

*Overcoming Resistance To Change: Gestalt, Jungian,
Organizational Learning & Defensive Routines, Death & Rebirth
and The Change Process*

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**Twenty four technologies have reached a flash point this
year...Thesetechnologies are changing the rules of the game...The key is
applying the technology creatively. Why be competitive? The new rules
suggest being innovative and not competitive.
(Daniel Burrus, Techno-Trends, 1993)**

**But it's hard to tell the poison from the cure
Hardest, for sure, to know the reasons
why,why, why,
All I know for sure,
Is another day's gone by.
(Sting, "Another Day," Bring on the Night)**

**Resistance. The act of resisting whether actively or passively...a force
acting in opposition to another force so as to diminish its effect or destroy
it...a guerrilla or underground force.
(Webster's Dictionary)**

**Resistance. See revolution. Destruction, overturning, upsetting,
turbulence, subverting, activity, anarchy and destroying.
(Webster's Thesaurus)**

Themes and Assumptions

- * Change has changed. Change is continuous and discontinuous. Change is accelerating and is as rafting in white water. Change is rapid and complex.
- * It's difficult to know the reasons why people are resisting change. There can be numerous reasons. Resistance may be multi-dimensional. These reasons can be conscious and unconscious.
- * The proposed cure for dealing with resistance may poison the change process.
- * Resistance may be normal. Resistance may be healthy. Resistance need not be overcome.
- * One strategy for understanding and dealing with resistance is to know thy theory of resistance (Theory is personal myths, beliefs and assumptions about resistance and strategies and tactics for dealing with it.) and seeing resistance through a different theory or group of theories.
- * This presentation presents a number of different theories of resistance. Your resistance to one or more of these theories may provide you with insights about your theory of resistance. It may also provide you with a new theory for dealing with resistance.
- * This presentation, by the way, is intentionally design to activate your resistance to change by not being normal or what you might have expected.

Why did you resist?
How was your resistance manifested?
What were you aware of?
What was your response to change?

Gestalt Theory and Resistance

Key Concepts

- * Gestalt is the German word for creating wholes.
- * Gestalt psychology suggests healthy humans, teams and organizations seek to create gestalts. When we don't, unfinished business is experienced. Unfinished business may be experienced as resistance to change.
- * Figure and Ground is another concept. Ground is the environment. Figure is the object or subject upon which a person, team or organization focuses attention. A gestalt is formed when there is a clear distinction between figure and ground. When a good gestalt is formed, a person has a clear focus on the figure and feels complete with it. When a gestalt is not completed, the person may experience unfinished business.
- * The following are some of the sources limiting the formation of gestalts:
 - (1) poor sensory contact with the environ and self,**
 - (2) holding back or blocking self expression,**
 - (3) repressing or holding back impulses, and**
 - (4) thinking, theorizing and anticipating what is going on in someone's mind or in the future.**
- * A third concept is gestalt cycle of awareness, energy/action, contact, resolution/closure and withdrawal.
- * Awareness involves being aware of what you are aware of in the here and now. Awareness is de-appreciated in organization because of our emphasis on thinking and analysis. Team awareness can be heightened through intra and interpersonal awareness experiences, data generation, scouting the environ, share information and seeking information.

* Awareness mobilizes energy for action. Team action and energy can be mobilized by generating ideas, developing and accepting proposals, identifying differences and conflicts and supporting maximum involvement.

* Contact requires awareness. Good contact between people is difficult to characterized but easily experienced. Both people feel understood and energized. Team and organization contact involves good contact amongst the members and stakeholders. Examples of contact are agreements to develop action plans, shared understanding of issues, and selecting a course of action.

* Good contact leads to resolution/closure. Examples of closure are the development of action plans and shared understanding of learning.

* Withdrawal is experienced when a gestalt has been experienced by two or more people. All members have completed their business and are free to focus attention on another subject without experiencing unfinished business.

* A fourth concept involves shouldism, aboutism and Isism. Shouldism and Aboutism inhibit awareness and contact.

* Shouldism implies a singular course of action or perspective. Shouldism reduces inquiry and choice.

* Aboutism implies abstracting a situation. It involves acting as if you are detached from your feelings and the situation. It's as if you are theorizing about people or a problem rather than experiencing them.

* Isism implies being aware of, recognizing and dealing with what is happening in the here and now. It also suggests being able to engage in straight talk or

consciously deciding not too. The person(s) is present. He or she is not fantasizing about other matters or thinking about his or her response.

* Resistance is assumed to be normal and respected. Strong resistance may be helpful. Resistance is viewed as energy mobilized for action.

