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FROM CHANGE MANAGEMENT TO CHANGE LEADERSHIP

WE HAVE ALREADY LEARNED three important lessons about change in higher education that are critically important to anyone who wants to lead rather than be led by the drivers of change affecting colleges and universities today:

1. The models of change management commonly used in the business world aren't really very effective in helping us understand what happens in higher education because its distributed organizational culture is so different from that found in hierarchical or decentralized organizations.
2. Since the distributed organizational culture of colleges and universities operates as an open system, those who are involved in change processes need to be able to see each policy, procedure, and proposal from multiple perspectives, adopting a system like Bolman and Deal's four-frame model, de Bono's six thinking hats, or our ten analytical lenses that combine features drawn from both these approaches.
3. Due to higher education's open system and distributed organizational culture, change processes are embraced by stakeholders more readily (and thus tend to proceed more smoothly) when they're based on a clearly established needs case rather than the anticipation of comparative advantages, net benefits, or any justification other than genuine need.

Those conclusions lead us to ask: If change management approaches like the Kübler-Ross model, the Krüger model, and the Kotter model aren't very effective in describing or planning for a successful change process in higher education, then which approaches work better? How, in short, can we as administrators stop trying merely to manage change and start to lead it?

Let's begin to answer these questions by reviewing certain similarities and differences among the three change management approaches examined in chapter 1. Each of them took a slightly different focus when it came to the most important aspects of change. For Kübler-Ross, it was how people respond to change; for Krüger, it was how various issues relating to change affect the progress of the change process in an organization; and for Kotter, it was how the manager should guide the change process. Yet despite these different emphases, each came to a similar conclusion: there's a right way and a wrong way to manage change. In other words, they concluded that change processes are largely the same in all types of organization. In the case of the Kübler-Ross and Kotter models, there are even specific steps we can expect to go through in a set order. That concept may bring an illusion of clarity to the often messy change processes that occur at colleges and universities, but it doesn't relate well to the actual experience most of us have when we try to propose needed changes at our institutions. Once the process is over, we can force our description of what occurred to fit those models, but they don't capture the sometimes chaotic, sometimes contentious, and sometimes painfully slow unfolding of change that we experience in higher education. In order to find a better way of describing how change occurs in the real world of colleges and universities, let's look at a few additional theoretical approaches to change. This time we'll focus not on traditional change models but on a different approach that we might call *change descriptions* or *change maps*.

The Learning Culture Theory

In *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (2010), Edgar Schein, whose insights into organizational culture we explored in chapter 1, identifies ten characteristics of organizations that accept change more readily because they develop what he calls a learning culture:

1. *These organizations are proactive*. Rather than being passive observers of their environments, they draw conclusions from experience and use the lessons they learn to avoid problems in the future.

2. *They are genuinely committed to learning*. Some organizations give lip-service to learning, believing that they're doing well since they pay attention to new developments in their external environments. But the organizations that Schein calls learning cultures also study themselves. They recognize when their administrative strategies aren't as effective as they should be and when key stakeholders are becoming disengaged. Then they take corrective action based on what they observe.

3. *They make positive assumptions about their stakeholders*. Schein finds great value in Douglas McGregor's (1960) distinction between theory X organizations (where it is taken for granted that people are basically lazy and motivated only by hope of reward or fear of punishment) and theory Y organizations (where the basic operating principle is that people usually do to the best of their abilities whatever they believe to be right, even if managers may sometimes disagree with the employees' methods). Learning cultures derive great benefits from taking a theory Y approach: they're able to make use of the talents and ideas of those who aren't technically in charge because managers don't assume their employees' ideas arise only out of narrow self-interest.

4. *They believe that change is possible, not just in themselves but also in the larger environment*. If organizations act as though every restriction on them is set by forces outside themselves, they don't even consider certain types of changes as possible. In essence, they adopt a victim mentality. For example, if a college assumes that it would never be accredited if it began accepting students who have not earned high school diplomas, it never even considers investigating the possibility of developing an admissions program that selects students based on their knowledge and skill rather than on their credentials.

5. *They understand that learning methods need to change over time*. In a true learning culture, Schein says that the organization isn't locked into any one way of gaining and evaluating information. If you assume, for instance, that hard data and empirical analysis are the only way of learning, you'll never trust an intuition that could have led you toward a truly innovative way of doing things. Steve Jobs's famous aversion to focus groups was based on his belief that customers can tell you what they want only in terms of what they already know; they can't envision a truly revolutionary product. In short, they don't know what they want because they haven't experienced it yet. Learning cultures work in a similar way: they respect facts and figures but don't become locked in by them. They do what's right even if it hasn't yet been proven.

6. *They are optimistic about the future*. When difficult economic or social problems occur, some organizations revert to past practices and comfortable habits. They try to return the world (and themselves) to an idyllic, and usually imaginary, concept of former glory. Learning cultures know that even if the near future is likely to contain a good deal of hardship, a better future is possible. And by definition, their long-term future will be dramatically different from the past.

