INTENTIONAL CHANGE

With the power and responsibilities of leadership come extraordinary challenges, and even the best leaders can get trapped in a cycle of stress, pressure, sacrifice, and dissonance—with potentially disastrous implications for their careers, relationships, health, and happiness. Building on their work with Daniel Goleman in Primal Leadership *(Harvard Business School Press, 2002), the authors point the way to renewal through a process of intentional change. The five steps lead to sustainable changes in habits, perceptions, and mood, as well as an enhanced ability to get results through greater understanding of your own and others' emotions—the heart of resonant leadership.*

Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee

Meaningful and important changes do happen by chance. Without a high degree of awareness, we may not notice the changes for a long time—or until others comment on them. In this sense, desired changes often appear discontinuous. In complexity theory, these surprises are called "emergence." For most of us, though, the important changes in our lives feel like epiphanies; they are truly discoveries. With increased mindfulness, the process of change seems smooth or even seamless. Part of the challenge of creating and sustaining excellent leadership is to recognize, manage, and even direct one's own process of learning and change. People who manage their own development intentionally are poised to make good choices about what they need to do to be more effective and more satisfied with their lives. Drawing on decades of research, much of it conducted by Richard Boyatzis, we can now say with some certainty that the Intentional Change Model can help people to engage in personal transformation successfully, and with excitement and enthusiasm.[1]

Longitudinal research studies in the last few years have shown that sustainable change occurs as we focus on five major discoveries:[2]

1. The *ideal self*, or what you want out of life and the person you want to be—leading to your personal vision.
2. The *real self*, or how you act and are seen by others; the comparison of the real self to the ideal self results in identification of your strengths and weaknesses—leading to your personal balance sheet.

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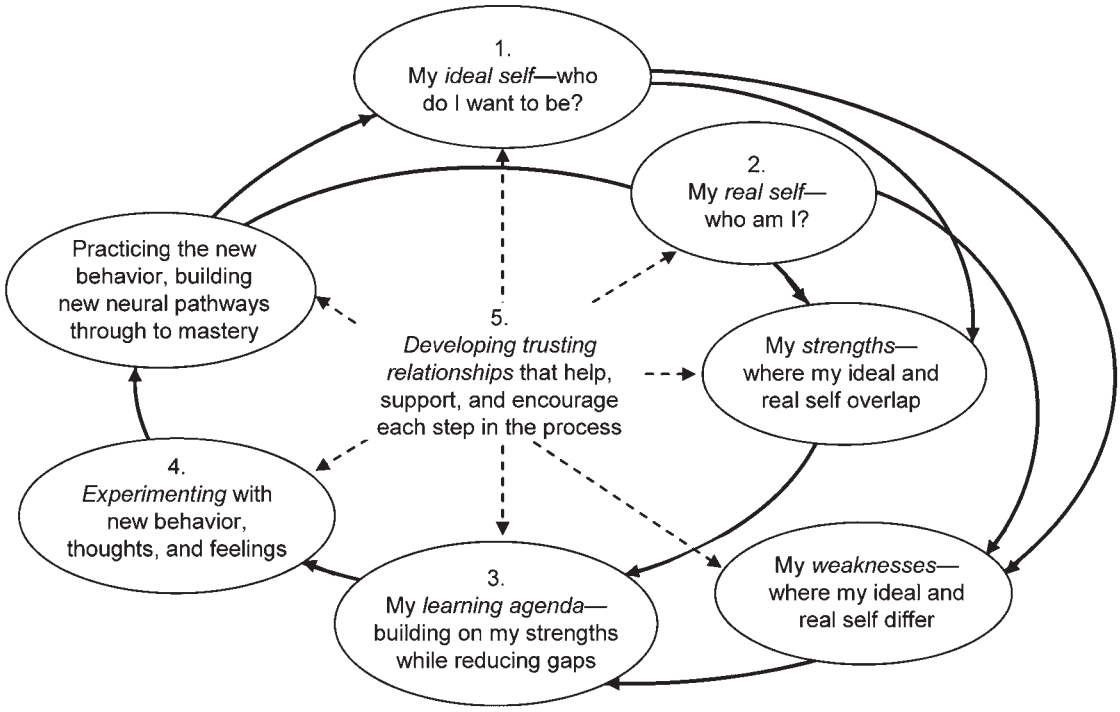
Exhibit 1. Boyatzis's Intentional Change Theory*



* Formerly self-directed learning theory.

3. Your *learning agenda* to capitalize on your strengths and move you closer to your personal vision while possibly working on a weakness or two (or working to maintain the ideal current state of your life and work).
4. *Experimenting with and practicing new habits* or reinforcing and affirming your strengths.
5. *Developing and maintaining close, personal relationships*—resonant relationships—that enable you to move through these discoveries toward renewal.

These discoveries are shown in **Exhibit 1** as a cyclical process. Your path to renewal and resonance involves cycling through these discoveries to become the person you want to be and live the life you want to live. [*Editor's note: The authors define resonance as the ability to deftly manage one's own emotions and those of others to achieve results, with emotional intelligence a key ingredient.*]

But dissonance is the default. Without intentional effort to move into resonance or remain there, we can miss opportunities for personal transformation, and our relationships will slide into less effective and less fulfilling interactions. On the path to resonance with self and with others, hope is the driver, compassion enables it, and mindfulness makes the path smoother and more understandable. Only with these elements can we sustain personal health, effectiveness, and resonant relationships. But it is not easy. It takes commitment and courage.

