

Leading Positive Change

Chapter 10

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The word leadership is often used as a catch-all term to describe almost any desirable behavior by a manager. “Good leadership” is frequently the explanation given for the success of almost any positive organizational performance—from stock price increases to upward national economic trends to happy employees. Magazine covers trumpet the remarkable achievements of leaders, and the person at the top is almost always credited as being the cause of the success or failure. Coaches are fired when players don’t perform, CEOs lose their jobs when customers choose a competitor, and presidents are voted out of office when the economy goes south. Contrarily, leaders are often given hero status when their organizations succeed (e.g., Gandhi, Welch, Buffet). The leader as scapegoat, and hero, is an image that is alive and well in modern society. Rationally speaking, however, most of us recognize that there is much more to organizational success than the leader’s behavior, but we also recognize that leadership is one of the most important influences in helping organizations perform well (Pfeffer, 1995).

Some writers have differentiated between the concepts of leadership and management (Bass, 1990; Nair, 1994; Katzenbach, 1995; Kotter, 1999). Leadership has often been described as what individuals do under conditions of change. When organizations are dynamic and undergoing transformation, people exhibit leadership. Management, on the other hand, has traditionally been associated with the status quo. Maintaining stability is the job of the manager. Leaders have been said to focus on setting direction, initiating change, and creating something new. Managers have been said to focus on maintaining steadiness, controlling variation, and refining current performance. Leadership has been equated with dynamism, vibrancy, and charisma; management with predictability, equilibrium, and control. Hence, leadership is often defined as “doing the right things,” whereas management is often defined as “doing things right.”

Recent research is clear, however, that such distinctions between leadership and management, which may have been appropriate in previous decades, are no longer useful (Tichy, 1993, 1999; Quinn, 2000, 2004). Managers cannot be successful without being good leaders, and leaders cannot be successful without being good managers. No longer do organizations and individuals have the luxury of holding on to the status quo; worrying about doing things right without also doing the right things; keeping the system stable in addition to leading change and improvement; maintaining current performance in addition to creating something new; concentrating on equilibrium and control in addition to vibrancy and charisma. Effective management and leadership are largely inseparable. The skills required to do one are also required for the other. No organization in a post-industrial, hyper-turbulent, 21st century environment will survive without individuals capable of providing both management and leadership. Leading change and managing stability, establishing vision and accomplishing objectives, breaking the rules and monitoring conformance, although paradoxical, all are required to be successful. Individuals who are effective managers are also effective leaders much of the time. The skills required to be effective as a leader and as a manager are nearly identical.

On the other hand, our colleague Bob Quinn (2004) has reminded us that no person is a leader all of the time. Leadership is a *temporary* condition in which certain skills and competencies are displayed. When they are demonstrated, leadership is present. When they are not demonstrated, leadership is absent. People choose to enter a state of leadership when they choose to adopt a certain mindset and implement certain key skills.

Understanding that leadership is a temporary, dynamic state brings us to a radical redefinition of how we think about, enact, and develop leadership. We come to discover that most of the time, most people, including CEOs, presidents, and prime

ministers, are not leaders. We discover that anyone can be leader. Most of the time, none of us are leaders. (Quinn, 2004: xx).

In this chapter, we focus on the most common activity that demonstrates leadership—leading change. It is while engaging in this task that the temporary state of leadership is most likely to be revealed. That is, despite the heroic image of leaders, every person can develop the skills needed to lead change. No one was born as either a leader or absent the abilities that would enable him or her to be a leader. On the other hand, leading change involves a complex and difficult-to-master set of skills, so assistance is required in order to do it successfully. That's because of the difficulties associated with change.

Ubiquitous and Escalating Change

It is not news that we live in a dynamic, turbulent, and even chaotic world. Almost no one would try to predict with any degree of certainty what the world will be like in 10 years. Things change too fast. We know that the technology currently exists, for example, to put the equivalent of a full-size computer in a wristwatch, or inject the equivalent of a laptop computer into the bloodstream. New computers are beginning to be etched on molecules instead of silicon wafers. The half-life of any technology you can name—from complex computers to nuclear devices to software—is less than six months. Anything can be reproduced in less than a half a year.

