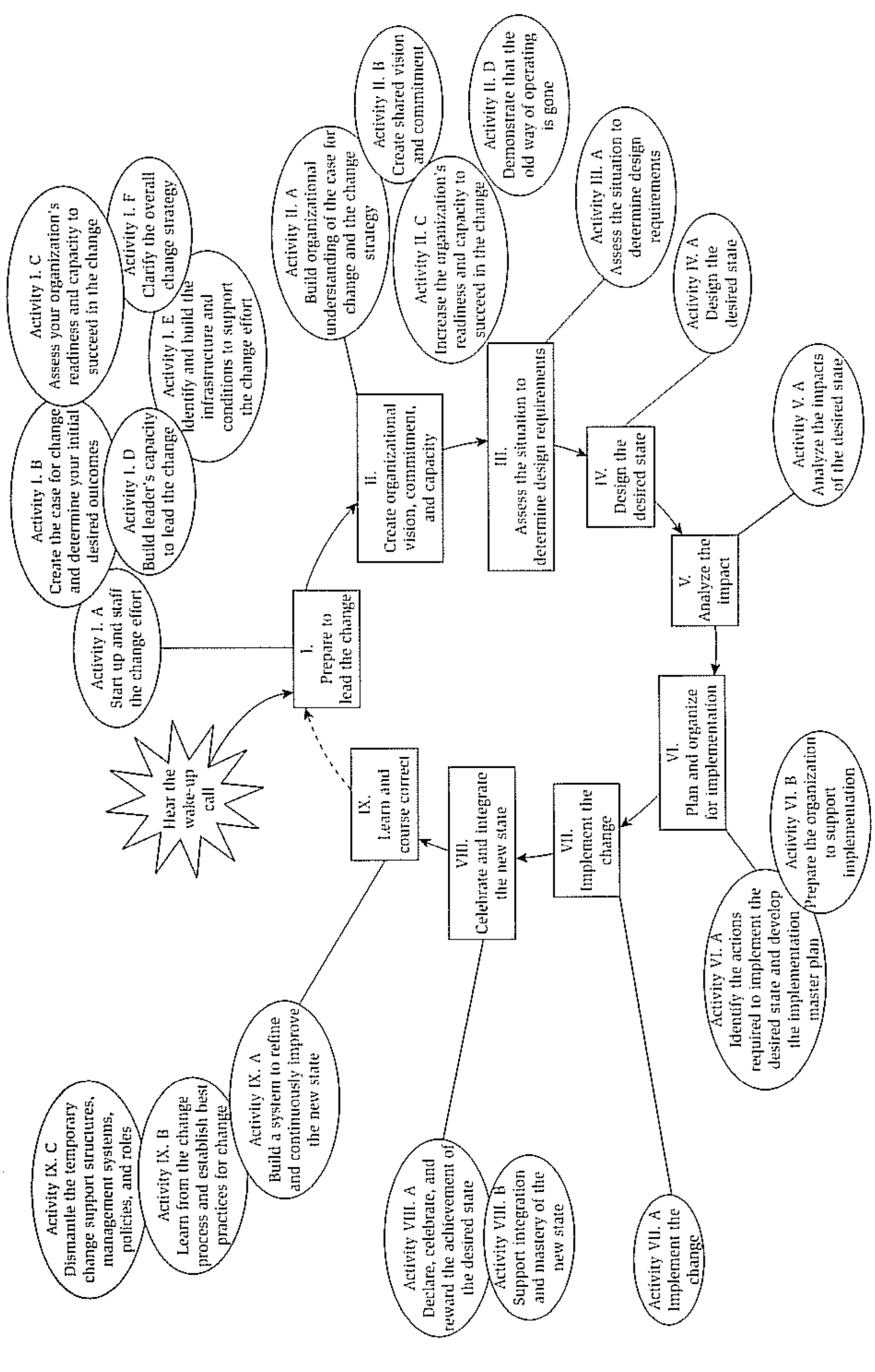

Figure 2.5. Three Models of the Change Process

From A.J. Mento, R.M. Jones, and W. Dirndorfer (2002). A Change Management Process: Grounded in Both Theory and Practice. *Journal of Change Management*. 3(1), 45–59.

long-term effort or in an intervention as short as a ten-minute phone call. It can be used as an intervention at any level of change. For example:

- An individual can use it to make changes in his or her own life;
- A coach or mentor can use it to work with a client;
- Two members of an executive team can use it to find new ways to collaborate;
- A team can use it to learn how to be more effective;
- Multiple teams can use it in the application of system theory and practice;
- Institution or enterprise-wide change efforts can use it—especially in ongoing, engaging change; and/or
- Network, community, or trans-organization development efforts can employ it.