Purpose of Consultant and Suggested Strategies

* The purpose of the consultant is to heighten awareness of the sources of resistance and reasons for change. The assumption is that current reality must be understood before alternatives can be explored. Change ought not to be rolled out. Strategies for overcoming resistance ought not to be considered.

Resistance ought to be respect and explored in open dialogue. Shouldism and Aboutism ought to be identified and addressed. Team members ought to be experiencing Isism. Gestalt cycle and exercises can be used to support group development. Critical to the consultant is his or her presence. He or she must express from the core of his being the values, principles and theory being presented.

Jungian Psychology, Mythology and Resistance

Key Concepts

* Collective unconscious is the shared archetypes and common themes of humankind. They are expressed in myths and fairy tales.

* Archetypes are clusters of independent creative intelligence and energy with unique characters and functions. Examples are the child, self, hero, feminine, masculine, father, mother, death and rebirth, quest, adventure or odyssey, and the gods of mythology. Archetypes are expressed in movies, novels, and our lives. Most people are unconscious of the archetypes directing their lives.

* Archetypes are also express through individuals, teams and organizations.

* Atypical expressed archetypes in organizations are the child, mother and father. Peter Block calls this parental management. Line management may be an expression of the father. Human resources may be the mother. Associates are the child. Block evokes the heroic archetype, "the

adventure," as an alternative to the parent and child archetypes. He also suggests we must create democratic governance structures.

- * Another example is the Senex and Puer change dynamic. The Senex is the traditional and Puer, the youthful energy of innovation.

- * "Overcoming resistance" may suggest the heroic or warrior archetype which must overcome through battle the resistance. An emphasis on problems may also suggest the heroic archetype.

- * When emphasizing scientific problem solving and SPC, TQM is expressing the archetype of the god Apollo.

- * The God Mars, Ares or Wotan may be reflected in such statements about organizational change as, "Rallying the troops," and "Undergoing radical change is not a war won in a single battle."

- * Individuation can be characterized as the process by which an individual, team or organization become a psychological 'in-dividual,' that is a separate indivisible unity or whole." Individuation can be called, "the pathless path."

- * This process is inhibited by using "fads" and practicing the path of management and quality gurus.

- * Synchronicity, meaningful coincidences of an acausal nature, is also important to individuation and team development.

- * As illustrated by Tom Peters in Liberation Management, serendipitous experiences may be the "difference that makes the difference."

- * Synchronicity suggests the importance of following intuitions and creating time-space for the irrational.

- * Persona is the the mask the individual or team develops and presents to the world. Persona tend to be composed of "positive" or culturally accepted qualities.

- * The shadow is the repressed aspect of the individual or group. These negative qualities are rejected in developing the persona.
- * The shadow suggests that teams and individuals have both dark and light, good and evil. Both need to be recognized and addressed.
- * Groupthink and mob psychology may be examples of the shadow of team effectiveness. Individuals may lose their personal morality when a member of team or organization.
- * The shadow may be projected onto others. This may result in blaming and "bad guy" fantasies. The team or individual may also project good qualities onto others.
- * Jungian psychology suggests that teams and organizations are not real phenomena. They are labels assigned to orders created by individuals when they come together for a common purpose. When we use the word organization we are reifying, "treating an abstraction as substantially existing." Organizations don't make decisions or lay-off people, individuals do. Organizations don't resist change, associates, managers and executives do.
- * Jungian psychology focus on the responsibility of the individual.
- * Traditional management practices and structures, performance management, reward systems, one minute management tactics and seeking to empower others are examples of attempts to negate individual responsibility. Corporate culture program may attempt to destroy individual responsibility by instilling the values and principles into the individual.
- * Resistance to such tactics and practices is healthy and suggests the individual may be attempting to express personal responsibility.
- * Jungian psychology suggests that purpose, principles and culture are developed through dialogue amongst individuals and not dictated by executives or managers.
- * Jungian psychology emphasizes understanding of rather than knowledge about organizations, groups and individuals.

* Traditional scientific knowledge and theory must be put aside for understanding. There is no theory without the phenomena. The phenomena creates the theory.

* Jungian psychology emphasizes uniqueness rather than commonalty. "The difference that makes the difference." The shadow of many management theories is the emphasis on commonalty to the exclusion novelty.

* Resistance may arise when uniqueness is not the respected. Such resistance ought to be respected since high performing systems are always unique.

* Jungian psychology suggest that teams are affected by personal conscious and unconscious factors and the collective unconscious and archetypes.