The mapping of the human genome is probably the greatest source for change, for not only can we now change a banana into an agent to inoculate people against malaria, but new organ development and physiological regulation promises to dramatically alter population life styles. As of this writing, more than 100 whole animals have been patented. Patents have exploded from an overwhelming 4000 applications in 1991 to 22,000 in 1995, but one year later they mushroomed to 500,000 per year, with exponential growth expected to continue. Whereas it took 10 years to produce a generic alternative to a normal pharmaceutical drug in 1965, the time was cut in half by 1980, cut in half again by 1990, and by the year 2000, generic alternatives could be produced for almost any pharmaceutical compound in about a week. In 1980 it took a year to assemble 12,000 DNA base pairs; by 1999 it took less than a minute, and by the end of 2000, 1000 base pairs could be assembled in less than one second. Currently, computers are being configured that can sequence every major disease in a single day. Who can predict the changes that will result? Hence, not only is change ubiquitous and constant, but almost everyone predicts that it will escalate exponentially (see **Enrique**, 2000).

The trouble is, when everything is changing, it is impossible to manage change. No one can manage constant and universal change. For example, let's say you are flying an airplane, moving through space. Everything is changing. You're constantly moving. The trouble is, it is impossible to guide the plane unless you can find a fixed point, something that doesn't change. You cannot control the plane if everything is moving at once. Consider the last flight of John Kennedy, Jr., for instance. He began to fly at dusk up the New England coast. He lost sight of land and, because it got dark, of the horizon line as well. He lost his fixed point. He couldn't see anything stable. The result was disorientation, and he flew his plane into the ocean, probably without knowing he was headed towards water. He couldn't manage change without a secure referent—something that didn't change.

The Need for Frameworks

Frameworks or theories help provide stability and order in the midst of constant change. To illustrate the importance of frameworks, consider a simple experiment conducted by Nobel laureate, Herbert A. Simon. Experimental subjects were shown a chess board as it appeared mid-game. Some of these individuals were experienced chess players, some were novices. They were allowed to observe the chess board for ten seconds, and then the board was wiped clean. The subjects were asked to replace the pieces on the board exactly as they had appeared before the board was cleared. This experiment was actually conducted on a computer, so wiping the chess board clean was simple, and multiple trials could be generated for each person. Each trial showed a different configuration of a chess game mid-way through.

The question being investigated was: Which group was best at replacing the chess pieces, the novices or the experienced players? After looking at the board for ten seconds, which individuals would be most accurate in placing each piece in its previous location? An argument could be made for either group. On the one hand, the minds of novices would not be cluttered by preconceptions. They would look at the board with a fresh view. It is similar to the answer to the question: When is the best time to teach a person a new language, age 3 or age 30? The fact that 3 year olds can learn a new language more quickly than 30 year olds suggests that novices might also be better at this task because of their lack of preconceptions. On the other hand, the contrary argument is that experience ought to count for something, and the familiarity of experienced players with the chess board should allow them to be more successful.

The results of the experiment were dramatic. Novices accurately replaced the pieces less than five percent of the time. Experienced players were accurate more than 80 percent of the time. When experienced chess players looked at the board they saw familiar patterns, or what might be called frameworks. They said things like this: "This looks like the Leningrad defense, except this bishop is out of place and these two pons are arranged differently." Experienced players identified the patterns quickly, and then they paid attention to the few exceptions on the board. Novices, on the other hand, needed to pay attention to every single piece as if it was an exception, since no pattern (or framework) was available to guide their decisions.

Frameworks serve the same function for managers. They clarify complex or ambiguous situations. Individuals who are familiar with frameworks can manage complex situations effectively because they can respond to fewer exceptions. Individuals without frameworks are left to react to every piece of information as a unique event or an exception. The best managers possess the most useful frameworks.

Tendencies Toward Stability

Organizations are designed like frameworks that allow exceptions to be managed effectively. They are intended to create stability, steadiness, and predictable conditions. They try to constrain as much change as possible. That is, organizations help specify what is expected of employees, who reports to whom, what the goals are, what procedures are to be employed, what rules apply, how the work gets done, and so on. These elements are all intended to reduce the ambiguity of changing conditions and to create predictability for employees so that the uncertainties of environmental change do not overwhelm them. Managers are obliged to try to ensure that steady, stable conditions are fostered.