Let us look at an example of a classic high-achieving, action-oriented, successful man who dramatically improved his already good leadership through engaging in intentional change to develop his capacity for renewal and resonance.

A LEADER'S JOURNEY TO RENEWAL

As CEO of Italy's UniCredit Banca, Roberto Nicastro stands out. He is young to be in his position—barely in his forties. His ruffled hair, quick smile, and restless inclination to act make him appear to be in perpetual motion, driven as he is by a powerful desire for excellence. And while he is likeable, friendly, and confident, Roberto is also

a leader whose mental sharpness has brought him and his company much success.

For example, recently Roberto was instrumental in enabling UniCredit Group to engage in an ambitious international expansion. In only three short years, the group took a solid but very bold acquisition strategy from vision to reality. Starting with just a minor interest outside the Italian borders, Roberto's business acumen, emotional intelligence, and sheer energy enabled the bank to develop partnerships with several significant financial services institutions in Central and Eastern Europe. Moving across cultural barriers is not always easy, and it is often difficult to establish trust, but Roberto quickly built solid relationships during the merger and acquisitions processes in sensitive situations that could have become contentious. He found novel solutions to management dilemmas. He built new systems, both human and organizational.

Given his obvious success as a leader, when we met Roberto we found it fascinating (and admirable) that he had decided to focus his energy on developing himself. After all, he was doing great, leading this new, exciting division with a very promising future in the industry. He and his family were also happy in their personal life. So why change?

Step 1: The Sparks That Ignite the Passion to Change—Finding Your Ideal Self. Roberto Nicastro described his awakening to the need for a different kind of happiness as a Maslovian process.[3] Early on, he was meeting modern basic needs: starting his career, doing well in his field, courting his loved one, getting married, having a family. All of these had been achieved some time ago. But, in quiet moments of honest reflection, Roberto knew deep down that he was not totally at peace with himself. He recognized that he was on an emotional roller coaster much of the time, pushing up hills and careening down—not feeling out of control, really, just not peaceful. It was starting to seem as if this roller coaster might be all there was to his life, and it was just not enough. Even though to everyone around him—up, down, and around in the organization—he seemed to be totally in control and very successful, Roberto knew that he was beginning to be caught in the Sacrifice Syndrome. This is the trap into which many leaders fall when they give too much without renewing themselves on a regular basis.

To his credit, Roberto saw what was going on long before it negatively affected him or his leadership. And, interestingly, he was not driven to change by any sort of fear of impending failure. In fact, the impetus was just the opposite: instead of being driven by a need to compensate for weaknesses, he wanted to build on his strengths. The spark that ignited Roberto's commitment to develop himself was a desire to be the best *person* he could be.[4] As he began to realize that he was indeed achieving the goals he had set for himself with respect to career and family, he found himself free to think a bit more expansively about life. He began imagining a future that included physical health well into old age, deeply fulfilling relationships at home and at work, and even making his mark in the world—his legacy, if you will. Roberto began to imagine a bigger future that was ripe with hope.

Surprisingly, even though we know the importance of considering a positive view of ourselves and our future, we often skip this step.

The new image that emerged of the person he wanted to be was what we call the *ideal self*. It was a vision that ignited hope—a powerful driver of behavior. His vision and hope actually motivated his change process, and constituted the first epiphany he had on the journey.

This kind of discovery—this awareness of what could be—that Roberto experienced was the first step in his becoming mindful of his personal change process. This process begins with identifying your dream—for yourself, your life, and your work.

The last twenty years have seen considerable research done on the power of positive imaging and visioning. The research in sports psychology, meditation, and biofeedback indicates that we can access and engage deep emotional commitment and psychic energy if we engage our passions and catch our dreams in our ideal self-image.[5] Surprisingly, even though we know the importance of considering a positive view of ourselves and our future, we often skip this step. We take on others' hopes for us, maybe, or we simply let ourselves become numb to our own dreams. So, your first challenge: Find your dream—your own vision for yourself and your life.[6]

Step 2: Confronting Your Real Self—Finding Your Strengths and Weaknesses. As Roberto worked to clarify his vision, he felt excitement, hope, and a compelling desire to move toward the future. Along with excitement from his hopeful vision came energy and a commitment to look at what might get in his way, what was preventing him from creating the life he dreamed about. He started looking at himself holistically—mind, body, heart, and spirit—and came to the conclusion that in fact some of his greatest strengths were now becoming liabilities.

Becoming clear about oneself and how others experience us is difficult and takes courage.

Becoming aware who we are *now*—what we call the real self—is the next step in intentional change. To move from where we are now to where we want to be, we need to have a sense of how others see us, and how that image matches (or does not match) with how we see ourselves.

This is an important aspect of mindfulness and requires deep self-awareness and the willingness to be vulnerable. Becoming clear about oneself and how others experience us is difficult and takes courage. Why? Because over time, we build a certain (usually positive) self-image, and our psyche actively protects that image from harm or change by preventing us from taking in all of the information about ourselves, especially negative or disconfirming information. This defense mechanism serves to protect us, but it also conspires to delude us into an image of who we are that feeds on itself, becomes self-perpetuating, and eventually may become dysfunctional.[7] So in order to really see ourselves as we are we have to let our defenses down.