* Resistance and change may be supported by archetypes which are ignored by behavioral science and OD.

* An example is the archetypes of Senex and Puer. The former focuses on maintaining the traditional and energizes resistance to change. The Puer is the archetype of youthfulness and energizes change. When Senex archetype is dominate, resistance will negate the change effort. Critical to energizing change is supporting the Puer archetype.

* Jungian psychology suggests the importance of mythology: archetype, cultural, organizational and personal.

* Cultural and organizational myths are the stories through which we interpret and act on reality. The following are four American Myths.

American Myths

THE MOB AT THE GATE
THE TRIUMPHANT INDIVIDUAL
THE BENEVOLENT COMMUNITY
THE ROT AT THE TOP

Source: Robert Reich. Tales of a New America--The Anxious Liberal's Guide to the Future.

* Cultural, organizational, team and personal myths may not change with changes in the time-spacescape. Change may be resisted because it does not reflect the cultural, organizational and personal myths of team or organizational members.

* Remything is a process of discovering, making conscious and transforming an organizations myths. Remything processes are presented in McWhinney's and Batisla's, "How Remythologizing Can Revitalize Organizations," and Owen's Spirit: Development and Transformation in Organizations.

Purpose of Consultant and Suggested Strategies

* The purpose of the consultant is to support the individuation process of the individual and team. The consultant might work with each individual and team to understand relevant myths, archetypes and shadow and to assess their impact on effectiveness and the change process. Remything and mythological assessments might be used to this end. Unconscious material may also be surfaced and dealt with. Myths and fables might be presented and worked with to understand sources of resistance.

* Change process must evolve from the individual and the team. Uniqueness must be emphasized. Fads and behavioral science theorizing needs to be avoid. Canned listing of attributes and team building

programs forgotten. Team development might be characterized as the pathless path. Team development ought to be directed by the team. Top management directed team development programs ought not to be performed because such programs evoke the child and parental archetypes. However, team members need to understand the organization's vision and strategy.

Action Science, Organizational Learning and Resistance

Key Concepts

- * Argyris suggests most organizations don't learn and resist change by engaging in Learning I. Argyris suggests that Learning II is required for organizational learning and change to take place.
- * Learning I is single loop learning. It involves correcting errors and problems.
- * Learning II involves questioning basic assumptions and values. It focuses on discovering why errors and problems weren't corrected and their sources.
- * Argyris suggests that there tends to be a difference between our espoused theories and theories in action.
- * An example is a trainer who espouses trust in intuition. However, he or she seeks to make people intuitive through structured and controlled training seminars and does not allow managers or associates to be involved in developing or expressing their intuitions. The theory in action is that managers and associates are as powerless children who must be empowered by the "trainer who knows best." The trainer is expressing predictability and control rather than trusting the intuitive abilities of participants.

Theories in action are based on four values:

- * maintain unilateral control,**
- * maximize winning and minimize losing,**
- * suppress negative feelings, and**
- * be rational.**

*** Defensive routines support this difference and inhibit organizational learning by limiting tough inquiry. Defensive routines are "any policy or action that prevents organizational players from experiencing embarrassment or threat in order to reduce or get rid of them."**

*** Defensive routines also create double binds. Double binds are mixed messages. They require a person to act in a certain fashion while simultaneously creating barriers to behaving in this way.**

*** Research by Gregory Bateson and R.D. Laing suggests double binds may produce schizophrenia.**

*** An example is "we are looking for trainers who can trick managers into empowering others." The mixed message is we want to empower people but we don't really want to because we're going to manipulate them.**

*** The rules of defensive routines are:**

- * produce an inconstant message,**
- * act as if it's not inconsistent,**
- * make the first two undiscussable, and**
- * make the undiscussability of the undiscussable also undiscussable.**

Purpose of Consultant and Suggested Strategies

* The consultant starts with top management. This group needs to examine their reasoning and deal with their defensive routines. This assumes the consultant has worked with his or her own defense routines. Next, the consultant ought to design an educational experience which is focused on a critical business issue.

Death, Rebirth and Change

Key Concepts

* All change involves death and rebirth. The American attitude expressed in such themes as "Get on with your life" fails to recognize the importance of death and rebirth to the human experience. It reflects a mechanical approach to living rather than an organic. The human soul is treated as a mechanism.

* Our attitude fails to recognize the importance of rituals and rites in human development. It fails to recognize the spiritual nature of Americans. It reflects the engineering, managerial science and behavioral science fantasies of modern management philosophies which view human being as rational, economic machines and soulless behavioral boxes seeking self-interest.