Leading change, therefore, is contradictory to the common requirements of ensuring predictability and constancy. It disrupts the permanence of the system and creates more uncertainty. The skill of leading change, therefore, runs contrary to what organizations are fundamentally designed to do. Even more important, leading *positive* change is different from simply leading ordinary change in an organization. Change will always be widespread and constant, but leading positive change in organizations is unusual and difficult, and it requires a special skill set.

To illustrate the difference between leading commonplace change and positive change, consider the continuum in Figure 10.1. It shows a line depicting normal, healthy performance in the middle, with unhealthy, negative performance on the left and

unusually positive performance on the right. Most organizations and most managers strive to maintain performance in the middle of the continuum. People and organizations strive to be healthy, effective, efficient, reliable, compatible, and ethical. It is in the middle of the continuum where things are most comfortable.

Figure 10.1 goes about here

We usually refer to the left end of the continuum as *negative deviance*. To call someone a "deviant" usually means that he or she needs correction or treatment. Most managers strive to get deviant people to behave within a normal range. If they don't, if they continue to behave badly, they get transferred or fired. With few exceptions (e.g., athletes and heroic figures) the same pressure towards normal behavior exists on the right side of the continuum as well as the left. Pressure is always brought to bear to get people to behave in predictable, normal ways.

Think, for example, of people you have encountered who are positively deviant at work—flawless performers, flourishing in everything they do, and constantly extraordinary. They're too perfect. They make people feel uncomfortable. They make others feel guilty. We accuse them of showing up other people. There is a lot of pressure to get them back in line or within a normal range of performance. Most of the time we insist that others stay in the middle range. Being on either the right side or the left side of the continuum is usually interpreted as against the rules.

Not surprisingly, we know a lot more about the left side of the continuum than the right side. Consider the top line of Figure 10.1, for example, and think of your own physical health. If you're ill, you usually get treatment from a medical professional who provides medication or therapy until you return to normal health. When you're healthy you stop seeing the doctor and the doctor stops treating you. About 90 percent of all medical research has focused on how to get people from the left side of the continuum—illness—to the middle of the continuum—health. Yet, everyone knows that a condition exists on the right side of the continuum which is better than just being healthy. It is exemplified by people who can run a marathon, do 400 pushups, or complete at Olympic fitness levels. They are positively deviant on the health continuum. Much less serious attention in medical science has been paid to how people can reach this state of positive deviance. Leading positive change (from the middle point to the right side) is more uncertain than leading change from the left side to the middle point.

Similarly, the second line of the figure refers to psychological health. On the left is illness—depression, anxiety, burnout, paranoia, and so forth—and the middle depicts normal psychological functioning. Seligman (2002) reported that more than 99 percent of psychological research in the last 50 years has focused on the left and middle points on the continuum—that is, how to treat people who are ill in order to get them to a state of normality or health. Again, however, a positively deviant psychological condition is also possible. It is sometimes characterized by a state of “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990)—where people’s minds are totally engaged in a challenging task so that they lose track of time, physical appetites, and outside influences—or they experience especially positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2003) such as joy, excitement, or love. A new movement in psychology studies positively deviant psychological states, and we will summarize some of those recent findings below. Most managers and most organizations, however, are in business to create normal behavior, not to foster deviant behavior. This is illustrated by the lower lines in Figure 10.1 that refer to organizations and managers.

The figure lists conditions ranging from unprofitable, ineffective, inefficient, and error-prone performance on the left side, to profitable, effective, efficient, and reliable performance in the middle. For the most part, managers are charged with the responsibility to ensure that their organizations are operating in the middle range. They are consumed with the problems and challenges that threaten their organizations from the left side of the continuum (e.g., unethical behavior, dissatisfied employees or customers, financial losses, and so on.) Most managers are content if they can get their organizations to that middle state—profitable, effective, reliable. In fact, almost all organizational and managerial research has focused on how to ensure that organizations can perform in the normal range. We don’t have very good language to describe the right side of the organizational continuum. Instead of just being profitable, positively deviant organizations might strive to be generous, using their resources to do good. Instead of just being effective, efficient, reliable, they might strive to be extraordinarily excellent, flourishing, and flawless.

