Grace Judson

Why Strategic Change Initiatives Fail

and how to succeed instead

a white paper from Grace Judson

~ change leadership for successful change initiatives~

Why Change Initiatives Fail
~ and how to succeed instead ~

> *Most strategic change initiatives fail, either immediately or over time.*

There's a reason people roll their eyes when you start talking about strategic change initiatives.
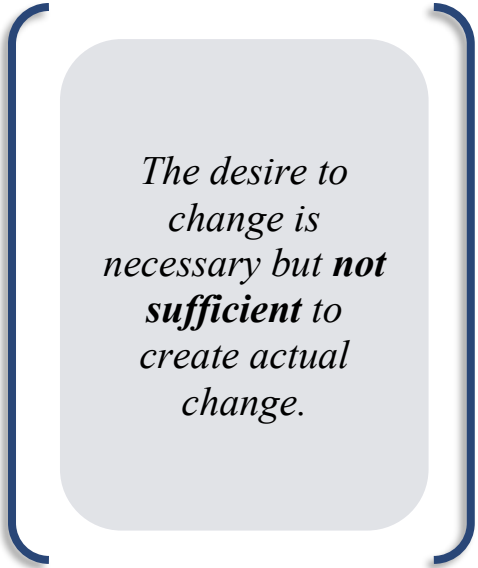
They fail. Often and expensively.

A report from Towers Watson says that "Employers felt that 55% of change management initiatives met initial objectives, but only 25% felt gains were sustained over time." (Lipman 2013)

Doing the math: 45% of change initiatives failed outright, and 75% weren't sustained. Ouch.

Equally startling, research from The Ken Blanchard Companies found that "Twenty-nine per cent of change initiatives are launched without any formal structure whatsoever." (Blanchard 2010)

Even assuming that every one of those unstructured 29% are doomed, that's still a lot of unaccounted-for failures.

So what is it about strategic change? Why is it so hard for organizations to plan, communicate, execute on, and sustain initiatives that are considered necessary for success?

In this paper, I'll answer those questions. In the process of answering them, I'll present a model for strategic change that *works*.
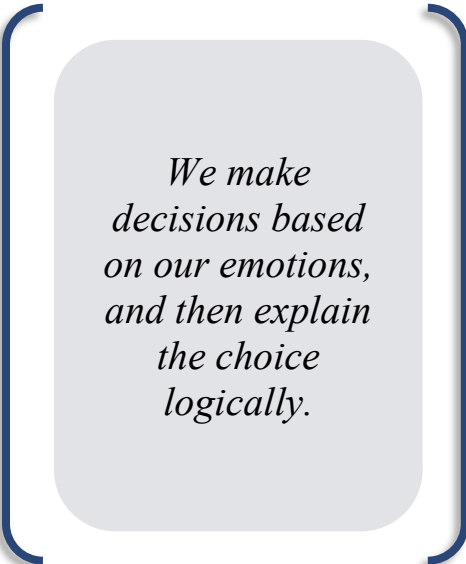
The model is divided into two parts that I call *conversations*. Others might call them phases or stages of change; I call them *conversations* because I base this work on the reality that clear, clean, honest communication is required at every step of the way.

Let's start by answering the question of *why* these crucial initiatives have such stunningly high failure rates.

THE SLOW SLIDE INTO FAILURE

Think about the last time you made a New Year's resolution.

There's excitement, determination, and a sense of commitment; there are often specific plans ("I will go to the gym five days a week" – "I will do a juice cleanse every three months" – "We will have date night once a week"); and then there's disillusionment as, a few weeks or months later, we look back and ask ourselves what happened.

> *The desire to change is necessary but **not sufficient** to create actual change.*

Why, I wonder, do we think organizations can succeed at what is, in effect, the organizational equivalent of a New Year's resolution?

The desire to change is important; the impulse to improve, to do better, to make our businesses, our lives, and the whole world better – it's a deeply human and very powerful impulse.
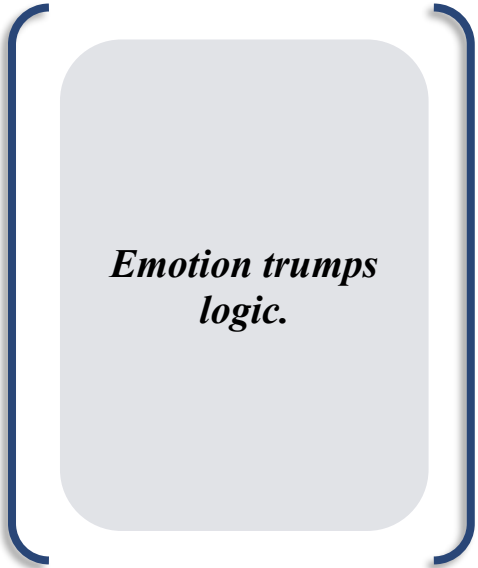
But the desire to change often remains a mere impulse or wish instead of an action plan.