Each phase or each session within a phase may include all four elements of SPAR. That is the Chinese box phenomenon—the famous puzzle consisting of a series of progressively smaller boxes inside a large box—which may typify many change efforts. In other words, when a change effort is big enough and long-term enough, the assessment and feedback moment or experience (for instance) may itself have an entry component, a start-up component, and so forth.

Scan. Diagnosis traditionally is the phrase that has been used to describe the major function of the scan phase. Our quantitative research over the years involving almost four thousand change agents has produced many heated arguments over whether to use assessment or diagnosis. We have been won over to the assessment side of the street because diagnosis comes more from a disease and medical model looking for something that is sick or problem-related. We prefer to look on the bright side of life. The glass is half full. Like the Appreciative Inquiry change agents, we strongly believe in the new positive psychology movement. Assessment is typically known as a classification of someone or something with respect to its worth. When a change process is positive, conversations are energizing. The process entropies when conversations are about problems, negativity, and the blues.

This is the phase where valid information is central. Common sense and classic research agree. Too often we see people in organizations jump right into the end-state planning without generating an accurate picture of where they are now and a clear view of a desired destiny.

It's important for the client to feel ownership of the assessment information. The more we can involve the client in jointly bringing forth valid information, the better. A key competency to be utilized here is the ability to create a trusting climate so the client feels safe to reveal disturbing, grandiose, or thought-provoking information and feelings. Gathering stories of best practices from within or from without the system is often exhilarating. A positive spirit of inquiry melts resistance.

Active and non-judgmental listening is paramount at this phase. When the client senses that the consultant is being judgmental, the consultant's ability to facilitate is impaired, and his or her influence is lessened. Trust is reduced because the common ground that is facilitated toward is colored with the consultant's own bias. Of course, there are exceptions. Sometimes a consultant will have one gigantic idea, and all will say, "YES! YES!" and welcome the contribution because the people in the system as a whole will benefit. Living systems move in the direction of what is assessed as being worthy.

Asking the right questions is key. David Cooperrider (founder of Appreciative Inquiry, which depends heavily on crafting the right questions) says that he spent days of intense concentration determining the exact questions he would use in breakout groups while he facilitated leaders of all the major world religions in a summit. Asking the right questions has much to do with where the client system lands in the next phase of planning.

Questions might include:

- What's up?
- What is working?
- What is our purpose?
- What outcomes do we wish to reach?
- What are your wishes and dreams?
- What do we want to change?
- What is a focus that you could really become passionate about?
- What best practices do we wish to enhance?
- What changes can we make to augment communication?
- Describe an ideal organization structure.
- Give me one strategy that, if implemented, would make a huge difference.

Usually we like to co-create scanning questions with the client. They know better than we do what is important. Often they need help rephrasing questions that could elicit negative, and perhaps unhelpful, responses. For example, "What is the problem with quality?" could become "What can you do to ensure superior quality?" or "The best example of high quality I have experienced around here is...."

In sum, the scan phase is about helping the client system get a comprehensive view from individuals or small groups about where they are and wish to be. Creating a system-wide synthesis and common-ground intelligence base comes in the next phase.

Plan. There is a wide assortment of techniques and methods that can be used to plan what you will act on. What approach should you use? It all depends. It may depend on the scope of the effort, the style of leadership, or the nature of the data-collection methodology. One idea is to have a change team representative of the larger system help design a planning process that fits the situation.

Here are some practical tips for the plan phase:

