



Quick CLIX for CHANGE ◀ No: 2

Applying the 5 Disciplines to Change

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The 5 Learning Disciplines, first popularised by Peter Senge, are a useful framework for building change capability as well as understanding both the dynamics of – and practices behind – planning effective change.

➔ Here's a summary of the 5 Disciplines and their change applications...

1. SHARED VISION: Taking time early in the change process to shape a truly shared vision is crucial for building common understandings and commitments, unleashing people's aspirations and hopes and unearthing reservations and resistance. Leaders use tools such as 'positive visioning' to create a shared vision, forge common meaning and mutually agree improvement strategies and change goals. Most change efforts pay lip service to the importance of having a vision of change, but gloss over or rush through the 'shared' bit.

2. MENTAL MODELS: One key to unlocking the door to successful change lies in surfacing the deep-seated mental models (the beliefs, values, mind-sets and assumptions that determine the way we think and act) we have about it. Getting in touch with the thinking going on about your change, challenging or clarifying assumptions and encouraging people to rethink or reframe is essential to success – and to understand and lessen deeply held but unexpressed reasons for resistance.

3. PERSONAL MASTERY: is all about 'self-awareness' – the human face of change. To manage change relationships sensitively, to be willing to have our own beliefs and values challenged and ensure our change interactions/behaviours are authentic, congruent and principled. Profound and lasting change rests on our personal level of change-ability. Leaders use tools like concept-shifting and reframing to enhance the quality of their interactions and team relationships.

4. TEAM LEARNING: happens when teams start 'thinking together' – developing critical reflection, inquiry and discussion skills to conduct more skillful change conversations with each other which form the basis for creating a shared vision of change and deciding on common commitments to action they can sign onto. The crucial conversations connected with the discipline of Team Learning enable people to be open about their change fears and feelings, discuss complex and conflictive issues and dialogue to share mental models, perspectives, guiding ideas and concepts.

5. SYSTEMS THINKING: is a tool to better see the interrelationships that underlie complex change situations rather than simplistic (and mostly inaccurate) linear cause-effect chains. It enables teams to unravel the often hidden subtleties, influences, leverage points and intended/unintended consequences of change plans and programs. Leaders use Systems Thinking Maps and principles to analyse situations, events, problems, possible causes and courses of action to find better (and often not obvious) leverage points in a system for change and improvement.

? Does your organisation's approach to change address each of the Five Disciplines?



Learning Solutions
for Leadership & Change

BILL Cropper
Director &
Principal Consultant

Fax: 07-4068 7555

Tel: 07-4068 7591

Mob: 0429-687 513

E-Mail: coachingclinics@thechangeforum.com

Web: <http://www.thechangeforum.com>