* It may express our fear of the pain of death, the uncertainty of rebirth and the emotional out-of-controllness of grieving which is conflict with the rational and rugged individualist executive fantasy.

* Grieving also melts the armor of the authoritarian manager. (See Ryan & Oestreich, Driving Fear Out of the Workplace; Shorris, Scenes From Corporate Life and Hallstein, Memoirs of a Recovering Autocrat. for characterizations of the totalitarian aspects of organizational life. Powerlessness is experienced in the mist of death. Such is the deepest fear of the authoritarian manager who loses the power of fear over.

* Without grieving, organizational members may be trapped in defensive fantasies about change. They may wish to return to the "good old days."

Or, they may act from the "good old days" fantasy because they haven't fully recognize the death of the old.

* For example, Burrus suggests that new technologies have changed the game from competition to innovation. This suggests the death of the myth of competition and the birth of a new myth. How may executives have grieved about or rebirthed into this new mythology? Without death and rebirth, they may continue to play the old game.

* Organizational members may resist getting on with the change when they are not supported in the process of death and rebirth. This failure may lead to reduced productivity, poor quality, depression, passive-aggressive behavior and the damping of the organization spirit when it is most needed.

* Death and Rebirth is both a predictable and unpredictable process. It's unpredictable because people go through this process in their own unique way and whenever the process happens, it happens. It's predictable because there are common themes and stages. These themes are presented in the writings of Owen, Spencer and Adams, Tannenbaum and Hanna, and Bridges.

* Death and Rebirth involves grief work. Such work can be supported through rites of passage. For example, a funeral ritual was conducting for the death of an R& D unit. However, such rites may also take place informally and without warning. See Harrison Owen's *Leadership Is* for a description of such a grief process.

* Critical to successful of grief work is the participation of organizational members in the development of the rite of passage. They and not the consultant ought to guide the development of the ritual. Active involvement supports the grieving process.

* Transitional workshops and intellectual presentations may be ineffective when mourning does not take place. Sacred space must be created for mourning. Sacred space is not organized. It emerges when people are ready. In fact, the best strategy for killing sacred space is to

organize it. See Harrison Owen's *Leadership Is* and M. Scott Peck's *Different Drum* for discussions of sacred space.

Purpose of Consultant and Suggested Strategies

* The consultant might start with educating top management about the process and its impact on organizational effectiveness. Next, the consultant might conduct educational seminars on transitioning, conduct grieve workshops and assist in creating the time-space for organizing and conducting an organizational memorial service. One process is to use open space technology. Volunteers are requested to organize and conduct the memorial. The consultant supports the process, acting as a servant rather than an expert. Useful guides for conducting such rituals are Cathy DeForest's "The Art of Conscious Celebration: A New Concept for Today's Leaders" and L. Peat O' Neil's "Celebrating a Life After Death."

Change Processes and Resistance

The intention to move the whole organization at one time, towards one culture, by one means, is destined to evoke compliance, not commitment. It become high persuasion, not high performance.
(Peter Block, Stewardship)

Key Concepts

* The change process may support resistance and doom the change to failure before it start.

* The traditional story of change enacted by consultants and management may be outdated. It may reflect the myth of the industrial age. Resistance to change is overcome. Change is dictated from on high and rolled out. Consultants are asked to overcome resistance. Developing and implementing change processes is fragmented. Our thinking about change processes still reflects the pyramid structure which is being questioned by re-engineering.

* A new story is needed. We need to start fresh. We need to question our myths, beliefs and assumptions about the change process. Why? Who cares? Time is the currency of the 90s. Resistance is the fire which burns up the currency of time.

Common Themes for Supporting Resistance

* Common themes supporting resistance and failed change efforts are:

* The first is a lack of commitment and ownership by associates, middle managers, customers and suppliers. Commitment and ownership fails to develop because such programs tend to be designed and driven by top management and consultants. This is also the case with purpose, vision, mission, values and norms. They assume responsibility for the change rather than encouraging responsibility throughout the organizational system.

* A second factor is a failure to use the intelligence and knowledge of organizational members, customers and suppliers to discover real business opportunities and to develop action plans to capitalize on them. Stakeholders come into the change too late. Again, this results from management and consultants driving the change process. Such a command and control approach fails to recognize that effective change is based on using and coordinating the intelligence and knowledge of all organizational stakeholders to produce results.

* A third factor is the focus on defect correction and problem solving. The problem with problem solving and defect correction is eliminating a problem or defect doesn't necessarily lead to effectiveness or quality. Also, focusing on problems and defects tends to de-energize rather than energize participants.