Likewise, optimism is great; it's what gets us started on the path to change, and without starting, we never get anywhere.

But optimism, even optimism backed up with carefully-documented project plans, accountability structures, and risk management, isn't enough to keep us – as individuals or organizations – motivated and moving through a full-scale change process.

We make decisions based on our emotions, and then explain the choice logically.

We've known for decades that we make decisions emotionally first, and only then back up our choices with logic. Neuroscience has clearly established that individuals with brain damage that disconnects them from their emotions struggle to make choices – and when they do choose, they often choose badly. (Bechara, Damasio, & Damasio 2000)

So science tells us that we quite literally rationalize our emotional decisions.

Yet we remain dedicated to the idea that the business world is logical, our feelings should be kept out of the workplace, and emotions have no role to play in the rational process of strategic change.

We talk about "fear of change" in disparaging tones, and say that people who resist change need to be "held accountable" for following through, implying that reward and punishment are enough to keep employees from the C-suite on throughout the organization on the straight-and-narrow path to successful change.

The evidence suggests that's not working so well.

Innumerable books, articles, models of change, and strategic change consultants discuss reasons why change initiatives fail. They cite the triumph of the urgent over the important, the influence of ingrained organizational culture, insufficient training, lack of effective communication, and so forth.

Avoiding those flaws in your change initiative is important and will certainly improve your chances of success.

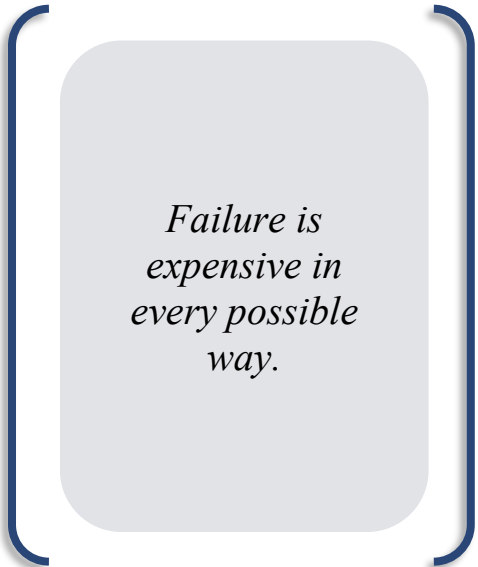But these discussions overlook the key point that *emotion trumps logic.*

Almost none recognize that we all have deep-seated beliefs, feelings, and anxiety about who we are, what our organizations

Emotion trumps logic.

stand for, and how change will impact us. And it's those thoughts, beliefs, feelings, anxieties, and competing commitments that keep us rooted in the status quo – no matter how much we may truly and honestly want to move forward.

In my career as a corporate executive, I spearheaded a strategic initiative that required significant cross-departmental cooperation. This was a change for every employee, from department leadership on throughout the ranks; like many technology companies at that time, it was a heavily siloed organization with Great Walls separating software engineers from the customer-facing support and sales teams.

Years later, long after I had left the company to become an external consultant, I heard from employees who told me how successful that change *still was* in improving their lives and the lives of the company's clients.

The initiative succeeded because I took the time to understand the department leaders' commitment to protecting their teams from "extraneous" requests from other departments. I built in specific steps at each phase to address the concerns that arose out of those protective commitments – commitments that were in direct competition with my mandate to implement cross-departmental cooperation and communication.

If I had not taken that time and put in that effort in every step – planning, communication, roll-out, execution, and follow-up – the initiative would have failed.

It's confusing and painful to put so much effort into envisioning a deeply-desired future, creating the tactical plans that should, with reasonable effort and available resources, move you toward that future … and then discover that the steps aren't taken and the vision appears perpetually out of reach.

Failure is expensive in every possible way.

And as a leader, it's more than just confusing and painful. It directly impacts the bottom line in terms of financial outlay during the planning process, resources committed during the attempt, and diminished productivity when employees become confused, frustrated, and jaded – never mind the unrealized goals of the initiative itself.
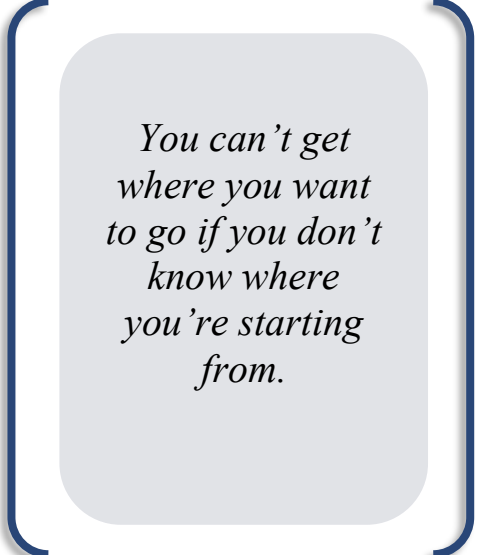
When change initiatives fail, jobs are lost, careers are derailed, and businesses struggle.