- *Feed back the data in a distilled manner.* Normally, one has more data than can be used. A process needs to be invented that will funnel all the accumulated ideas into common themes. Go for ideas that can easily turn into new attitude and behavioral commitments and action items. Involve participants in organizing the ideas. We do not encourage prepared recommendation reports assembled in the closet of the consultant's office and then presented and sold to the clients. Always prepare the data for planning with clients.
- *Spend some time validating the data that was collected.* Clients need help seeing collectively the state they are in. Rarely will they deny what has surfaced. Validating accommodates ownership and ultimate commitment.
- *Do allow the system to disturb itself.* Do facilitate so clients are able to confront themselves. Do allow them to self-realize what they will do with the dissatisfaction. Facilitate a wake-up call. Get their attention. The value of a consultant is to help the system face itself as it is and to realize what it wishes to become.
- *Be sensitive in confrontation.* Clients want to get rid of a past that is not working, but need help to destroy a past that is nonetheless theirs. Know how much disturbance they can handle. Realize that more change will happen if feelings are evoked and worked through. Authentic feelings in a room set the stage for serious and concentrated conversations. So it's important to intervene only as deeply as you know the client can handle. Expert and masterful facilitation is required, especially if there are five hundred people in the room.
- *Together create compelling propositions.* Establish a realistic preferred future that grows out of all the work that has been done up to this point. Unleash the creativity. Blend in the weird. Develop a bold plan that matches the audacious and enterprising times of today. Challenge clients to make a dramatic difference, a difference that will have a huge impact on the success of the system. Help them create a future that will give them a real reason to believe in themselves. They have it in them. The answers are in the system. Surface them. Bring them to life. Just pull the right cords to unleash the extraordinary mind power that all systems have. Let the compelling possibility give them hope.

- *Ensure that clients are able to freely choose their plan.* This concept is paramount. Remember the financial case above where the executive team did not buy the strategic plan until they felt they freely chose it. People follow through and own the plan when they have choices.
- *Anticipate and name the resistance that may arise.* You considered all possible sources of resistance in your planning and engaged people in the project insofar as possible. Still, additional resistance may arise now that implementation is inevitable. Rehearse how the different choices may play out, and consider ways to involve people even at this point, giving them options in implementation that will help them feel a measure of control over their destinies.
- *Create a simple, elegant master plan format.* The plan should go after specific actions that can make the biggest splash with the least amount of resources and effort. Surface the priority focus. Establish long-term goals, but only specify activity for shorter periods, certainly not more than 120 days. Most organizations are moving too fast to plan in detail much further out. Ideally you will be able to publish the plan on a website. One of our clients used a technology where an automatic email was sent to the person responsible to alert him or her before an action was due.

Here's an example of the potential power of such a process. We had a three-day whole system transformation summit with the top 350 people of a Fortune 250 organization. During one module of the design, the issue for interaction was the executive team's relationship with the remaining 340 leaders. A design team created an activity so the room could react to the behavioral commitments that the executive team made in the previous year's summit. After a very honest and open reaction from the first table's report-out, the second person reporting started by acknowledging his pleasure with the directness that had been heard and said, "I think we must hear a detailed assessment of the executive team from every table in the room." Applause and a standing ovation occurred.

On the spot we changed the design so all were heard. The rapt attention of the participants was stunning. The executive team spent from 8:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. crafting their response. When they presented it the next morning, they received a standing ovation. The people had been heard! In fact, this group decided not to have any structured follow-up or reaction phase. They did not need it. They just went and performed.

Six months later when the board was challenging the executive team about flying three hundred people to Minneapolis for the session, the second person in charge said, "Remember how you have been challenging us for the last five years to increase our profit in one of the financial variables? Well, look at the numbers. Note the five-million-dollar difference. We know that was the result of our organization change summit."

Act. Acting the plan is the heart and soul of what we do in OD, where the interventions we have planned with clients are carried out. The Act phase is where we get the results, where we add value. When we do it well, performance increases. If we have done all previous phases and sub-phases competently, success should spontaneously and authentically occur.

Chris Argyris offers a clear, simple, and profound statement around "Act." *He writes, "In order to act, human beings diagnose problems, invent solutions,* and evaluate the effectiveness of what they have produced" (2004, p. 2). These are indeed the same steps we are describing in SPAR. A key competency of an OD practitioner is to facilitate client conversation to help these effective change actions happen.

Argyris continues by saying, "Productive reasoning (1) produces valid knowledge, (2) creates informed choices, and (3) makes personal reasoning transparent in order for the claims to be tested robustly. The core of productive reasoning is that the parties involved are vigilant about striving to avoid unknowingly deceiving themselves and others" (2004, p. 3).