* A fourth reason is an emphasis on continuous improvement. While continuous improvement can be beneficial, improving the existing system isn't necessarily going to create the competitive edge in a fast changing marketplace. Discontinuous improvement may.

* A fifth is the use of mass production trainings such as team building, TQM and MBO to induce behavioral change and the assumption that technologies and tools support change. While training and technologies

may be useful, they must be selected by participants and be relevant to the business issue directing the change.

- * A sixth reason is the need for control and the fear of chaos. Chaos is seen as an enemy and a negative sign. Chaos is both constructive and destructive. Chaos is the aliveness of organizing. Chaos is natural to all living systems. Chaos is natural to the process of innovation and creating new forms.

- * A seventh reason is change isn't linked to an authentic business opportunity. Change effort is either glamour shot consulting, demanded by outsiders or initiated by true believers in a guru or fad. Glamour shot consulting is cosmetic change programs designed to show off to outside parties. There is a lack of committed leadership. True believers seek to convert. They indoctrinate. They don't involve others and tend not to link their religion to an authentic business opportunity.

- * A eighth reason is the use of reward and punishment systems and psychologies to reinforce the change and gain compliance. Does your enterprise want compliant child or passive-aggressive employees or businesspeople who creatively create the future and take responsibility?

- * A final factor is that organizational members are content or deny the need for change. When majority of organizational members are in these rooms, change will be strongly resisted and likely fail.

Themes of the New Story of Change

- * The themes of the new story of change are high involvement, whole system and ownership. Common factors supporting ownership and successful change are:

- * The first is energy for change. Stakeholders and organizational members are experiencing confusion or seeking renewal. The organization isn't died.

- * Leadership is committed to the change process. They have a deep intentionality to see the change enacted. Committed leadership focuses on worthy aspirations, mobilize energy through high involvement and are willing to face the unknown without answers. Committed leadership need

not mean "top management." Leadership may be a plant manager or general manager.

- * The third is the involvement of stakeholder as early as possible in developing the change process. The change strategy is developed by stakeholders with top management and consultants. This creates stakeholder ownership.

- * The fourth factor is linking change to a business issue. Change efforts ought not arise from the latest fad or from human resources or OD departments. The latest fad is only used when it applies directly to the opportunity or issue.

- * Stakeholders are directly involved in creating a perceptual assessment of the issue. They understand "why" the issue is important. They have scouted the environ and gained direct experience with the need for change, possible strategies and technologies for supporting the change. They are participants in creating the vision and strategy.

- * The business issue and the strategies associated with it drives the selection of tools and techniques used. Participants select the tools and technologies and not the training department or outside consultants. Each groups is able to discover and re-invent the wheel. They take hold of the tools and technologies.

- * Defensive routines have been discovered and dealt with.

- * A culture of trust and openness is created. For example, when empowering, people are actively involvement in the designing and implementing the change process. That communicates, we trust you. Empowerment training from the training department without active involvement doesn't support openness or trust. This may also require time-space to deal with past history. Trust develops through trust. This requires risking and feeling FUD (fear, uncertainty and doubt). Fear is transformed into communion. Trust does not arise from "fixing," "healing," "converting" or training. Trust arises from compassion.

- * Chaos and messiness is accepted and embraced. Chaos is the aliveness of the organization or team. The messiness is worked with. Failures and

problems are expected and learned from. "Can't cover all the bases."
Errors happen even with the best teams and players.

- * Discontinuous improvement is possible. That means a revolutionary revisioning of structure, processes, governance, technology, products, services and culture may take place.

- * Reward systems support the allocation of wealth based on value-added contribution and not for compliance to the change strategy. Everyone is a businessperson.

Purpose of Consultant and Suggested Strategies

- * The consultant ought to assess the commitment of leadership and the energy in the organization for change using the four apartment model. Confusion and renewal suggests energy for change. First, discover a burning business issue or opportunity. Second, actively involve stakeholders in planning and designing the change process. This will create additional energy. It will also lead to ownership, commitment and responsibility. Third, use processes which involve large numbers of stakeholders in designing and implementing the change.

- * When organizational members are in the contentment and denial rooms, don't use OD. Create scouting and assessment groups composed of stakeholders to assess the environment and to communicate their findings to peers. Educate people about the need for change. Conduct "open space" conferences to create energy for change. Don't roll out. Don't create "Wall Street Journal" or "Fortune" visioning statements. Both will only create massive resistance, communicate "business as usual," support distrust and kill empowerment.

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