Roberto was a prime candidate for playing out this dynamic. Everyone had always praised his creativity, energy, drive, and ambition. In his early career these characteristics were the source of his success, and he certainly did not want to put out his own flame. Yet during this time of visioning, he found himself to be more open and willing to let his defenses down, increasing his capacity to look at himself realistically. He began listening to his emotions, his body, and to what people did *not* say to him. He began to realize that his strengths—notably his creativity, action orientation, and speed—were also at the root of some of his problems. Roberto's adrenalin was constantly pumping—he was in a physiological state of high alert most of the time. His body was beginning to revolt: Irritating stress-related illnesses were becoming more common with each passing year. He realized that his intensity, focus, and creativity were sources of personal satisfaction and success but also at the core of some of the internal unrest and stress he habitually experienced. He noticed the effects of power stress and the beginning of the Sacrifice Syndrome.

Moreover, his intense style was beginning to cause a few problems with his work relationships. At the height of his fast-paced, action-oriented, hurricane era, Roberto inspired admiration, awe, frustration, and sometimes fear. His tendency to constantly move toward novelty and to always have lists of new ideas and projects became overwhelming for the people around him. Some could not keep up and began to feel exhausted, inadequate, or decidedly uninspired.

At around the same time, there were a couple of difficult personnel situations that were not, in fact, helped by his intensity. He came to see that part of the problem was that he moved too fast, with such impatience, that he could lose sight of the people around him. In his search for excellence and the next best idea he was running right over people—not really understanding their experience and often quite callously ignoring his impact or the impact of what he set in motion.

As he moved up the hierarchy, he realized, his style might become a liability.[8] Even though so many strengths—such as initiative, drive, and the quest for excellence—actually do lead to success, they can also become very problematic for a leader and the people around him when left unexamined. In fact, people who have a strong achievement motive often find themselves pushing so hard for excellence that they actually sabotage their own and others' efforts—not very effective in leadership situations. It is particularly damaging when dealing with strong individuals at the top of a large organization, where relationships are key.

When we finally recognize that we are heading for trouble, we often wonder why we did not see it sooner. In fact, however, seeing yourself as

others see you and honestly considering your internal states, beliefs, emotions, and so forth is probably one of the most difficult developmental challenges. Many of us know this phenomenon as the boiling frog syndrome. Simply put, if you drop a frog into a pot of boiling water, the frog will immediately jump out. But place a frog in a pot of cool water, and gradually raise the temperature to boiling, and the frog will remain in the water, unaware of the rising temperature, until it is cooked to death.

Several factors contribute to humans becoming boiling frogs. People around you may not let you see yourself or the world clearly; they simply do not give you feedback or information about how they see you. This is particularly true if you have power over them—as a parent or leader, for example. Or, they may be victims of the boiling frog syndrome themselves, not seeing you or the world all that clearly. And some people are enablers: They deliberately avoid sharing the truth. They may be frightened of repercussions, want to avoid conflict, or be unwilling to change themselves.

We also miss clues about our real selves because when we attempt to change and develop, all too often we focus only on our deficiencies rather than our strengths. Organizational training programs and managers conducting annual reviews often make the same mistake. There is an assumption that when it comes to talents and strengths, we can leave well enough alone and get to the areas that need work. So, at best, people are faced with negative and disconfirming information about themselves, with little or no attention paid to their strengths. They then become trapped by negativity, which has a powerful and destructive effect. They lose the passion for change, become resentful, or even opt out from their jobs, psychologically if not physically. It is no wonder that many of the leadership programs intended to help a person develop result in the individual feeling battered, beleaguered, and bruised, rather than encouraged, motivated, or guided.

As Roberto's story illustrates, for you to truly consider changing yourself, you must have a sense of what you value and want to *keep*. Roberto started with a sense that quite a lot was working well with respect to his leadership and his life. He began examining himself holistically—looking at what he valued in himself as well as what he might need to change. He took a balanced approach, focusing on what we call *strengths* and *gaps*.

The areas in which your real self and ideal self are consistent and congruent can be considered strengths, and you are likely to want to preserve them. You will also need to consider weaknesses: areas where your real self and ideal self are not consistent, or deficiencies that you wish to change or adapt in some manner (these deficiencies are often referred to as *gaps* in organizations). Then you have to turn your insight into an actionable plan—a personal vision and a learning agenda.

Talking with close friends or mentors can help, if both you and they agree to candor, honesty, support, and confidentiality.

It takes courage to change patterns that have always worked well, to let the old behaviors and attitudes go and try new ones. It is particularly difficult to modify one's strengths—after all, we do not want to obliterate the very characteristics that have enabled us to succeed. Difficult as this kind of change can be, it is important to start with a highly motivating vision—this is exactly what the ideal self is, and why the hope it generates can provide the fuel that drives the engine of personal transformation.