The following are some practical tips for the Act phase:

- *Increase the quality of the conversation.* Being transparent includes fishing for doubts and reservations so the concerns of all parties can be on the table. Name the resistance and honor it. Part of our role is to surface the "undiscussables," to surface the below-the-table thinking, to shed light on the shadow of the system. To get a view of the "whole," representing all parts of the system is required. (Of course, we must do so without getting ourselves fired by leadership that is not yet prepared for truth. And we must protect the truth tellers so they will continue to feel safe in speaking their view of the truth.)
- *Facilitate high-performing relationships.* Let us share an example. We had an executive team come to a four-day residential retreat prepared to light the fire in their team. The first day they were overwhelmed by the challenges before them. The team went into a funk. We anticipated such a state from our scan. We knew that there were serious relationship issues in the team so we spent a couple of days in deep dialogue around specific relationships and the climate of the team as a whole. By noon of the third day, there was a dramatic shift. They began to feel a confidence that they could handle the challenges before them better than any other team in the world. Why? We believe that the time they spent in effective dialogue (and our masterful facilitation, of course) moved them to a place where they deepened the genuine connection to all others in the team. Deep relationships generate confidence to act on significant challenges.
- *Establish a climate of trust and openness.* Our experience indicates that participants become very excited and engaged while they are working with the reality of their system. Without doubt, if they have been

in honest dialogue, they will be likely to generate effective solutions. Expectations increase. An increase in results often does not happen until an expectation is declared.

- *Empower all to "act" through engagement.* Peter Block acknowledges that he learned much about engagement from Kathie Dannemiller. Kathie is known for her co-invention of whole-scale-change methodologies and especially for her belief in empowerment. Peter says:

> "A core strategy for building emotional commitment to implementation is to design new ways for people to engage each other. This may be more critical than the clarity or rightness of a decision. Results are achieved when members of a system collectively choose to move in a certain direction. It is this act of choice that is critical.... We tenaciously hold onto the belief that leaders can induce others to act. Leaders can no more induce action on the part of their followers than consultants can induce action on the part of their clients." (2000, p. 265)

- *Ensure that the people in the organization are prepared to support the action.* We have found that it is best if the entire system is engaged in helping leadership define high-performance behavior. If it happens, the payoff is remarkable. If the participants have been genuinely connected to the change process up to this point, support, ownership, and commitment will prevail. Also structures, high-level systems, policies, and procedures must be adapted to help the system conduct the "Act" phase successfully.
- *Engage the leaders.* Leaders must visibly support the action. If in the past they were among those leaders who do not walk their talk, a change process is a great opportunity for them to now have a breakthrough. Anyone can change behavior. The desired behaviors just need to be clarified and committed to. Leaders need to model the changed or transformed mindset. How the organization views the congruency of leadership cannot be underestimated.
- *Help internal change agents.* They can prepare to and be available to move the action plan forward. If the SPAR model is effective, the client group's resolute spirit reaches out to internals to receive support and assistance in realizing their dreams. Perhaps they can be of assistance in areas that may be "stuck." In other instances, internal practitioners can offer themselves as coaches. Essentially, this is the time for them to initiate their own "SPAR" process. They will best serve the system if they are continually scanning, planning, acting, and re-acting to what is occurring.

Re-Act. The "Re-Act" phase occurs in more than one way. Planning renewal is a must. Re-action is necessary as the organization responds to the implementation of the plan. The action plan always evolves differently than you might have expected, so your plan must be updated and adjusted. Reaction feeds corrective action. Now is also the time to extract the learning from the previous three phases, and to be prepared for the next cycle of SPAR.

The following section highlights some issues related to this phase:

- *Obtain information on which to base re-action.* One of the best ways to get reaction is to have informal and frequent sessions where participants can converse. That will allow unforeseen obstacles and developing resistance to be identified. This is the time to monitor what has taken place. Monitoring may include scientific or non-scientific measured reactions to what has happened and is taking place. Monitoring is the reflective process to discern what we have learned from what has just happened in the previous three steps to guide us as we repeat SPAR.