It's time to stop allowing that to happen.

THE FIRST CONVERSATION

Let's begin at the beginning

Failure point

You can't get where you want to go if you don't know where you're starting from.

All too often, leadership teams and Boards skip the serious work of understanding where they're starting from and jump right into the fun stuff: envisioning what could be.

But it's hard to get to London when you don't know if you're starting from Paris or San Francisco.

To lay the groundwork for success, the strategic planning process must start with explicitly understanding the platform from which you're launching your change initiative.

That platform is made up of three components:

1. **Facts**: resources, including both finances and people; market positioning.

2. **Leadership**: vision, mission, values, and commitment to shared meaning.

3. **Culture**: employee engagement and shared understanding of the vision, mission, values, and organizational objectives.

You may think you already know these components well. My clients believe they do. But my clients quickly discover that they

don't know them as well as they thought, and often realize that long-established concepts about leadership and culture are well past due for revision.

By the way, please don't roll your eyes at my use of the terms *vision, mission, values, culture*, and *employee engagement.* I agree that these are over-used words that have become pale ghosts of themselves. In this process, I hope to revive them – and I'll start by explaining what *shared meaning* is all about.

Shared Meaning

We can easily agree that we want to be successful, as individuals and as an organization.

But do we share a common understanding of what *success* actually means?
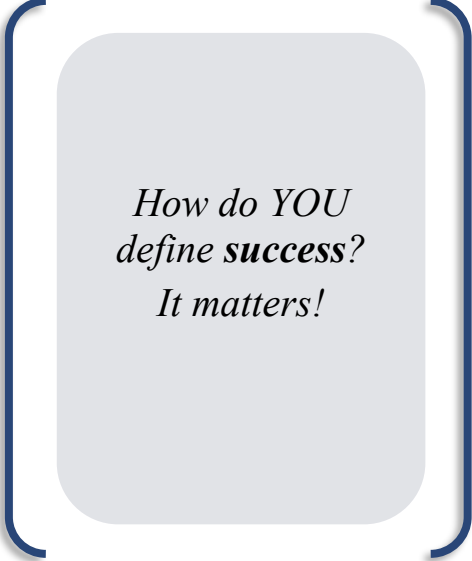
I've yet to encounter a leadership team or Board where everyone agreed on what *success* meant, for themselves personally or for the organization as a whole.

The more fundamental and significant a word or phrase is, the more likely it is to carry multiple, often contradictory, implications for individuals and across teams.

Success is just one example of where we *must* have real conversations about meaning. The key words and phrases used

*The **lack** of shared meaning the biggest barrier to real communication.*

in an organization's vision and mission likewise need to be discussed and explicitly defined, as do the words and phrases used in defining strategic initiatives and identifying values and goals.

When we open the process by asking each member of the team to define *success* – and all the other words used in crafting the terms by which an organization makes decisions – the team experiences enhanced trust between members and discovers insights into why past initiatives have struggled and failed. And they align around a new, shared definition of *success* that leads to a more inspiring, impactful expression of the organization's vision and mission than they'd previously imagined.

> *The first step in a successful strategic change initiative is to create shared meaning around the organization's **facts, leadership**, and **culture** – and what each team member understands by **success**.*

*How do YOU define **success**? It matters!*

Answer these questions

Facts:

➤ What is the organization's current financial situation?

➤ What are your primary sources of revenue?

➤ What is the marketplace environment and brand position?

Organizational Facts, Leadership, Culture: these are your foundation.

*Your vision, mission, and values are the North Star for decision-making at **every** level.*

➢ Who are the stakeholders – all of them?

➢ What resources are available?

➢ What are the bottom-line consequences if you *don't* change?

Leadership:

➢ What does your organization take a stand for – and why?

➢ Can your leadership team and Board state and explain the organization's vision, mission, and values – without a cheat-sheet?

➢ Are your vision, mission, and values up-to-date and accurate tools for guiding organizational direction – and are they actually used in day-to-day decision-making?

➢ Are you willing to have a real conversation to create shared meaning about the key words and phrases used in your vision, mission, and values?

Culture:

➤ Do your employees understand and agree with what the organization takes a stand for – and why?

➤ Can your employees state and explain the vision, mission, and values – and are they held accountable for using them to guide their day-to-day workplace choices and decisions?