7. *They are committed to transparent and open communication*. Many organizations hoard information, believing either that power is derived from the scarcity of knowledge or that certain stakeholders, in Jack Nicholson's famous words in the 1992 movie *A Few Good Men*, "can't handle the truth." Learning cultures aren't afraid to share information even if their plans aren't yet completely clear. They take responsibility for past and pending decisions, and they believe that their processes are strengthened, not weakened, by responding to criticism.

8. *They are committed to diversity*. A dedication to diversity occurs in different ways for different types of organizations. Schein himself was largely thinking of the need for cultural diversity in the corporate world, which long preserved a narrow view of who its stakeholders were and whether employees were capable of becoming managers. But in higher education, where gender and cultural diversity has already been a goal for many years, other types of diversity need to be considered. For example, a college may benefit from a higher degree of organizational diversity in which major decisions are not made by the governing board and upper administration alone but with a wider participation of stakeholders. Institutions that find themselves drifting into political homogeneity, such as the widespread belief that all faculty members are, in Roger Kimball's famous phrase, "tenured radicals" (Kimball, 1990), can benefit from making a consistent effort to ensure that students are exposed to a broader spectrum of philosophies, pedagogies, and political approaches.

9. *They adopt systems approaches wherever possible*. Learning cultures understand that organizations rarely operate in vacuums. They embrace the interconnectedness of people within their organization, as well as the interconnectedness of their organization with other groups. They're less likely to be blindsided by the unforeseen consequences of a decision because they're so used to considering every choice they make in terms of its potential effect on others.

10. *They believe that the study of their own organizational culture is important to their growth and development*. Learning cultures don't assume that all organizations are alike. They don't even assume that all organizations in similar fields are alike. Amazon has a distinctly different corporate culture from Google, and Harvard has a distinctly different institutional culture from UCLA. It's possible to be successful—even to reach the pinnacle of your profession—with a local culture that's different from that of even your best competitors. But it's very difficult to attain or maintain this level of success if you don't know what your organizational culture is, which elements of it are integral to your success, and which elements of it are merely customary practices that can be altered when necessary.

Schein's concept of the learning culture can provide a framework within which we can talk about change in a different way from the rather prescribed approach of the change models set out in chapter 1. Moreover, the idea of a learning culture resonates better at a university than do corporate models of change because of how a university sees its mission: it wants to be a learning culture, not a profit-generating culture or a culture that's victimized by forces beyond its control. It prefers to see itself as approaching change not in terms of becoming reconciled to death or attempting to steer clear of icebergs on a dangerous journey, but as an organic type of growth that reflects the fundamental mission of higher education: growth in knowledge and understanding.

The Change Leader's Road Map and the Change Journey

This same metaphor of change as growth, progress, discovery, and learning can be seen in the second major theory of change we'll consider in this chapter: Linda Ackerman Anderson and Dean Anderson's change leader's road map. Like Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and John Kotter, Ackerman Anderson and Anderson view change as a series of steps that usually occur in a specific order. For these authors, most change processes can be thought of as having nine distinct phases (Ackerman Anderson and Anderson, 2010):

1. Prepare to lead the change.
2. Create organizational vision, commitment, and capability.
3. Assess the situation to determine design requirements.
4. Design the required state.
5. Analyze the impact.
6. Plan and organize for implementation.
7. Implement the change.
8. Celebrate and integrate the new state.
9. Learn and course-correct.

Several of the assumptions the Andersons make about the change leader's road map are things we've come to question with regard to change in higher education. For example, the road map assumes that substantive change usually flows from the top down: the leader is the person who develops the vision and builds commitment; the members of the organization are the ones who merely embrace, accept, implement, or adapt to that vision.

But the Andersons' approach does include a major conceptual shift from the three change models we discussed earlier. The change leader's road map acknowledges that each change process will be different and that there'll be unexpected detours along the way. If the Kübler-Ross, Krüger, and Kotter models of change can be thought of as recipes for change (if you omit an ingredient or perform the steps out of order, you're unlikely to have a satisfying result), the Andersons' theory is presented as a road map for change (it outlines a commonly taken route, but allows side trips, alternative itineraries, and various diversions along the way):

> The … Change Leader's Roadmap … has an appealing logic and flow. Some leaders and consultants may inadvertently assume that this logic implies that transformation is controllable and predictable, and that the model is meant to be adhered to rigidly and followed sequentially. They also assume that they must do all of the tasks in it. These assumptions would be neither wise nor beneficial.... The Change Leader's Roadmap is not a cookbook for how to orchestrate transformational change. The model is designed as a *thinking discipline*, a guidance system for navigating the complexity and chaos of transformation in a conscious and thoughtful way. The structure and depth it provides are meant to support your thinking, not … to order or dictate your actions. (Ackerman Anderson and Anderson, 2010, 278–289)