It takes inner strength to look at your real self. That is why you need to look at the ideal self *first*. This gives you a powerful, positive, and motivating sense of what could be that sustains you through the hard work of looking at your current reality. Discovering the real self, then, begins by looking closely at your ideal self. We have included exercises [later in the book] for insight into your ideal self. These activities are personal and the outcomes can be elusive, so the work of exploring your ideal self must take place in psychologically safe surroundings. These exercises and tests can help by making explicit the dreams or aspirations you have for the future. Talking with close friends or mentors can help, if both you and they agree to candor, honesty, support, and confidentiality. Allowing yourself to think about your desired future, not merely a prediction of your most likely future, is difficult but quite possible if you diligently consider your real dreams and consciously stay open to possibilities.

After you have discovered your ideal self and begun to gain insight into your real self—and your strengths and weaknesses—you might want to begin systematically collecting information from others, perhaps through 360-degree feedback, which is popular in organizations. Other sources of insight into your real self may come from behavioral feedback through video- or audiotaped interactions and other exercises done in assessment centers, career centers, and coaching relationships. Again, good friends and loved ones can help if all parties take the exploration and conversations seriously and treat one another with compassion and sensitivity. Various psychological tests, such as those that look at values, philosophy, traits, and motives, can also help you determine or make explicit inner aspects of your real self. In fact, reflecting on your core values and operating philosophy is a good way to begin this process.

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Once we have these insights about our strengths and weaknesses, and the context of our personal vision, how do we get there? Developing a learning agenda makes it possible.

Before we see how Roberto's story has played out, let us now move to the case of how another executive remade herself into a resonant leader.

Step 3: Creating a Learning Agenda for a New Future. "Ellen" is a general manager of a small business within a FORTUNE 500 company that makes a variety of automotive and truck components. Little did she know, when she took yet another promotion in 2000, that she was about to have an epiphany that would bring her strengths and weaknesses into stark relief. Her appointment as head of sales and marketing at one of the parent company's large divisions followed the latest of what had been a series of star performance reviews. In this review, her boss, the general manager, gave her the first "1" performance rating he had awarded in his twenty years of managing for the company.

Success was not new to Ellen. After getting a BA in biomedical engineering and one MA in finance and another in operations, she was on the fast track—changing jobs about every year and a half. She wanted to be the best she could be at any job and enjoyed the steady movement up the ladder toward general management. Her duties were challenging, including orchestrating layoffs and restructuring. Following one particularly difficult turnaround period, a new HR manager came into the division. He approached Ellen on a Friday and said, "We have a problem." He had reviewed exit interviews with people who were laid off and handed her a list of things people had said about her.

The list devastated her. People had said things like, "I can't trust Ellen." "She doesn't care about her people. She only cares about results." "She's intimidating to work for." "She expects a lot out of people without taking the time to develop them." The shock permeated Ellen's every waking thought for the weekend. She could not believe it. She had always done what was needed or expected of her and gotten results. Her performance was exemplary and had won her accolades. Bosses had consistently praised her.

Ellen approached her boss on Monday and asked him what this meant. He was angry at the HR manager for what he had done (without his knowledge), and furious at the way he had done it. He reiterated all of her strengths, as he had a few months earlier at the time of the promotion and most recently at her annual review. But he then told her that although she always got results, "You have to get your people to be as results driven and passionate as you are—then, you'll be ten times more successful." He handed her a book on emotional intelligence and suggested that she read it and consider its implications for her style.[9] As we all know, reading a book—any book—is rarely enough to get us to change. But, as Ellen read, she was also crafting a vision of her ideal self, and a vision of her future. She saw that some of the attributes of great leadership, including empathy, would be essential if she were to achieve her dreams. This was her wake-up call—and she heard it.

Over the next few weeks, Ellen came to realize that her new mission was to get results through others. As she will say now, "For many years, I demonstrated very little empathy at work. In fact, in my efforts to demonstrate strength and courage in a male-dominated environment, I had convinced myself that empathy was a sign of weakness and did not belong in the workplace. As a result, I was

very unskilled at being an empathetic manager." And this despite the fact that at home with her husband and children, and with her friends and extended family, she was tuned into others. "The book," she said, "convinced me that emotions had a place at work."

Her learning agenda started with getting help. When she asked, her boss encouraged Ellen to go ahead and find a coach. She did, and worked with him to refine her image of her ideal self. In particular, her coach helped her realize that she could not achieve her dreams unless she really focused on and fixed the problem she had showing empathy. She and her coach engaged in long conversations and even exercises that enabled her to explore empathy and to practice it at work and at home. The exercises sounded simple, but they were not easy for someone who had never thought this way—at least not within the work environment. They had a powerful effect on Ellen's awareness and growing talent for understanding others' feelings and tuning into their moods. For example, the coach once asked her to describe what others' feelings and thoughts were likely to be during an upcoming meeting, *before* she went into the meeting. She did this before each meeting for a few weeks. At first, it seemed awkward and an interference in her tight schedule, but she kept repeating to herself that she had to tune into the others to be able to motivate them.

Then Ellen visualized customers' thoughts and feelings through play. Soon she felt confident enough to begin to use the new insights and techniques with her internal customers. Next, she asked for her next two promotions to be in staff positions. In these roles, she had no direct subordinates, but had to use her interpersonal sensitivity and skills to get things done. She continually practiced her new-found talent. Eventually, she found that she did not have to spend so much conscious effort. She seemed to be aware of how others were feeling and their moods while looking at them or just being in the room with them.