  It may be done with periodic online surveys. One company had all computers set so they would not fire up until the person signing on completed a brief survey on the status of the department action plan. For example, people were asked:

  - What they had accomplished the previous week
  - What they would accomplish the upcoming week
  - What the best change practice they had observed in the organization the past week was
  - What one wish they had for the larger system to change in the immediate future to increase results

- *Deal with challenges.* It's important that challenges that arise be dealt with quickly and effectively. Challenges are not always bad news. One manufacturing client in the midst of dramatically transforming the entire enterprise just to survive struck gold with an unprecedented amount of new work. For the first time in their almost 100-year history, they were getting and turning away new work from the prestigious automotive industry. Thirty percent of the industry had just gone kaput the previous twenty months. Work was going to China in waves. But not for them; they could select high-quality customers who were willing to pay a premium for their products. An entire new focus for the change plan was required. They knew that not handling the opportunity wisely could take the company under. They had to quickly scale up for the increased business.
- *Avoid slippage.* It happens that organizations revert to previous behavior. Very often systems in place for years—systems that supported the old behavior—will become apparent now and provide pressure to do things the old way. The reaction phase is the time for the organization to invent ways to get back on track. If resistance persists after offering people chances to learn and use the new ways, leadership may have to say, "The boat to the new land has just left. If we are going to survive and you believe in what we are doing here, then we need your best.

If you are not willing to give us 100 percent, we have some rowboats that you can use to make your exit." Most importantly, people must be encouraged, supported, and cheered on in the efforts they are making toward change or transformation.

- *Celebrate success*. This is the time to celebrate. Tell stories of success. Seek out and share best practices and examples of progress of new work process or team behaviors. One of our clients collected hundreds of success stories and made them available on the web. Leaders of the organization might give their reactions to the change action commencing. A vote of confidence from them can go a long way. Such reaction activities can be fantastic momentum boosters.
- *Apply lessons learned*. A very important aspect of the SPAR cycle is to glean the best of the change practices and institutionalize them. A learning organization recognizes what has worked and adopts it into the ongoing process of doing business, so the best new practices become standard operating procedures, culture, or policies. Once they are accepted and working smoothly, resources can be again freed up to find the next new improvements.

Every year or so, depending on how much people in an organization thirst for positive change, the change effort may start back at the launch phase when a deep dive transformation lift is needed. For one of our clients, the largest financial system in South Africa, launching transformative change has become a way of life. They are known to do a dozen summits per year. The summits are designed where the system boundaries are open to customers and events in the larger culture. That keeps them close to their customers and has made them one of the most loved brands in Africa.

Competencies for SPAR. We have selected a few of the many competencies required in the SPAR approach to list here, as we feel they are the most critical to remember. Here they are

- Keeping the client focused on the stated purpose yet allowing flexibility to flow with the river of change rather than against it;
- Being perceptive and hearing what really is happening and facilitating a response that moves the system forward;
- Ability to quickly and accurately adapt to unexpected forces;
- Knowing how to help set parallel interventions amidst a chaotic and complex environment;
- Joining with participants as the implementation unfolds in a collaborative manner to better learn to interact around how the work can achieve more results;

- Building and mobilizing commitment to the change process;
- Generalizing learnings and making new knowledge explicit so others can utilize it;
- Helping the client apply systems theory to include expansionist thinking and the establishment of connectivity;
- Looking for the positive and bringing out success stories;
- Building interdependency within the client system rather than fostering dependency on the change agent;
- Ensuring that feedback loops are functioning effectively so specific data are flowing in a timely manner;
- Setting up a monitored accountability process to surface success and new challenges; and
- Helping the client see when a change is ready for adoption and when a change needs to be maintained.

So we see that the SPAR model can be a cycle within a cycle—a Chinese box within a box—an endless loop of response to the ongoing change in today's organizations. Leaving the SPAR model, we come back to our larger change frame and conclude.

Separation

When we search the literature, we find little on consultant separation or closure. Yet we know from our learning on the dynamics of small groups that saying good-bye and endings are very important. Recall the organization change and transformation that grew out of the group development era of the 1950s through the 1980s. The best source of wisdom on this phase has come from our competency research.

Separation is already treated in this book, so we only wish to add one story. We know of a well-known and respected OD consultant who establishes up-front ground rules for separation. One key ground rule is this: Either the consultant or the client can call a separation meeting at any time. The clients and the consultant commit to a full-day session offsite in an environment free from distractions. At that time they can process the engagement with honesty and openness, trusting that a mutual decision about how and when to separate will evolve. Such a contractual arrangement gave the consultant an opportunity to give the client system a wake-up call regarding what was being stirred in the system because of the intervention, while providing an opportunity to adjust the change process so breakthrough progress could be made. If the client was having issues with the change process or the consultant behavior, an opportunity was provided to work through the issues. Sometimes clients do not understand the consultant's approach. They have a natural tendency to become resistant and defensive. A heart-to-heart conversation will start movement for additional external help or a termination that can be settled on in a manner that is agreeable to both the client and the consultant.