Building on this concept, Vesa Purokuru, a coach and consultant at humap.com, and Holger Nauheimer, the CEO of Change Facilitation (www.change-facilitation.com), describe what they call the change journey. In chapter 2, I used this same expression to describe that view of the world that believes change is constant and that encourages people to pay more attention to their experiences along the way than on the ultimate destination. But Purokuru and Nauheimer use this expression differently. For them, the change journey is indeed about getting somewhere, but they suggest that it's difficult, at times even impossible, to predict exactly what path a process will take in order to reach that destination. Since no two organizations or institutional cultures are alike, each change process must be unique. Moreover, since each organization or institutional culture evolves over time, no two change processes even at the same institution will ever be alike. According to Purokuru and Nauheimer, the fallacy many leaders make is to believe that any change model can predict what will occur with 100 percent accuracy or even with 50 percent accuracy. After all, organizations are highly complex systems, often with many hundreds of employees, all making unsupervised decisions on a daily basis. When we compound this situation with all the external factors promoting change (the drivers of change that we considered

in the previous chapter), it becomes clear that no one can possibly predict how any particular change process will unfold. Any approach that seeks to describe specific steps that each "good" change process must go through simply distracts leaders from the way things actually work. When their organizations fail to follow the prescribed model, change managers assume that either they or their organizations have done something wrong. But all they've actually done is discovered the limitations of change models in general. (See www.changejourney.org.)

What's needed, Purokuru and Nauheimer argue, is not just another model but a far more flexible approach, something they call a change journey map. The change journey map can be envisioned as a cityscape. In it, there are numerous places that a traveler could go during a journey, although none of these places are destinations where he or she is required to go. Each change journey is different because it involves different visits of different durations to different destinations in a different order. Moreover, Purokuru and Nauheimer see their change journey map as an evolving concept. New places may be added to it as new discoveries are made about organizational culture and as individual institutions encounter their own as-yet-unmapped destinations along the way. As an illustration of how this concept works, here are a few examples of the "destinations" an organization might visit throughout its change process:

- *The laboratory:* The point an organization reaches when it begins experimenting with pilot programs for new processes, procedures, and structures
- *The garden of trust:* Where there's an attempt to build mutual trust as a prerequisite for positive change
- *The labyrinth:* Where the organization temporarily gets lost during its change journey and needs to find its way back to common ground
- *The exhibition center:* Where successes that occur along the journey are celebrated and publicized
- *The graveyard of old habits:* Where people stagnate for a time by fixating on past practices that prevent future growth before developing new strategies to change those habits
- *The gate to goals:* Where the group sets clear goals and decides what success will ultimately look like
- *The opera house of emotions:* Where there is recognition that some of the drama arising in response to the change has not been based in reason

- *The court of conflicts:* Where strained interpersonal relations that arise as a result of the change process must be mediated and resolved
- *The studio for ideas and creativity:* Where the challenge facing the organization is addressed in innovative ways that aren't bound by past or current practice
- *The agora:* Where constructive dialogue occurs (see www.changejourney.org/page/the-map)

The change journey map makes several important contributions to our understanding of how change processes occur in higher education. First, it recognizes that each path of change is different. Despite what traditional change models argue, no institution goes through exactly the same steps in the same order as any other institution. Some colleges and universities may get hung up for a long time at destinations like the graveyard of old habits, while others may move past this site after a very brief "visit" or avoid it entirely. Second, the change journey map offers useful metaphors leaders can adopt to help themselves and others understand why their processes get hung up from time to time. It also offers ideas about how they might get their processes back on track. "I think we've become caught in the prison of inability and resistance," a change leader might conclude. "Perhaps we need to draw on the bank of diverse resources in order to take better advantage of the skills and talents we already have and thus develop a clearer idea of how we can break free." In this way, the change journey map doesn't try to offer a predictive tool in the way that traditional change models have; instead it serves as a tool for interpretation and problem solving.

C. Otto Scharmer's Theory U and Mindfulness-Based Leadership

When most people think of a leader, they tend to picture someone who has the courage to act quickly, decisively, and boldly; who moves forward despite the naysayers; and who doesn't waste time second-guessing choices that have already been made. But there are several reasons for regarding this common image as severely flawed, particularly for higher education. In a distributed organizational culture, quick, decisive, and bold actions, decisions made without adequate consultation, and a refusal to revisit issues are all fatal for morale because they cause members of the faculty and staff to feel unappreciated and out of the loop. In addition, failure to take advantage of the insights that could have been provided by a highly educated workforce is an inefficient use of resources. So rather than emphasizing speed and decisiveness, it's often more effective for academic leaders to slow down their decision-making processes, pay closer