➤ Do you understand the extent of commitment, trust, and shared meaning within your employee population?
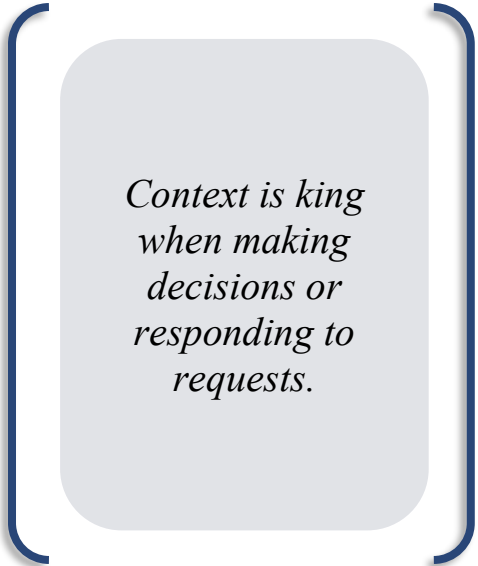
Success:

➤ What does *success* mean to each member of the leadership team and Board?

➤ Have you reconciled those individual meanings into a shared definition of success for the organization as a whole, and the strategic change initiative in specific?

What and Why?

Failure point

Primarily because of a lack of shared meaning, but also because of a lack of operational rigor, goals are often fuzzily defined and out of alignment with the organization's vision and mission. Then,

Context is king when making decisions or responding to requests.

inevitably, communication of objectives to employees fails to provide enough context for them to engage with the importance of the change they're being asked to support.

Leadership teams overlook the simple fact that their employees don't share the same perspective, knowledge, or context as they do.

I think we've all experienced how frustrating it is to be asked to do something without appropriate context, but here are two brief examples.

At a party some years ago, I was handed a bowl of tomatoes, a cutting board, and a knife, with the request that I cut up the tomatoes.

"For what?" I asked. "Sandwiches, or salad?"

If I had assumed salad and cut chunks of tomato, the sandwiches would have gone without their tomatoes. Likewise, sandwich slices would have fallen apart in a salad. A crucial piece of information, a.k.a. context, was missing from the request.

At that same party, someone came rushing into the kitchen asking for a towel.

Responding usefully to that request was impossible without knowing what the towel was for: to wipe a baby's face, dry a plate, or – as was the actual case – clean up dog slobber? Or something

else entirely? We don't use the same towel to wipe dog drool off the floor as we do to dry our fine china – or wipe a baby's face.

The problem lies in the fact that leadership teams often fail to adequately define their strategic goals for themselves – and so of course they fumble when it comes time to communicate those goals to the employees who have to implement and live with the change. Or, on the other hand, they've defined clear goals, but they've become so familiar with them that they struggle to communicate them in a way that makes sense to someone with no knowledge of the context.

Fuzzy goals yield fuzzy results.

Answer these questions:

➢ Exactly what is the strategic change intended to achieve?

➢ How is that objective 100% aligned with the organization's vision, mission, and values?

➢ Why is the change important – and why is it important *now*?

➢ When this change initiative succeeds, what will be different in each stakeholder's experience?

➢ What are the consequences if the change is *not* undertaken?

➢ Do you have the necessary resources to be successful (the right people with the right skills; time; funding)?

Resources, resilience, and tactical planning

Failure point

Within reason, the initial process of setting goals for strategic change should always be done without worrying about *how* the change will get done. When we ask *how* before determining *what* and *why*, we immediately – and unnecessarily – constrain our results. It's only once the objectives are in place that it's time to look at resources: time, money, and people.

Time frames for change initiatives are often so far in the future that it's almost impossible to get traction – any sense of importance and urgency – on what needs to happen *right now*. Furthermore, time frames tend to be unrealistic; goals often feel overwhelmingly large; and contingency planning is usually non-existent, even though we all know that even the best plans seldom, if ever, survive contact with reality.

If you want your initiative to be successful, plan no further than one year out. If your initiative spans more than nine to 12 months – 18 months at the absolute most – you probably have more than one initiative, and you need to break your monolithic objective down into smaller chunks. *It's okay to do this*. It doesn't mean you have to abandon your bigger vision or inspiring objectives. It just

> *Don't ask "how" when brainstorming; it immediately and unnecessarily constrains your options.*

means that, like any very large effort, you need to tackle that big vision and inspiring objective in phased steps.

There are several reasons for this.

First, the world today moves far too fast for what used to be standard long-term planning practice. Looking back over the last six, nine, and 12 months, we see enormous change – culturally, economically, politically, environmentally, globally.

And whether you read this the moment I press "publish" or you're reading it months or years later, that statement is still going to be true.

Skip the long-term plans; medium-term planning is the new black.