About two years later, when she was offered the challenging job of turning around an old-line business, she felt ready, but nervous. She took the job as general manager of the business unit. Had her transformation worked?

Now, with over one hundred people reporting to her, Ellen says, "I am having more fun than I ever imagined.… I love the people I'm working with … because, in part, we have good relationships while getting results." Her division and her company have turned around financially. But, you might ask, what is different? What's different is Ellen—how she is leading, and how people experience her leadership.

We had the pleasure of observing Ellen recently when she received anonymous 360-degree feedback from all of her direct reports, as well as peers and her boss. It confirmed that her intentional change had worked. As she opened her 360-degree report, her face broke into a smile. She had done it. In all of the six emotional intelligence competencies related to relationship management, including developing others, inspirational leadership, and teamwork, her direct reports and boss assessed her at or above the target point for outstanding leaders. With regard to empathy, her direct reports gave her an almost-perfect score.[10] In the open-ended comments, people praised her and used words like "inspirational" and "exciting" to describe her leadership. She had become a resonant leader!

Even when we have the intention, courage, and energy for change, it is easy to become distracted and focus on the wrong things.

What worked so well for Ellen can work for others—but not always. Even when we have the intention, courage, and energy for change, it is easy to become distracted and focus on the wrong things. Lots of times, when we realize that our style is beginning to cause problems for us, we turn to coping strategies—exercise, a better diet, a holiday. In extreme cases, we have known people who quit their jobs, ended marriages, or took other drastic measures to try to alleviate their distress. While all of these things are sometimes necessary, and in particular the healthy coping mechanisms are probably things we should all do, the reality is that if we do not find the true source of our distress, anxiety, or our shortcomings, no coping mechanisms or extreme measures will really help. A great exercise program is just a Band-Aid if we have internal drivers that cause us to be forever dissatisfied and striving. Leaving a job might ease things for a while, but most people we know

who do this without getting at the real issues eventually end up in another situation as stressful as the one they left.

While Ellen's challenge was to become mindful of others and work on her empathy, Roberto's was to become mindful of himself and work on his self-awareness. Let us return to him now to see how he used personal transformation to accelerate his success at work—and at home.

To Roberto's credit, he saw that if he wanted to be content, to have some measure of peace in his life and to achieve his dream, he needed to attend to himself holistically. His challenge was to become mindful of himself—his emotions, his drives, how he made sense of things, his habitual patterns of behavior. Taking up a new sport or building in more time for family and enjoyable activities would not be enough. He needed to address the issues from the inside out.

When engaging in any personal change process, it is a good idea to choose only a few key things to work on.

After his initial self-diagnosis, Roberto turned his drive for excellence inward, on himself, and slowed down long enough to take stock—to look at what in his life might help him realize his vision and what might get in the way. He engaged in a number of activities, quietly and with little fanfare. He found a coach … The regular meetings and conversations provided a structure within which Roberto could begin to grapple with his hopes for the future and current reality. All in all, Roberto spent several months talking through issues, deciding which strengths to leverage and what he needed to change. He developed a learning agenda and began to implement it.

This is the third step in intentional change: development of an agenda and focusing on moving toward the desired future. While performance at work or happiness in life may be the eventual consequence of our efforts, a learning agenda focuses on the *process* of development itself. It focuses our energy on learning first, outcomes second. The orientation to learning arouses a positive belief in one's capability and the hope of improvement.[11]

A major threat to effective goal setting and planning is that we are already busy and cannot add anything else to our lives. We can only succeed in the change process, then, if we determine when to say "no" and stop some current activities in our lives to make room for new activities.

Another potential challenge or threat is the development of a plan that calls for people to engage in activities at odds with their preferred learning style and therefore difficult to adopt. When this occurs, a person becomes demotivated and often stops the activities, or becomes impatient and decides that the goals are not worth the effort.[12]

When engaging in any personal change process, it is a good idea to choose only a few key things to work on. Ellen focused on understanding what others were feeling. For Roberto, the challenge was clear: If he was going to have more positive impact on the people around him, he needed to temper his desire for action and novelty as well as his impatience. He needed to channel his energy more effectively and in a healthier way.

Step 4: Experimentation—and Practice, Practice, Practice. Once your agenda or plan points you in the right direction, you have to practice sufficiently to go beyond comfort to mastery of the new habits. That is what worked for both Ellen and Roberto. The new attitudes and behaviors have to become unconscious responses. Early wins spark hope—which in turn engenders energy and commitment to the process. Then, the fourth step in the intentional change process is to experiment with and practice desired changes. Acting on your plan and moving toward your goals involves numerous activities and experimenting with new behavior. To develop or learn new behavior, you must find ways to learn more from current or ongoing experiences. That is, the experimentation and practice does not always require attending courses or engaging in a new activity. It may involve trying something different in a current setting, reflecting on what occurs, and experimenting further in this setting. Sometimes, this part of the process requires finding and using opportunities to learn and change.