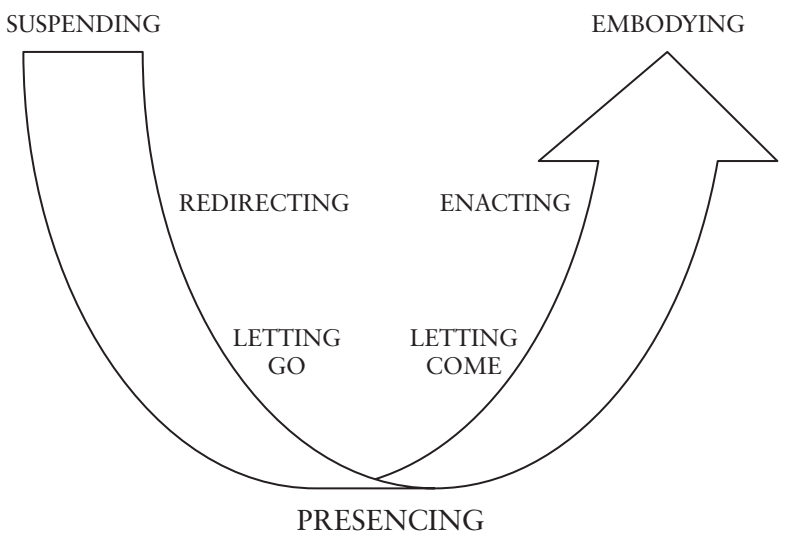
attention to the specific context in which they're operating, and place a priority on awareness of the complexities involved in an issue. In fact, two major approaches to leadership deal specifically with the role that being deliberate and reflective can play in successful change processes: theory U and mindfulness-based leadership.

The name *theory U*, which was coined by C. Otto Scharmer, senior lecturer at MIT and founding chair of the Presencing Institute, was chosen both because it served as a response to Douglas McGregor's theory X and theory Y and because Scharmer believed that effective change processes should follow a U-shaped path. In *Theory U* (Scharmer and Senge, 2009) and *Leading from the Emerging Future* (Scharmer and Kaufer, 2013), he describes how bringing about meaningful change requires us first to venture inward and downward into our own values and core beliefs and then to venture upward and outward in a way that applies the insight we gain to the challenges that surround us. This is how Scharmer describes the U-shaped change journey (figure 4.1):

INWARD AND DOWNWARD

1. *Suspending:* Being willing to set aside preconceived notions and observe the situation with eyes that are truly open
2. *Redirecting:* Developing a new understanding of the system or network in which you are operating that includes seeing yourself as part

Figure 4.1 Otto Scharmer's Theory U



of the system ("How might I be contributing to the problem? How could I potentially become part of the solution?")

3. *Letting go:* Giving up your old models for understanding how things "should" or "have to" work and surrendering to uncertainty, complexity, and risk

TURNING THE CORNER

1. *Presencing:* Relating these new insights to your core values as a person or your institution's values ("Who am I in terms of the principles I'm most committed to? What is my work in terms of my mission in life and ultimate goals?" or, "What is our institution in terms of the principles it's most committed to? What is its work in terms of its mission and long-term goals?")

UPWARD AND OUTWARD

1. *Letting come:* Accepting that, on the basis of these core values and the new insights you've achieved, change must occur in you as well as in the world
2. *Enacting:* Allowing a new, compelling vision for the future to crystalize based on the insights you've received about your present circumstances, your own core values, and your institution's long-term goals
3. *Embodying:* Embedding the new ideas and changes into the institution's standard practices, resulting in "the new normal" simply becoming normal

Throughout his work, Scharmer elaborates on this process so that, by the end of *Theory U*, for example, this seven-step journey also includes a full twenty-four principles and practices and five additional movements (co-initiating, co-sensing, co-presencing, and so on). But for our purposes, the simplified structure I have outlined summarizes the essential concept. While initially theory U seems little more than a variation of traditional models—with a specific number of identifiable steps that must be completed in a specific order—it differs from those approaches in a key way: it studies organizational change not as a process that we observe externally ("I am one thing. The institution I'm observing is something else.") but as an environment we're inseparable from. To put it another way, the change leader is not a catalyst that remains unaffected by the change, but a key ingredient in the change itself.

You can't change an organization without being changed yourself.

Scharmer's emphasis on self-awareness and understanding how change leaders are inseparable from the changes they initiate also characterizes the leadership strategy known as mindfulness-based leadership. (See Buller, 2014.) A great deal of research has been done on the benefits that can result from exercises in mindfulness—the practice of paying nonjudgmental attention to each experience as it occurs. For example, mindfulness practices have been demonstrated to reduce depression following a traumatic brain injury (Bédard et al., 2012), alleviate chronic pain (Wong et al., 2011), decrease the urge to smoke (Brewer et al., 2011), help people cope with stress (Schreiner and Malcolm, 2008), and raise self-esteem (Rasmussen and Pidgeon, 2011). Most important for our purposes, training in mindfulness-based leadership strategies, as provided by such organizations as the Authentic Leadership in Action Institute (www.aliainstitute.org), the Institute for Mindful Leadership (www.instituteformindfulleadership.org), and the Bradford Clark Group (www.art-of-growth.com) is increasingly being taken seriously by executives and human resource departments throughout the corporate world (Karakas, 2011; Veil, 2011).