In order to maintain any sort of resilience in the face of this reality, planning *must* span shorter time frames, in what's known as "medium-term" planning.

As scholars Dominic Holder and Nandu Nandkishore point out in a Harvard Business Review article, "The short term is the daily managerial grind of fire-fighting and solving problems. The long term is a dream. The medium term is where companies are shaped — where they really achieve results and growth." (Holder & Nandkishore 2016)

Secondly, as I mentioned above, the larger an objective is, the more unattainable and overwhelming it feels, and the harder it is to initiate or maintain engagement and momentum. While

intellectually we all know that any objective of any size is never achieved in a single swoop but always by taking one step at a time, emotionally the burden of a big change keeps people immobilized.

Having said all that, and assuming your change initiative falls within the one-year time frame, it's crucial to recognize that the initial steps of tactical planning, including allowing for the unexpected, are part of your strategic process if you are to keep a sense of both potential and reality.

Initial tactical planning belongs in the hands of leadership, not the implementation team.

When leaders hand off a completed strategic plan to a tactical team without completing at least an initial, high-level tactical plan (as they so often do), you lose continuity, and you run a very real risk of having an over-committed strategy that's virtually impossible to implement.

Leadership teams don't have to be the implementation team. But for a change initiative to succeed, leadership teams must validate the tactical feasibility of their strategy before turning it over to those responsible for making it happen. This includes being reasonable and realistic about resource availability – the right people with the right skills, training needs, funding, and, of course, the available time.

Answer these questions

➢ Is the strategic initiative something that can be completed within 12 to 18 months or less?

➢ Do you currently have the resources – time, skilled employees or consultants, funding, and any other resource you may need, including people skilled in change leadership – to complete the initiative?

➢ If not, do you have plans in place to obtain those resources quickly, so you don't lose momentum before you even start?

➢ Are there clear owners for each phase and sub-project within your initiative – and a single point of ownership for the initiative as a whole?

➢ Do you understand the impact of change leadership – the people aspect of change (versus change management, the tactical aspect) – on your initiative? And is there a skilled change leader who's responsible for the people aspect?

THE SECOND CONVERSATION

You've completed the planning process, including the initial tactical review and plan. You've got the right resources in place, you've turned everything over to your implementation team, and they're off to a great start.

The planning is done – but you're not done yet!

At this point, most people believe there's nothing left but the execution phase. It's just another project now, needing to be managed like any other project is managed.

And this is where most strategic change initiatives begin that slow slide into failure.

Because change initiatives are *not* just another project.

Change initiatives ask people to alter the way they do things, which requires them to alter the way they think, the things they believe, and how they feel.

And that's non-trivial, to say the least.

A white paper from Tony Laffoley, Executive Development Program Director at UNC's Kenan-Flager Business School, cites a 2008 IBM Global study that surveyed 1,500 executives in 15 countries. "People and corporate culture were identified by the respondents as major obstacles to implementing change, with nearly 60 percent of respondents saying changing people's mindsets and attitudes was the biggest challenge. Forty-nine percent of respondents said that corporate culture was the next biggest challenge." (Laffoley 2013)

Management guru Peter Drucker famously said, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast."

That's more than just a cute saying.

Never forget that change is **CHANGE**.

The success of your strategic change initiative depends upon how well you understand and manage your organization's culture *and* how well you understand and facilitate key employees' experience throughout the change process. This is what I mean when I refer to *change leadership*.

And it includes your leadership team – and yourself.

Consider this: if we *really* want to create this change, why isn't it happening? Why isn't it unfolding organically out of the planning process?
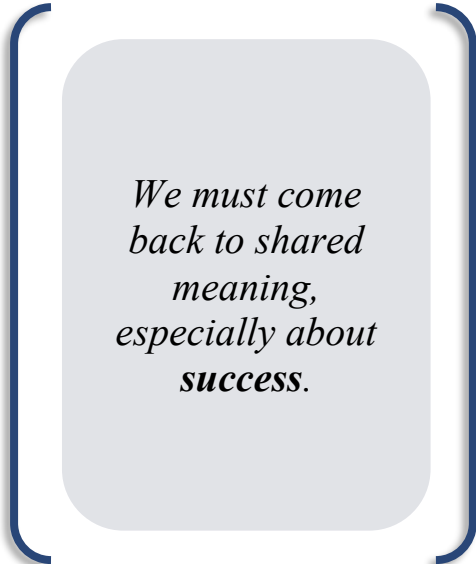
There are any number of apparent reasons, with a lack of necessary resources (time, money, knowledge, skills, etc.) at the top of the list.

Whenever there is "resistance" to change, it's because of anxiety around competing commitments.

But underneath all that lies an often-unconscious commitment to maintaining the status quo.