OTHER CHANGE MODELS

Writings about organizational change are replete with a dizzying array of different change models to guide change leaders and change facilitators. Three of the best-known to corporate managers are Kotter's eight-step model for strategic change, Jick's ten-step model, and General Electric's seven-step model.

Common Elements

Kotter's (1995) model is based on a study of change in over one hundred organizations of different sizes and industry categories. Kotter's model is intended to help change leaders avoid common errors. It might be regarded as a vision of what the change process should be and how it should be carried out.

Jick's (1991a; 1991b) model is focused on the tactical level of change. It is really a blueprint for a change process. The model serves a dual purpose. It can be useful in evaluating and reacting to the progress of change efforts that have already been launched. It can also serve as a roadmap for the issues to consider when launching a change effort. He labels it tactical because of his belief that most change efforts fail in execution.

Garvin (2000) published a version of General Electric's change model. GE's model is based on Kurt Lewin's (1947) model for change, which emphasizes the importance of unfreezing, movement, and refreezing. The model stresses what leaders need to do to make change happen.

The three models are summarized in Figure 2.5. According to Mento, Jones, and Dirndorfer (2002), the models share some elements in common and can be distilled to identify specific steps to be taken during a change effort:

Step 1: Discover the idea and its context.

Step 2: Assess to define the change initiative.

Step 3: Evaluate the climate for change.

Step 4: Develop a change plan.

Step 5: Find and cultivate a sponsor.

Step 6: Prepare your target audience, the recipients of change.

Step 7: Create the cultural fit making the change last.

Step 8: Develop and choose a change leader team.

Step 9: Create small wins for motivation.

Step 10: Constantly and strategically communicate the change.

Step 11: Measure the progress of the change effort.

Step 12: Integrate the lessons learned in the change process.

Critiques of Existing Change Models

Existing change models have not been immune from criticism. As Schaafsma (1997, p. 41) has written, "Middle managers who search the current literature for successful models and case studies of change may have difficulty finding something that meets their needs." In short, the issues involving middle managers in change efforts are too often forgotten in existing change models.

Existing change models can be criticized for focusing too much attention on top-down change (Whiteley, 1995), leaving vague the details on how to establish vision, mission, and strategy, providing too much emphasis on the corporate hierarchy as a tool for the change process, directing too much attention to short-term and bottom-line measures of success, and playing too much to the "old boy network" as an instrument for change.

There is no "one best way" to manage change, when (in reality) organizational transformation may require a range of models to be used selectively. Models must be attuned to the corporate cultures and group norms of the settings in which they are applied, and so improvisation is essential (Orlikowski & Hofman, 1997).

The Change Handbook (Holman, Devane, & Cady, 2007) describes over sixty methods and models from founders and leaders in the OD. change, and management field based on engaging whole systems. Please visit the book's website for a more expansive list of change models.

SUMMARY

A model for change serves as a compass to guide managers and consultants as they lead or facilitate change efforts. These models are best understood as a simplified representation of the general steps in initiating and carrying out a change process. This chapter reviewed numerous models for change...some old, some evolving.

Critical research was the first model. Stemming ultimately from Marxist practices, CR is similar to a dialectic approach to change in which opposing positions are used to power change. Critical research drives change from the natural tension that develops between what people believe should be happening and what they believe is actually happening. The basic thrust of CR is to identify this discrepancy and use it to power change. Although critical research has not been widely used in mainstream OD, interventions such as confrontation meetings can lend themselves to it.

Traditional action research was the second model examined in this chapter. Long the foundation for many change efforts, it is properly regarded as both a model and a process. A typical way to view it is that change is managed as a project and encompasses eight key steps.

A third model examined in this chapter was Appreciative Inquiry. Appreciative Inquiry is a philosophy. It "invites us to choose consciously to seek out and inquire into that which is generative and life-enriching, both in our own lives and in the lives of others, and to explore our hopes and dreams for the future" (Watkins & Mohr, 2001, p. 58).

A new view of action research was the fourth and final model examined in this chapter. Its creation is in response to recent research that indicates that the old linear models are not working. It reinvents the traditional action research model based on the assumption that change efforts should not be managed as projects but instead as a process.

The final section of the chapter reviewed some other change models that have been described in the literature. A large section of this book is based on the new view of action research. The reader will therefore find chapters in the rest of the book that address these methods in more detail.

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