

Thursday, November 3, 2016; 9:00 - 10:15 a.m.

T-22

Building a Bridge Over Troubled Waters: Navigating Change in Schools

By Edward B. Hollinger, M. Ed.

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Part I

- I. Voices of Change. What does resistance to change sound like in your school?
- II. Fear of Change
 - A. Anxiety
 - Comes from parting with old habits that have worked well in the past.
 - Change becomes a threat to our identity. (Edgar Schein, 1991)
 - B. Fight or Flight (Cannon, 1932)
 - A natural human response to stress
 - C. Fear
 - Responses come from the *amygdala*; that part of our brain that serves as the repository of emotional memory.
 - Stress triggers a fear response (Debiec and LeDoux, 2014)
 - D. Unconscious response
 - We can have fear responses without being consciously aware of it. (Phelps, 2006)
 - E. Emotional Hijackings
 - Reasoning is lost to the defensive processes. (Goleman, 1995)
 - A perceived emergency in the brain will generate irrational behavior.
 - F. Perceived threat become an “arduous challenge to the rational mind. (Holmer, 2014)
- III. What are the implications of resistance to change?
 - A. Change creates fear and sense of loss.
 - B. Change creates confusion and conflict.
 - C. Change is hard and resistance to change is normal.

IV. Preparing for Change - Four strategies

A. Reduce the threat.

- Create a climate of “inquiry, openness and trust” (Argyris, 2006).
- Create safe spaces.
- Build an emotional safety net.

B. Manage the reactions.

- Create space for dissent.
- Inform the conversation.
- Keep it civil. It’s NOT personal!

C. Expect conflicts and manage them.

- Conflict is inevitable.
- Conflict is normal.
- Conflict can be healthy.
- “Optimal Conflict” (Kegan, 2009) with the proper support system.

D. Improve the dialogue

- Get comfortable with difficult conversations.
- Live with ambiguity.
- It’s OK to have more questions than answers.

V. Navigating Change - Four Essential Questions For Crossing the Bridge

A. Where are you on the bridge?

- How far along are you in the conversation?
- Is your change technical or adaptive?
- Adaptive changes often require a shift in mindset. These will be harder.

B. How strong are your supports?

- From your board?
- From you faculty and staff?
- From your parents and community?

C. How turbulent is the water you are crossing?

- What’s the level of risk?
- What does failure look like?
- What change battles will you pick?

D. What does the other side look like and how long will it take you to get there?

- What do you want to accomplish?
- How will your school be better?
- How urgent is this change?

Building a Bridge Over Troubled Waters: Tools and Tips for School Change
Part 2

I. Transitions of Change

- a. Pre-contemplation Phase: "I have no intention to change."
- b. Contemplation Phases: "I'm thinking about change."
- c. Preparing Phase: "I developing a plan for change."
- d. Acting Phases: "I'm acting on my plan."
- e. Maintaining Phase: "My new habits are in place."
- f. Relapse Phases: "My old habits have returned."

II. Unfreezing (Schein)

- a. Moving from *loss* to *commitment*.
- b. Moving from *old* competencies to *new* competencies.
- c. Moving from *confusion* to *coherence*.
- d. Moving from *conflict* to *consensus*.

III. Immunity to Change (Kegan and Lahey)

- a. Commitment / Goal: What is my goal to change?
- b. Doing/ Not doing: What am I doing or not doing to get to my commitment?
- c. Hidden agendas: What is it that is getting in the way? What's my "worry box?"
- d. Big assumptions: What are my big assumptions?

IV. Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider)

- a. Positive Principle: positive questions lead to positive change
- b. Anticipatory Principle: image inspires action
- c. Simultaneity Principle: inquiry creates change; the questions are important
- d. Poetic Principles: we can choose what we study; endless source of learning
- e. Wholeness Principle: wholeness brings out our best

Recommended reading:

Immunity to Change, by Robert Kegan and Lias Laskow Lahey, 2009.

The Human Side of School Change, by Robert Evans, 1996.

Change or Die, by Alan Deutschman, 2005

Difficult Conversations, by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton and Sheila Heen, 1999

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Specializing in:

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