This is more than just a nod to the commonly-held idea that people fear and resist change. It points to the conflicting commitments we all hold, no matter how deeply we may believe in the change we seek to implement.

And this treads on touchy ground.

Consider non-profit leaders, who are typically absolutely and legitimately passionate about their cause. Despite – or perhaps because of – that commitment, it's not surprising to realize that

they sometimes see their client population as victims – victims of society, of their childhood, of the legal system, of abuse and trauma, or whatever it may be.

However, when I point out that this belief that "your clients are victims" *keeps them from doing what they want to do* in helping these people become healthy, thriving, happy members of society – well, as I say, this is a touchy subject!

Likewise, when I work with business leaders who are quite clear – and often just as passionate as their non-profit counterparts – that their company *must* change in the ways they've outlined, they too are unhappy to discover that they have equally insidious competing beliefs. It may be that the C-suite is invested in staying in control – not a surprising commitment for people at that level in an organization, but a significant stumbling block when it comes to certain types of change.

It can come up as individual stakeholders' commitment to what's familiar to them, rather than diving into the uncertainties around their skills, jobs, and what they might need to learn and do differently.

Or it may go back to questions about shared meaning, especially about what *success* means to each member of the leadership

We must come back to shared meaning, especially about success.

team, implementation team, and the employee community as a whole.

I know a business where each of the three primary leaders within the organization had a slightly different definition of success.

One of them believed that success meant serving their customers as well and honestly as possible while making a reasonable profit and maintaining a steady growth rate.
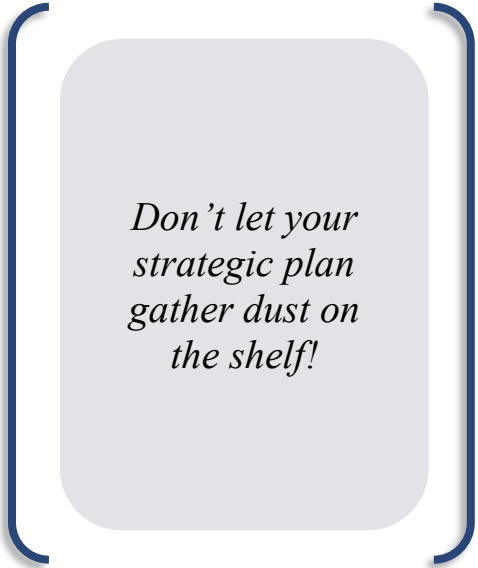
Another one believed that making everyone happy – customers and employees alike – was the most important quality of success, above any questions of profitability.

And the third believed that having as many high-status customers as possible was the primary measure of success for the business.

Small wonder they were all maddeningly frustrated by their inability to be truly successful on *anyone's* terms.

Failure point

Ken Blanchard on why change initiatives fail: "One reason is that the issues and challenges organizations face today are more complex than ever before. *A second and more fundamental reason is that leaders in most organizations do not use a high-involvement change strategy to lower resistance and generate buy-in to change.*" (Blanchard 2008; emphasis mine)

"Failure Reason Number 1: Executives often fail to factor in the heart issues."

Or as another author puts it, "Failure Reason Number 1: Executives Often Fail to Factor in the Heart Issues." (Johnson n.d.)

When you think everything is set up for success, it's an ugly, frustrating surprise when you suddenly discover that your change initiative is stalling out.

Deadlines start getting missed. Stress levels rise. Project managers mutter about resistance to change.

Or – worse yet – no one really notices as the process quietly slides to a halt and everything reverts to what it was before.

Don't let your strategic plan gather dust on the shelf!

This is typically where, if there was outside help during the initial strategic planning process, everyone points a finger at the consultant.

It's also where the cliché of the "strategic plan gathering dust on the shelf" comes from.

Because if you don't have the *second conversation* to uncover the often-unconscious belief structures, countering commitments, and underlying anxieties, your strategic change initiative is likely to become one of those that fail or aren't sustained.

What is the "second conversation"?

The *second conversation* has to do with uncovering the competing commitments and fears that hold the status quo in place – and cause your strategic change initiative to fail.

And this is where change leadership is essential.

This *second conversation* is, of course, more than just one conversation (just as the *first conversation* happened over time as you created shared meaning, validated your vision, mission, and values, evaluated your market position and resource availability, established your strategic objectives, and created the initial tactical plan).

It's also the conversation that most leaders fail to have. Why? Because most leaders, managers, and Human Resources practices tell us not to *go there* – not to go into any discussion of personal beliefs, feelings, and behavior patterns.

The second conversation requires the courage to be vulnerable.