What mindfulness-based leadership shares with theory U is its strong emphasis on nonjudgmental awareness. Usually when we have an experience at work, our response is either a complete lack of awareness (we're too busy multitasking to pay attention to what Sarah said) or judgment ("Why is Sarah in such a bad mood today?" or, "What must I have done to annoy Sarah?"). Traditional leadership approaches exacerbate this tendency because they tend to emphasize speed and decisiveness. They encourage us to take a quick read of the situation, make a judgment, and then move on. But leadership approaches based on mindfulness run counter to that tendency. Scharmer's theory U encourages us to become more aware of our perspectives by looking inward before moving onward. Mindfulness-based leadership encourages us to become more aware of our environments by taking each experience as it comes, without attaching a story or meaning to it. If Sarah said something that seemed abrupt or curt, what we should conclude is simply that Sarah said something that seemed abrupt or curt, not necessarily that she's a bad person, in a foul mood, angry with us (justifiably or not), in need of customer service training, or anything else we may be tempted to conclude. Withholding judgment helps us keep our options open. We're less likely to box ourselves into a small number of possible responses (such as our habitual ways of dealing with an angry person) because we train ourselves to approach each experience with an open mind. We exchange quick decisiveness or rashness for a generous and compassionate range of possibilities.

Creative Leadership

Of course, just as we might fault a decisive person who turns out to be wrong, so might someone fault us for indecisiveness if we fail to act on first instincts that turn out to be right. In fact, Malcolm Gladwell in *Blink* (2005) argues that gut reactions prove to be right far more often than they're wrong. Is there any way to reconcile mindfulness with a willingness to trust our instincts? One possibility might be found in the leadership philosophy known as creative leadership. As described by Gerard Puccio, Marie Mance, and Mary Murdock (2011), creative leadership "can be defined as the ability to deliberately engage one's imagination to define and guide a group toward a novel goal—a direction that is new for the group. As a consequence of bringing about this creative change, creative leaders have a profoundly positive influence on their context (i.e., workplace, community, school, family) and the individuals in that situation" (28).

What Puccio, Mance, and Murdock are suggesting is that rather than viewing change as a process that's separate from organizational culture—as something that happens to an institution, willingly or unwillingly—our goal should be to understand that change is an integral part of that culture. But rather than simply reverting to the continual view of change as outlined in chapter 2, creative leadership views ongoing, open-ended change not as an inevitable occurrence that must be managed and endured, but as a daily opportunity to do something desirable in an organization. Think of it this way: we all know people who are highly creative, just as we're all familiar with those who seem utterly uncreative in everything they do. What distinguishes one from the other is that the former group possesses an openness to new ideas; a conviction that innovation is exciting, not threatening; and an opportunity to see the world in new ways. In the same way that we're familiar with people who fall into each of these two categories, so can we imagine both creative and uncreative organizations. A creative organization is one that regards change as stimulating and exciting; an uncreative organization prefers the tried and true even when it no longer works as well as it once did.

What creative leadership does is turn our entire discussion of change on its head. Rather than trying to manage change in an organization just as you might manage cash flow or inventory, you focus on developing a new organizational culture. Change management is goal oriented; it keeps its eyes on the prize and continually measures its progress toward its predetermined destination. Creative leadership is systems oriented; it devotes its energy toward building a more creative organizational culture. Rather

than defining a goal and establishing a plan to get there, creative leaders build a culture of innovation and expect change and innovation to flow naturally from it. With creative leadership, supervisors don't waste their time trying to impose change on a recalcitrant group of stakeholders; they invest their time in learning how to be more creative themselves and how to instill an outlook that celebrates innovation in those who work with them. This approach has a natural affinity with distributed organizations like colleges and universities since it doesn't involve driving a new idea downward through a hierarchy; instead, it works to foster the type of organic environment in which new ideas are born, nurtured, grow, and reproduce.

In addition, creative leadership involves processes at which academics are highly skilled—problem solving, cultivating and refining new ideas, developing ideas that initially go against the mainstream—with the result that it uses the faculty's talent and training to its best advantage. While organizations like the Center for Creative Leadership (www.ccl.org) and the Institute for Creative Leadership (www.instituteforcreativeleadership.org) apply this approach to all kinds of organizations, it hasn't yet been fully embraced throughout higher education, the very field in which it holds so much promise.

The Pattern That Emerges

Although the change theories we've explored in this chapter seem very different, they share certain features that distinguish them from traditional change models.

The first pattern we observe as we consider these theories side by side is their insistence that, contrary to what we might conclude from traditional change models, effective change does not result from following a formula or recipe. Not every change process will be the same as any other, and there's no reason we should expect it to be. Particularly in a field as dynamic as higher education, we do our institutions a disservice by trying to force their change processes to adhere to a prescribed series of steps. Change in higher education is not like a guided tour; it's more like a voyage of discovery.