The right side of the continuum is referred to as an *abundance approach* to performance. The left side of the continuum is referred to as a *deficit approach* to performance. Much more attention has been paid to solving problems, surmounting obstacles, battling competitors, eliminating errors, making a profit, and closing deficit gaps compared to identifying the flourishing and life-giving aspects of organizations, or closing abundance gaps. Our colleague, Jim Walsh (2003) found, for example, that words such as “win,”

“beat,” and “competition” have dominated the business press over the past two decades whereas words such as “virtue,” “caring,” and “compassion” have seldom appeared at all. Less is known, therefore, about the right side of the continuum in Figure 10.1 and the concepts that characterize it. Most research on managers and organizations, therefore, has remained fixed on the left and center points of the continuum. Yet, it is on the right end that the skill of leading positive change becomes relevant. It is on that side of the continuum that our discussion will focus in this chapter.

A Framework for Leading Positive Change

Leading positive change is a management skill that focuses on unlocking positive human potential. Positive change enables individuals to experience appreciation, collaboration, vitality, and meaningfulness in their work. It focuses on creating abundance and human well-being. It fosters positive deviance. It acknowledges that positive change engages the heart as well as the mind.

A Case Example. An example of this kind of change occurred in a New England hospital that faced a crisis of leadership when the popular vice president of operations was forced to resign (Cameron & Caza, 2002). Most employees viewed him as the most innovative and effective administrator in the hospital and as the chief exemplar of positive energy and change. Upon his resignation, the organization was thrown into turmoil. Conflict, backbiting, criticism, and adversarial feelings permeated the system. Eventually, a group of employees appealed to the board of directors to replace the current president and CEO with this ousted vice president. Little confidence was expressed in the current leadership, and the hospital’s performance was deteriorating. Their lobbying efforts were eventually successful in that the president and CEO resigned under pressure, and the popular vice president was hired back as president and CEO.

Within six months of his return, however, the decimated financial circumstances at the hospital led to an announced downsizing aimed at reducing the workforce by 10 percent of the workforce. The hospital faced millions of dollars in losses. This newly hired CEO had to eliminate the jobs of some of the very same people who supported his return. The most likely results of this action were an escalation in the negative effects of downsizing—e.g., loss of loyalty and morale, perceptions of injustice and duplicity, blaming and accusations. Based on research on the effects of downsizing, a continuation of the tumultuous, antagonistic climate was almost guaranteed (Cameron, Whetten, & Kim, 1987).

Instead, the opposite results occurred. Upon his return, the new CEO made a concerted effort to lead *positive change* in the organization, not merely manage the required change. He institutionalized forgiveness, optimism, trust, and integrity. Throughout the organization, stories of compassionate acts of kindness and virtue were almost daily fare. One typical example involved a nurse who was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Respondents reported that when word spread of the man's illness, doctors and staff members from every area in the hospital donated vacation days and personal leave time so that he would continue to collect a salary even though he could not work. Ironically, the pool of days expired just before he died, so he was never terminated, and he received a salary right up to his last day.

Employees also reported that the personal and organizational damage done by the announced downsizing—friends losing jobs, budgets being cut—had been formally forgiven. Employees released grudges and moved on toward an optimistic future. One indication was the language used throughout the organization, which commonly included words such as love, hope, compassion, forgiveness, and humility, especially in reference to the leadership that announced the downsizing actions.

“We are in a very competitive health care market, so we have differentiated ourselves through our compassionate and caring culture . . . I know it sounds trite, but we really do love our patients . . . People love working here, and their family members love us too . . . Even when we downsized, [our leader] maintained the highest levels of integrity. He told the truth, and he shared everything. He got the support of everyone by his genuineness and personal concern . . . It wasn't hard to forgive” (representative responses from a focus group interview of employees, 2002).

Even the redesigned physical architecture of the hospital reflected its positive approach to change, being designed to foster a more humane climate for patients and to communicate the virtuousness of the organization. For example, the maternity ward installed double beds (which didn't previously exist) so husbands could sleep with their wives rather than sitting in a chair all night; numerous communal rooms were created for family and friend gatherings; hallways and floors were all carpeted; volunteer pets were brought in to comfort and cheer up patients; original paintings on walls displayed optimistic and inspiring themes; nurses stations were all within eyesight of patient's beds; Jacuzzis were installed in the maternity ward; and so on. Employees indicate that the leadership of positive change—not merely

the management of change—was the key to their recovery and thriving. Special language, activities, and processes were important parts of employees' explanations for the organization's renewal. Figure 10.2 illustrates the financial turnaround associated with the hospital's concentrated focus on virtuousness.