The reality is that this *second conversation* requires vulnerability, and vulnerability is often in scarce supply in the workplace. Nonetheless, as some researchers and writers acknowledge, a key failure point for change is that, "People's concerns with change are not surfaced and/or addressed. Although they may comply with the change early on, unresolved information, personal, or implementation concerns will cause them to revert

back to old behaviors and work processes when the pressure to change is off." (Zigarmi, Hoekstra 2008)

From the same authors: "It is critically important that leaders develop strategies to listen in on and initiate conversations in the organization so that they can surface and resolve people's concerns with change and benefit from the insights and advice they have about how to implement the proposed change." (Zigarmi, Hoekstra 2008)

We continue to cling to the outdated and inaccurate notion that the workplace is a place of logic and reason, project plans and task lists, and most emphatically not a place for personal exploration, self-reflection, and growth.

Our work – just like every aspect of our lives – offers opportunities for self-reflection and self-awareness.

And yet every client I've worked with has told me that their work – especially when that work engages them in transformational change – offers as many or more opportunities to develop self-awareness and personal growth than any other area of their life (with the possible exception of family relationships!).

Answer this question

➢ What might prevent us from achieving this transformational change?

Your initial responses will inevitably be about external factors: resource availability, employee resistance, marketplace surprises,

the economy, regulatory changes, and so on. And of course these are all important factors to consider from the standpoint of project and risk management.

Yet as real as any of those risks might be, the true challenges lie further in. Keep asking the question, over and over again.
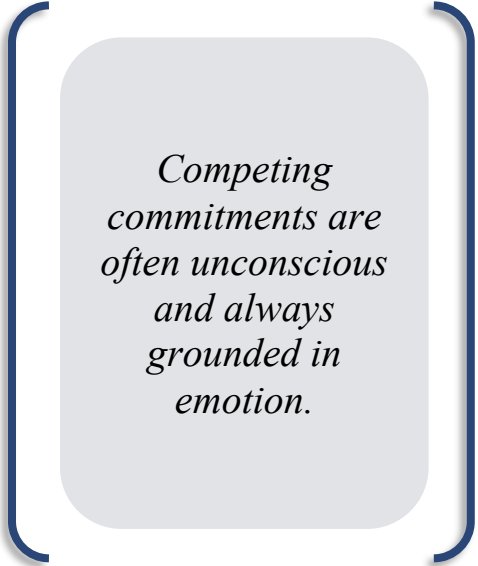
Change happens from the inside out, not from the outside in. External factors may be the *apparent* reasons why change fails, but they are usually not the *actual* reason; in short, they're the symptoms, not the real problem.

Change is an inside job.

Answer this question

➢ What beliefs, preconceptions, ideas, and thoughts do you have – individually and collectively – that keep you attached to the status quo?

Resources can be managed, employees can be engaged and motivated, and the marketplace always throws curve balls, as does the economy, regulatory agencies, and so on.

The real key to effective change – change that works, lasts, and has meaningful results for every one of your stakeholders – lies in understanding the hidden, often-unconscious internal commitments to keeping things the way they are.

Recent client examples include

> *Competing commitments are often unconscious and always grounded in emotion.*

➢ A twelve-member Board was unanimously disillusioned with strategic planning; they believed that strategy only led to lofty goals that would never be achieved.

Their competing commitment: to prove that strategic planning was a waste of time, just as it had always been in their previous attempts.

➢ A leader exhausted herself being "nice" to everyone; she believed her team had to like her in order for everyone to be successful.

Her competing commitment: to avoid being disagreed with and disliked.

➢ A business owner had a deeply-ingrained pattern of shutting down when his co-owner became emotional; he believed there was no choice except disengagement when she started yelling at him.

His competing commitment: to prove his partner's opinion of him was correct; he really was difficult, bossy, and unfair.

➢ A CEO was determined to never do anything she wouldn't ask her employees to do; she believed that hands-on work was the only "real" work, despite her exceptional aptitude for strategic thinking.

Her competing commitment: to not disappoint her blue-collar parents and grandparents by doing what they considered to be "fake" work instead of "getting her hands dirty with real work."

➢ A CFO was reluctant to challenge his staff to be more conscientious about accurately entering financial details; he believed the potential conflict would be more painful than the time-consuming effort of researching and correcting errors.

His competing commitment: to avoid conflict and disagreement at all costs.

Internal belief structures and the accompanying competing commitment to the status quo must be uncovered in order to manage them.

However, they typically aren't changed just by discovering that they're there. Instead, they must be actively disproved by testing their validity.

For instance, for the Board described in the first example, we began with my commitment to them that we would plan only for the next 12 months, and no further, and that I would support them not just through the strategic work, but also through the tactical planning and implementation phases.

Disprove a competing commitment, and it loses its power to prevent change from happening.

By the end of the half-day strategy workshop, they were already recognizing the value of strategic planning and the power of redefining their non-profit's vision – while keeping their feet solidly on the ground of what was practical and necessary to accomplish.