The second pattern we notice is that people unnecessarily complicate the change process by trying to divide it into silos: the leader as change agent is one type of entity, the stakeholders as change participants are another, the goal itself as a change objective is still another, those external factors that serve as change drivers are a fourth, and so on. The real world, particularly in distributed organizations like colleges

and universities, can't be divided that neatly. There are change drivers both within and outside our institutions. We as change leaders are ourselves affected by the change, no less than are our organizations and stakeholders. Sometimes even the external environment can be changed by something that happens within our institutions, as occurs when technology transfer leads to the creation of a new industry or our programs have an impact on the culture and economy of our local communities. Change in higher education should not be imposed from the outside; it should grow more organically from within.

The third pattern we learn from these change theories is that the key to effective change is not, for the most part, engaging in quick and resolute decision making. It derives more gradually from awareness—awareness of our own values, of what's going on all around us, of the needs of others, and of the effect our choices have on the larger world. Being aware as academic leaders means that we often withhold judgment as a situation unfolds. We wait to see where it's going and how it fits into the bigger picture. We don't assume that opposition occurs because people are evil, stupid, lazy, or uninterested in the good of the institution. We remain open to learning more. We refrain from jumping to conclusions. In fact, we seek out diverse views, contrarians, and devil's advocates because we want to base our decisions on the fullest information possible, and we often gain new perspectives from those who don't agree with us. In short, effective change leaders apply the same academic rigor to their administrative work as they do in their teaching and research. They let the facts take them wherever they may. Change in higher education is not a matter of connecting the dots; it begins with an appreciation of the dots themselves and a willingness to understand how they got there.

The change theories summarized in this chapter demonstrate that guiding change effectively is a lot more flexible than applying a one-size-fits-all change management model. Effective change leaders are those who adopt an approach that fits their organizational culture on both the macrolevel (the culture of higher education as a whole) and the microlevel (the culture of the specific institution or academic unit that they're leading). With that in mind, what might this more effective type of change leadership in higher education look like?

Change Leadership in Higher Education

Successful change leadership at a college or university will borrow aspects of all the change theories we just explored. It will work to develop learning cultures, emphasizing the importance of adapting to new circumstances,

making positive assumptions about the motives of stakeholders, encouraging transparency from all parties, and thinking in terms of inclusive systems rather than conflict between an in-group and an out-group. It will borrow from the change leader's road map and the change journey, recognizing that each change process is unique and resisting the tendency to apply artificial formulas, patterns, and precedents. It will draw inspiration from theory U and mindfulness-based leadership, encouraging leaders to reflect on their own values and the values of the programs they serve and refraining from premature judgments and false assumptions. And it will engage in creative leadership, taking time to build a culture that admires innovation and sees change as an asset, not a threat.

To see how this combination of ideas can come together to promote lasting change, let's imagine an institution that has several options about how to plan for its future. Our hypothetical university started out as a two-year college and has already gone through a number of significant transformations. Its first programs were all applied areas, particularly the practical skills needed by secretaries to work in large offices during the 1950s and 1960s. Early catalogues for the college list such courses as typing, shorthand, bookkeeping, and business writing.

Over time, as secretaries became administrative assistants and needed a different type of education, the college's academic program grew, and the school eventually offered all four years of an undergraduate degree. New academic areas were added—the arts and humanities, health professions, education, engineering, and public administration—and this expansion ultimately led to the college's first master's degrees. Enrollment rose, and the college sought university status. It began awarding doctoral degrees, first in applied areas (the EdD and PsyD) and then in research fields (the PhD).

Now the school appears to be at another crossroads. An economic downturn in its primary service area has resulted in plummeting enrollment, significant losses of philanthropic funding, and pressure from the community for the school to "stick to the knitting" (in other words, to eliminate programs that aren't vocational). Some type of change seems inevitable. The school will either have to close its doors in the near future or find a way to deal with these severe challenges. But the immediate question is: How should the university change?

Scenario One

In one possible scenario, the university hires a new president who established her reputation by saving another school on the brink of financial

ruin. She's widely regarded as a visionary change agent, "just the sort of person we need," the university's governing board said when they hired her. Throughout the entire interview process, everyone she met mentioned how ready the university was for substantive change and how following its current path would destroy it.

With such a strong mandate, the new president assembled a leadership team (including a number of new vice presidents she brought in because she had worked with them before and knew she could trust them), scheduled a planning retreat with her administrative team and the governing board, and gave her first State of the University address less than a month after being hired. In it, she announced a sweeping new strategic plan that she called *10,000 in 10*, with a goal of raising the university's enrollment to ten thousand full-time students within the next ten years. To accomplish this goal, the school would radically alter its academic programs. It would refocus on professional programs, deemphasize the liberal arts and PhD programs (which were "irrelevant in the twenty-first century anyway," according to a very vocal member of the governing board), offer all its programs online, accept credit for massive open online courses and professional experience, condense each baccalaureate program to only three years, and cut the price of tuition to less than half its current rate. At the same time, the institution would aggressively recruit students into its applied doctoral programs and set an ambitious target for federal grant support, which would give it access to sizable amounts of external funding.