Interestingly, people often downplay experimentation and may not even think they have changed until they have tried new behavior in work or other real-world settings.[13] Because of this, we often rush to try new behaviors in "hot" settings,

like work. It is easy to become discouraged if we do this, however, because it is not necessarily safe to try new ways of being in settings where performance is constantly measured. In fact, experimentation and practice are most effective if they are done in conditions in which we feel safe. This sense of psychological safety creates an atmosphere in which we can try new behavior, perceptions, and thoughts with relatively low risk of shame, embarrassment, or serious consequences of failure.[14] This is probably part of the reason that executive coaching can be so helpful. A good coach can provide perspective, feedback, guidance, and confrontation, all within the confines of a safe and confidential environment. Also, a good coach can coax and goad you to continue the practice in the same way a fitness instructor will push you for "five more" repetitions of an exercise.

Hopefully, *following* a period of experimentation in a safe setting (such as with a coach or in personal activities), you will want to practice the new behaviors in the actual settings within which you wish to use them, such as at work or at home. During this part of the process, intentional change and learning begins to look like a continuous improvement process.

For Ellen and Roberto, practicing new behaviors at work and then making them a way of life were crucial steps in their development. Although they were faced with different issues, both practiced becoming attuned to people by simply paying more conscious attention to what was going on around them. We saw how Ellen practiced her visualization of others' feelings and responses over and over. In Roberto's case, he watched people a lot more carefully to see their reactions to him. He focused on how his actions and mood affected others as a way to understand himself and to help him know how to better manage himself. This was something he had done before; it was part of the reason he had been so successful. But now, he began to consciously monitor his habitual responses and thought patterns—noticing more, assuming less, and not taking his first assumptions about individuals or groups for granted. He questioned his quick judgments and automatic responses. He worked hard to avoid the trap of his own perceptions—to understand individuals' experiences from their points of view, rather than his. He schooled himself to draw conclusions based on what he actually saw, thought, and felt rather than habitual patterns of thought and action. In essence, Roberto was transforming his newfound self-awareness into a new level of social awareness that in turn enabled him to manage his own actions more effectively. So, to build social awareness, he worked heavily on his self-management emotional intelligence competencies.[15]

It is a lot harder to stop the process of developing yourself when you have other people invested in helping you change.

Step 5: Don't Try This Alone. As you begin to engage in intentional change, you need to involve other people—connection is essential. For both Roberto and Ellen, their bosses, a coach, their spouses, and a few close friends were essential to their transformation. Sometimes, this is really the first discovery—finding a coach or a good friend or perhaps a colleague who is on a similar quest. The next step: talking to such people, checking your reality with theirs, and opening yourself to their views. Honest dialogue can spark our own creativity, new ways of understanding self and others, and help us stay the course. This takes courage and persistence. Just as it is difficult to really look at oneself, it is not easy to seek others' opinions, expertise, and help. By involving others, you turn up the heat. It is a lot harder to stop the process of developing yourself when you have other people invested in helping you change.

Our relationships are an essential part of our environment and are key to sustaining personal transformation. The most crucial relationships are often within groups that have particular importance to us. These relationships and groups give us a sense of identity. They guide us as to what is appropriate and good behavior, and provide feedback on our behavior.[16]

Based on theories of social identity, our social setting, our culture, our reference groups, and our relationships mediate and moderate our sense of who we are and who we want to be. We develop and elaborate our ideal selves from these contexts as well as label and interpret our real selves from these contexts. And we interpret and

value strengths (things we consider to be part of our core and wish to preserve) and gaps (things we consider to be weaknesses or that we wish to change) from them.

In this sense, our relationships are mediators, moderators, interpreters, sources of feedback, and sources of support, and they give us permission to change and learn. They may also be the most important source of protection from relapses or returning to our earlier forms of behavior.[17]

RESONANCE WITHIN YOURSELF = RESONANCE WITH OTHERS

As we saw, Roberto went through a process of self-discovery that resulted in stepwise changes in his leadership. A gradual awakening to the desire for inner peace and more positive impact on people around him sparked him to enter into a process of envisioning his ideal future, his ideal self. He looked back over his life to see how his habits had developed, and he came to some conclusions about which patterns still served him and which did not. He began continuously monitoring his thoughts, feelings, and behavior, paying attention to what had been automatic responses.

The outcome of this process is that Roberto's internal state is healthier. He is calmer, more in control of his desires, and more content as a person. He now understands better the source of some of the tension that used to trouble him and others. He has learned to manage his intensity and creativity, and is no longer at the mercy of his own achievement drive. He now uses his desire for novelty to turn difficult situations into creative challenges, and is not on a constant quest for diversity of experience. He is more likely to slow down, metaphorically and actually, taking deep breaths and practicing mindful connection with people. Roberto now manages himself much better around the people with whom he works. He restrains himself. He does not overwhelm people with new plans and projects when he sees that they are still grappling with what is happening in the moment. Roberto has learned to control his impulses, to manage his emotions and his strengths so his best ideas are presented to people when they are most ready. And when inevitably he falls into the old patterns, running too hard and too fast for the people around him, he can self-correct much earlier than before.

Similarly, Ellen's transformation from a hard-driving, results-driven leader to an engaging team leader was a journey of building resonance with others, which eventually led to resonance within herself.