In each of these cases, and others I could list, the effort of uncovering the competing commitments and proving their untruth was essential – because in each of these cases, the organizations and individuals involved achieved the desired transformational change.

There are just two *questions to ask* in this second conversation – but if answered thoughtfully, honestly, *repeatedly,* and with a willingness to be vulnerable, those questions will yield a wealth of information, ideas, and insights that will exponentially increase your chances of successfully creating the strategic change you desire.

IN SUMMARY

Change happens from the inside out first, and then from the outside in.

As a change leader within your organization, it's up to you to

Your role as a change leader (should you choose to accept it!)

➢ Help your team understand the current landscape (where you're starting from);

➢ Describe the desired objective (what you want to achieve and why, and how that aligns with your organization's vision, mission, and values – and what will happen if you *don't* achieve that objective);

➢ Create a clear tactical plan, including identifying and allocating the right resources;

➢ And then have the *second conversation*, in which you uncover the external AND internal risk factors, uncovering the competing commitments and addressing the hidden anxieties and fears that create resistance.

Sources

Leonard, David, and Claude Coltea. "Most Change Initiatives Fail -- But They Don't Have To." Gallup. May 24, 2013. Accessed August 08, 2016. http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/162707/change-initiatives-fail-don.aspx.

Blanchard, Ken. "Mastering the Art of Change." The Ken Blanchard Company. January 2010. Accessed August 8, 2016. http://www.kenblanchard.com/img/pub/blanchard_mastering_the_art_of_change.pdf.

Zigarmi, Pat, PhD, and Judd Hoekstra. "Leadership Strategies for Making Change Stick." The Ken Blanchard Companies. Accessed August 8, 2016. http://www.kenblanchard.com/getattachment/Leading-Research/Research/Strategies-for-Making-Change-Stick/Leadership_Strategies_for_Making_Change_Stick.pdf.

Houlder, Dominic, and Nandu Nandkishore. "All Hail Medium-Term Planning." Harvard Business Review. June 23, 2016. Accessed August 08, 2016. https://hbr.org/2016/06/all-hail-medium-term-planning.

Bechara, Antoine, Hanna Damasio, and Antonio R. Damasio. "Emotion, Decision Making and the Orbitofrontal Cortex." Oxford Journals - Cerebral Cortex. March 2000. Accessed August 8, 2016. http://cercor.oxfordjournals.org/content/10/3/295.full.pdf.

Laffoley, Tony. "Why Change Initiatives Fail." UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School, Executive Development. November 12, 2015. Accessed August 08, 2016. http://execdev.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/blog/why-change-initiatives-fail.

Johnson, Bruce D. "7 Reasons Why Most Change Management Initiatives Fail." Accelerated Growth Consulting. Accessed August 08, 2016. http://acceleratedgrowth.org/free-stuff/articles/initiatives-fail/.

About the Author: Grace Judson

So, why should you pay any attention to me and what I say?

I could give you the usual sort of backstory about how I spent twentysomething years in corporate America, sixteen of them in leadership, witnessing and experiencing so much painful dysfunction, especially around change initiatives. And how that made me want, very deeply, to do what I could to make things better by helping companies get better at overcoming the inevitable resistance to change so they could actually make the improvements they want to make!

All true. But, well, yawn.

Because there are a gazillion change consultants and trainers out there who say pretty much exactly the same thing. Not very inspiring, eh?

Here's what's different about me.

I see patterns. I think in systems and process. And I understand *people.*

These are terrific skills for facilitating change leadership in organizations.

But they're not exactly common – or normal.

For a long time, I thought everyone could do this. But then I realized that being able to see patterns, think in systems, and simultaneously understand the big picture *and* the details involved, as well as understanding the people and their motivations and anxieties around change – no, it's not normal. Or common.
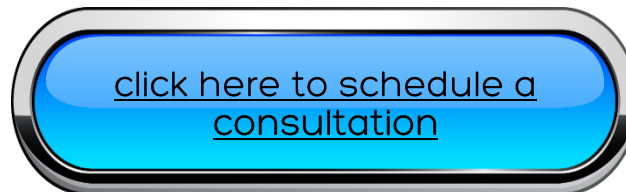
I'm not your "normal" change leadership expert.

I work with midsized companies who might believe they don't have the time or other resources to get help implementing essential change – and I show them how it can be done in ways that fit their culture and their needs, and develops change leaders within the organization for future change initiatives.

The tools presented in this guide are part of a powerful, confident leader's repertoire. And they're just a small taste of the learning available.

WANT MORE?

Let's talk. Click the big blue button to schedule time for a free consultation to see how I can help you succeed at change.

click here to schedule a consultation

Or follow me on LinkedIn, Facebook, or YouTube.