Since the president had been through a similar change process before, she believed she knew what to expect. The Kübler-Ross model of change told her that there would be strong resistance to her ideas initially, but the Krüger and Kotter models of change told her what she'd need to do. She'd pay close attention to the power dynamics lying just below the surface of the organization, spend her time communicating her vision to the faculty and staff, empower others to implement the initiatives developed by her leadership team, and celebrate small victories. After all, two steps in the Kotter model were already behind them: there was a strong sense of urgency at the university, and she had created her guiding coalition. As a result, she was quite surprised when the new strategic plan was met with widespread enthusiasm rather than anger and denial. Faculty and staff embraced the ideas with a sense of relief that there was finally a plan in place, and they could understand their role within in. *I must've lucked out,* the new president thought. *Things were so bad that people are just glad they finally have visionary leadership*.

As the fall semester got under way, however, that initial honeymoon period ended abruptly. A rumor emerged that in order to reduce costs, there would be layoffs of faculty members in the liberal arts and PhD programs. Even in fields like business and public administration, the rumors said, full-time faculty members would be replaced by adjuncts who would cost less since they didn't qualify for benefits. The new adjuncts could be located anywhere in the world since their courses were taught online. The faculty senate, which had once welcomed the new plan, increasingly resisted it as its members saw the impact it would have on their own workload. Once the students and alumni learned that major changes were in store, they mounted a campaign against the new plan on Facebook, wrote op-ed pieces for the local newspaper, and began showing up en masse in the president's office. "I didn't pay to get a degree from Online U," one protestor was quoted as saying, and "Stop Online U" became a new rallying cry.

By the end of the president's first year, the office of research and sponsored programs issued a report concluding that rather than increasing the amount of indirect funding received by the university, the plan to replace research doctorates with more applied degrees could reduce it by up to 90 percent. The president then fired the vice president for research for going public with this report. Opposition grew even stronger since this termination seemed to confirm everyone's fear that many people would soon lose their jobs.

The president reviewed her notes about the Kotter change model and decided that the university must be in the "never let up" stage. She redoubled her efforts to force through the new strategic plan, called additional meetings with various constituencies, and tried to counter the anger of the faculty, students, and alumni with a positive and forward-looking message. Her efforts backfired. The president's calm demeanor was misinterpreted as indifference, and she found herself increasingly isolated.

Within a year and a half of the president's arrival, the university had reached gridlock. Faculty meetings were devoted to little more than arguing about which elements of the president's new strategic plan were the worse. A vote of no confidence concluded each meeting. Over winter break of her second year, the new president released a memo stating how much she missed the classroom and intended to return to the faculty at the end of the academic year. The university limped on, but its financial problems continued, and within three years, massive layoffs proved to be unavoidable.

Scenario Two

Our second scenario also begins with a university that hires a new president. But this time the president who's been hired has worked with learning cultures, change journeys, and creative leadership at her previous institution. So rather than relying on a change model approach and prescribing her new vision for the university, she invests her first hundred days in getting to know the school's primary stakeholders, asking about the issues that matter most to them, and letting them learn a bit about her and her core values. At a public forum, she addresses this broad group of constituencies:

> It's not going to shock anyone if I tell you that our university is facing serious challenges, and that there are going to be lots of struggles ahead. But one of the things I learned in the last several months is how resilient you all are and how committed you are to the success of our university. After all, it's not as though you haven't dealt successfully with problems before. It was that innovative, entrepreneurial spirit you all have that most attracted me to this job. Just think of how creatively you've responded to every opportunity you've had in the past. You reinvented yourselves many times, first from a two-year to a four-year college, then as a university, and finally as a research university. Compared to what you've already done, the issues we're all facing together now don't seem all that threatening. It's just an opportunity for us to build on the solid foundations you've all laid. I've got confidence in you, and I want you to have confidence in me. Most of all, we're going to have fun planning our future together.

Over the next few weeks, the president worked with the governing board and various faculty committees to establish a series of task forces that would examine possible approaches to the school's challenges. Each group would have representation from multiple constituencies in order to provide a broad range of perspectives. Guidelines were established stating that no member of a working group's vote or opinion would count more than anyone else's. As a result, whenever a member of the governing board started referring to classes and degrees as "products" and to students as "customers," the alumni, students, and parents on the task force would immediately counter this language by steering the discussion toward the importance of education and research. Conversely, whenever students or faculty members began to focus too exclusively on their own programs or interests, members of the upper administration or governing board would redirect the conversation toward the big picture.

The process wasn't smooth by any means. As occurs in any discussion of substantive change, early adopters ran into conflict with those who opposed any type of change whatsoever. Arguments broke out and, not infrequently, feelings were hurt. But rather than concluding, "We must now be at the depression stage of the change process. That means the acceptance stage is just around the corner," the president would good-naturedly tease that the university was just making a short side trip to the graveyard of old habits or the opera house of emotion and respond accordingly. By being aware of the competing needs of all groups within her open system, the president was able to keep their attention on the goals they shared, not on the fears and vested interests that could divide them.