Developing the capacity for renewal in these two somewhat different and yet similar journeys has enabled Roberto and Ellen to consciously manage their strengths to leverage their talent and energy to inspire passion and create resonance. This has been a powerful lesson. They each learned how to use their many talents consciously so their enthusiasm and passion did not become a liability, but a source of inspiration for others. In both cases, these leaders' reflection and intentional change impacted their organizations positively. In fact, Roberto found the process so relevant personally that he sponsored an organizationwide program for over 3,000 managers of UniCredit's retail division to help each of them begin their own process of leadership development. ■

NOTES

1. Intentional Change Theory: R. Boyatzis, Intentional change theory from a complexity perspective, Journal of Management Development (forthcoming); D. Goleman, R. Boyatzis, & A. McKee, Primal leadership: Realizing the power of emotional intelligence (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002); R. Boyatzis & K. Akrivou-Naperksy, The ideal self as a driver of change, Journal of Management Development (forthcoming); R. Boyatzis, C. Frick, & E. Van Oosten, Developing leaders throughout an entire organization by developing emotional intelligence competencies, in The talent management handbook: Creating organizational excellence by identifying, developing, and positioning high-potential talent, ed. L. Berger & D. Berger (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003); R. Boyatzis, Developing emotional intelligence, in The emotionally intelligent workplace, ed. C. Cherniss & D. Goleman (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001); R. Boyatzis, Stimulating self-directed learning through the managerial assessment and development course, Journal of Management Education 18 (3) (1994), 304–23; D. A. Kolb & R. E. Boyatzis, Goal setting and self-directed behavior change, Human Relations, 23 (5) (1970), 439–57.

2. Longitudinal studies of learning and developing management and leadership competencies: These were reviewed in chapter 6 of Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, Primal leadership. The key references include: R. Boyatzis, E. C. Stubbs, & S. N. Taylor, Learning cognitive and emotional intelligence competencies through graduate management education, Academy of Management Learning and Education 1 (2) (2002), 150–62; R. E. Boyatzis, S. S. Cowen, & D. A. Kolb, Innovations in professional education: Steps on a journey from teaching to learning (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995); R. Ballou, D. Bowers, R. E. Boyatzis, & D. A. Kolb, Fellowship in lifelong learning: An executive development program for advanced professionals, Journal of Management Education 23 (4) (1999), 338–54; H. Cutter, R. Boyatzis, & D. D. Clancy, The Effectiveness of power motivation training for rehabilitating alcoholics, Journal of Studies on Alcohol 38 (1) (1977), 131–41; R. Boyatzis, Power motivation training: A new treatment modality, Work in progress on alcoholism: Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 273, ed. F. A. Seixas & S. Eggleston (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1976), 525–32; C. Cherniss & M. Adler, Promoting emotional intelligence in organizations: Make training in emotional intelligence effective (Washington, D.C.: American Society for Training and Development, 2000); Learning that lasts: Integrating learning, development, and performance in college and beyond, ed. M. Mentkowski and Associates, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000); R. E. Boyatzis, D. Leonard, K. Rhee, & J. V. Wheeler, Competencies can be developed, but not the way we thought, Capability 2 (1996), 25–41; D. C. McClelland & D. G. Winter, Motivating economic achievement (New York: Free Press, 1969); D. Miron & D. C. McClelland, The impact of achievement motivation training on small business, California Management Review 21 (4) (1979), 13–28; J. V. Wheeler, The impact of social environment on self-directed change and learning (PhD diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1999); D. Leonard, The impact of learning goals on self-directed change in education and management development (PhD diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1996); and K. Rhee, Journey of discovery: A longitudinal study of learning during a graduate professional program (PhD diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1997).
3. Maslow's hierarchy of needs: One of the better known, if not thoroughly validated, theories of human motivation was put forth in 1954 by Abraham Maslow in Motivation and Personality, 2nd. edition (New York: Harper & Row, 1970). Maslow postulated that people first need to meet basic physiological needs—food, water, etc. Then they are free to consider safety needs, then belongingness, followed by esteem, and finally self-actualization.
4. Positive emotional attractor: A discussion of positive versus negative attractors is in chapter 7 [of the book from which this article is excerpted].
5. The power of vision: See chapter 7 in Coleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, Primal leadership.
6. Emotion and vision: It is believed that the potency of focusing one's thoughts on the desired end state is driven by the emotional components of the brain. See D. Goleman, Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ for character health and lifelong achievement (New York: Bantam Books, 1995).
7. Self-protection and delusion: See D. Goleman, Vital lies, simple truths: The psychology of self-deception (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985); D. L. Paulhus & K. Levitt, Desirable responding triggered by affect: Automatic egotism, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 52 (2) (1987), 245–59; P. Cramer, defense mechanisms in psychology today: Further processes for adaptation, American Psychologist 55 (6) (2000), 637–46; G. E. Vaillant, The wisdom of the ego (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993); Goleman, Emotional intelligence.
8. Leadership style: For a review of leadership styles and their link to emotional intelligence and resonance, see D. Coleman, What makes a leader? Harvard Business Review (November–December, 1998), 93–102; and Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, Primal leadership.
9. The book on emotional intelligence: The book Ellen's boss handed her was Daniel Goleman's Working with emotional intelligence (New York: Bantam Books, 1998).
10. 360-degree feedback on emotional intelligence: Self-assessment of emotional intelligence may be useful as a tool for reflection, but it is not likely to be an accurate measure of the associated behaviors. The reason is simple. Self-awareness is a cornerstone of emotional intelligence. It will be unlikely, if not impossible, that a person deficient in this area will accurately assess his or her own emotional intelligence. According to research on the Emotional Competence Inventory, average internal consistency of self-ratings is .75, and the average internal consistency of total others' rating is .85. Therefore, we recommend 360-degree feedback as a way to get a comparative perspective on a person's emotional intelligence. This instrument, designed by Richard Boyatzis and Daniel Coleman and distributed by the Hay Group, has been thoroughly researched for construct validation, reliability, and performance validity; see F. Sala, Emotional competence inventory (ECI) technical manual (HayGroup, McClelland Center for Research and Innovation, June 2000). Also see R. Boyatzis & F. Sala, Assessing emotional intelligence competencies, in The measurement of emotional intelligence, ed. G. Geher (Hauppauge, N.Y.: Novas Science Publishers, 2004).
11. The power of a learning plan: Creating a learning plan results in people setting personal standards of performance, rather than "normative" standards that merely mimic what others have done; see J. M. Beaubien & S. Payne, Individual goal orientation as a predictor of job and academic performance: A meta-analytic review and integration, paper presented at the meeting of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Atlanta, April 1999. Meanwhile, a performance orientation evokes anxiety and doubts about whether or not we can change; see G. Chen, S. Gully, J.-A. Whiteman, & R. N. Kilcullen, Examination of relationships among trait-like, individual differences, and learning performance, Journal of Applied Psychology 85 (6) (2000), 835–47. As one of the longitudinal studies at the Weatherhead School of Management showed, MBAs who set goals to change on certain competencies changed significantly on those competencies, compared with other MBAs (D. Leonard, The impact of learning goals on self-directed change in education and management development (PhD diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1996)). See also E. Locke & G. P. Latham, A theory of goal setting and task performance (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990).
12. Learning activities that work and those that do not: See D. A. Kolb, Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1984); R. Boyatzis, Stimulating self-directed change.
13. Where to practice new behaviors: Christine Dreyfus studied managers of scientists and engineers who were considered superior performers. Once she documented that they used considerably more of certain abilities than their less effective counterparts, she then pursued how they developed some of those abilities. One of the distinguishing abilities was team building. She found that many of these middle-aged managers had first experimented with team-building skills in high school and college, in sports, clubs, and living groups. Later, when they became "bench scientists and engineers" working on problems in relative isolation, they still practiced this ability in activities outside of work, in social and community organizations such as 4-H Clubs, as well as in professional associations, planning conferences, and similar activities; see C. Dreyfus, The characteristics of high performing managers of scientists and engineers (PhD diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1990).