After a semester, the working groups proposed four alternative pathways that could take the university back to a state of financial health. In order to keep people from becoming attached to their pet pathway, the members of working groups were shuffled so that a new set of working groups would study the feasibility of all four approaches. These new groups used our ten analytical lenses to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal, with the result that certain elements of one proposal eventually came to be combined with the best features of other proposals, resulting in a single hybrid or consensus pathway.

When this consensus pathway was brought before the governing board, faculty senate, student government association, and alumni board for their endorsement, no one was surprised by anything they heard. The details of each proposal had been shared with all constituents at various points throughout the process. Only the governing board endorsed the final proposal unanimously, although it received a majority vote (and at times an overwhelmingly majority vote) from other bodies. The resulting plan—to rebrand the institution as a national professional university, hire new recruiters who would aggressively seek out-of-state applicants (and who were each given a challenging quota so that the extra tuition that resulted would more than pay for their salaries), refocus the university's PhD programs on a few pillars of excellence that would become the focus for large federal grants, and offer thirty select programs completely online to students located anywhere in the world—received sufficient support. Although there were challenges in its implementation, momentum kept the plan moving forward. When the president stepped down after ten years in office, full-time equivalent enrollment had reached more than twelve thousand, and the school's financial status was rated "excellent" by its regional accrediting body.

A Comparison of These Strategies

Notice that the plans put in place in these two scenarios were not really all that different. But the ways in which the school developed these plans were completely dissimilar. Change models almost inevitably cause institutions to adopt hierarchical approaches, with serious problems arising for a distributed organization like a college or university. The strategy adopted in the second scenario retained enough flexibility to be workable in an open system like higher education. As counterintuitive as it may seem, the first president who seemed to be following a traditional leadership role by promoting *her* vision and *her* change process ended up trying to manage change; she never reached the point of leading it. Although the second president stayed more in the background and empowered various working groups to develop the actual strategy, she was demonstrating effective change leadership. She created an environment in which successful change became possible.

The first president focused on the intended outcome and expected the culture to adapt in such a way that it could bring it about. The second president focused on the culture and put enough trust in the process that it produced a desirable outcome. Her leadership was demonstrated through building relationships, encouraging people's confidence in themselves, and reminding the institution that it already had a creative learning culture.

The first president saw the world in dichotomies: success or failure, adoption or rejection of her vision, adherence to or violation of a specific change model, us and them, and so on. As a result, she became afflicted with what Rolf Dobelli (2013) calls alternative blindness—the failure to recognize that there may well be more options than those on the table at any given moment. The second president, by directing her energy toward the culture rather than investing in any one particular outcome, allowed a wider range of alternatives to be considered. At the same time, she developed maximum buy-in for the consensus proposal because people had already had plenty of opportunities to have their voices heard.

To be sure, these scenarios are largely hypothetical, even though I've based them on situations I witnessed firsthand. I altered only enough details to protect the innocent (as they used to say on *Dragnet*) or, perhaps, the not-so-innocent. And I'll plead guilty to the charge of constructing them in such a way as to obtain the result I want. But if you've been around higher education long enough, you probably know people who bear more than a passing similarity to the two presidents, even if the people you know happen to be provosts, deans, or board chairs. If you recall the last major change process that failed at your own college or

university, it's almost certain that you'll find the missing ingredient wasn't strong, decisive leadership from the top down or sufficient adherence to one of the traditional models of change management. What's much more likely to have occurred is that someone tried to promote his or her vision for the future among stakeholders who had contributed little or nothing to its development, fell victim to alternative blindness in believing that the choice had to be all or nothing, gathered a leadership team that said only what that person wanted to hear, and to this day still hasn't taken responsibility for the way things turned out. At colleges and universities all over the world, that process is unfolding right now.

Conclusion

Although they were initially designed to describe change processes, traditional change models are all too often used to prescribe and guide change processes. In hierarchical organizations, that's not a major problem. The person at the top of the hierarchy has the ability to impose this plan throughout the chain of command. But in a distributed organization, that approach rarely works. Change leaders have to see themselves as part of the system being changed, not in control of it from on high. They need to allow each change process to find its own path. They must remain informed of what's occurring throughout the organization so that they can respond effectively. They should devote their time to building a creative learning culture rather than trying to engineer a specific outcome. Although a vision of where the institution needs to go can be a powerful motivator, assuming that there's only one right way to reach that destination will usually lead to frustration, divisiveness, and failure. The mistake many academic leaders make in attempting to guide change processes at their institutions is that they continue to pursue an approach that's consistently shown itself to be largely ineffective in bringing about meaningful change: strategic planning. Why strategic planning doesn't work—and what alternatives to this largely futile exercise exist in higher education—is the topic of the next chapter.

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