14. Learning in "safe space": See Kolb & Boyatzis, Goal setting and self-directed behavior change; Wheeler, The impact of social environments on self-directed change and learning; J. LePine, M. LePine, & C. Jackson, Challenge and hindrance stress: Relationships with exhaustion, motivation to learn, and learning performance, Journal of Applied Psychology 89 (5) (2004), 883–91; R. Wright, J. Dill, R. Geen, & C. Anderson, Social evaluation influence on cardiovascular response to a fixed behavioral challenge: Effects across a range of difficulty levels, Annals of Behavioral Medicine 20 (4) (1998), 277–85; D. E. Conroy, The unique psychological meanings of multidimensional fears of failing, Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology 26 (3) (2004), 484–91. For an excellent review of the role of care and support and their impact on learning, see M. Herb, A study of care and support among teachers and students in a small suburban middle-senior high school (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, 2005).
15. Social awareness: The ability to read and understand individuals, groups, and organizational cultures. See Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, Primal leadership; P. Ruby & J. Decety, How would you feel versus how do you think she would feel? A neuroimaging study of perspective taking with social emotions, Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience 16 (6) (2004), 988–99.
16. Reference groups: In sociology, groups that we rely on to help define ourselves are called reference groups. These relationships create a context within which we interpret our progress on desired changes, the utility of new learning, and even contribute significant input to formulation of the ideal (see K. E. Kram, A relational approach to careers, in The career is dead: Long live the career, ed. D. T. Hall (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), 132–57).
17. The power of relationships in the change process: Jane Wheeler analyzed the extent to which the MBA graduates worked on their goals in multiple "life spheres" (i.e., work, family, recreational groups, etc.). In a two-year follow-up study of two of the graduating classes of part-time MBA students, she found those who worked on their goals and plans in multiple sets of relationships improved the most and more than those working on goals in only one setting, such as work or within one relationship (see Wheeler, The impact of social environment on self-directed change and learning). In their study of the impact of the yearlong executive-development program for doctors, lawyers, professors, engineers, and other professionals (referenced in note 2 for this article), Ballou et. al. found that participants gained self-confidence during the program. Even at the beginning of the program, others would say these participants were very high in self-confidence. The explanation came from follow-up questions in which they explained the evident increase in self-confidence as an increase in the confidence to change. Their existing reference groups (i.e., family, groups at work, professional groups, community groups) all had an investment in them staying the same while the person wanted to change. The executive development program allowed them to develop a new reference group that encouraged change.