Figure 10.2 goes about here

A Framework of Positive Change. This chapter reviews the five key management skills and activities required to effectively lead positive change. They include (1) establishing a climate of positivity, (2) creating readiness for change, (3) articulating a vision of abundance, (4) generating commitment, and (5) institutionalizing the positive change. Figure 10.3 summarizes these steps, and we discuss them below. Leaders of positive change are not all CEOs, of course, nor are they in titled or powerful positions. On the contrary, the most important leadership demonstrated in organizations usually occur in departments, divisions, and teams and by individuals who take it upon themselves to enter a temporary state of leadership (Quinn, 2004; Meyerson, 2001). These principles apply as much to the first-time manager, in other words, as to the experienced executive.

Figure 10.3 goes about here

Establishing a Climate of Positivity

The first and most crucial step in leading positive change is to set the stage for positive change by establishing a climate of positivity. Because constant change is typical of all organizations, most managers most of the time focus on the negative or problematic aspects of change. A leader who will focus on positive change is both rare and valuable. Not everyone masters it, although everyone can.

Baumeister et al., (2001) pointed out that negative occurrences, bad events, and disapproving feedback are more influential and longer lasting in people than positive, encouraging, and upbeat occurrences. For example, if someone breaks into your home and steals \$1000, it will affect you more, and will be more long-lasting in its effects, than if someone sends you a \$1000 gift. If three people compliment you on your appearance and one person is critical, the one criticism will carry more weight than the three compliments. In other words, according to Baumeister's review of the literature, “bad is stronger than good.” People tend to pay more attention to negative than positive phenomena, and for good reason. Ignoring a negative threat could cost you your life. Ignoring a positive, pleasant experience would only result in regret. Consequently, managers and organizations—constantly confronted by

problems, threats, and obstacles—have a tendency to focus on the negative much more than the positive. Managers must consciously choose to pay attention to the positive, uplifting, and flourishing side of the continuum in Figure 10.1, otherwise negative tendencies overwhelm the positive. Leading positive change, in other words, is going against the grain. It is not necessarily a natural thing to do. It requires skill and practice.

Mahatma Gandhi's statement illustrates the necessity of positivity, even though it is difficult:

"Keep your thoughts positive, because your thoughts become your words. Keep your words positive, because your words become your behavior. Keep your behavior positive, because your behavior becomes your habits. Keep your habits positive because your habits become your values. Keep your values positive, because your values become your destiny" (Gold, 2002).

In order to establish a climate of positivity in an organization, managers must help establish at least three necessary conditions: (1) *positive energy networks*, (2) *a climate of compassion, forgiveness, and gratitude*, and (3) *attention to strengths and the best self*.

(1) *Create positive energy networks*. Have you ever been around a person who just makes you feel good? You leave every interaction happier, more energized, and uplifted? In contrast, do you know people who are constantly critical, negative, and discouraging? They seem to deplete your own reserve of positive energy? Recent research has discovered that people can be identified as "positive energizers" or "negative energizers" in their relationships with others (Baker & Cross, 2003). Positive energizers are those who strengthen and create vitality and liveliness in others. Negative energizers are people who deplete the good feelings and enthusiasm in people and make them feel diminished, devalued, or criticized. Research shows that positive energizers are higher performers, enable others to perform better, and help their own organizations succeed more than negative energizers (Baker & Cross, 2003). People who drain energy from others tend to be critical, express negative views, fail to engage others, and are more self-centered than positive energizers. Being a positive energizer is associated with being sensitive in interpersonal relationships, trustworthy, supportive to others in comments, actively (not passively) engaged in social interactions, flexible and tolerant in thinking, and unselfish. They are not necessarily charismatic, giddy, or just Pollyannaish. Rather, positive energy creators are optimistic and giving, and others feel better by being around them.

Here is why that is so important in leading positive change. Research by our colleague Wayne Baker (2001) has investigated the kinds of networks that exist in organizations. Most research investigates two kinds of networks—information networks and influence networks. If you are at the center of an information network, that means more information and communication flow through you than anyone else. You have access to a greater amount of information than others. Predictably, people at the center of an information network have higher performance and are more successful in their careers than people on the periphery. The same can be said for people at the center of influence networks. Influential people are not always people with the most prestigious titles, but they tend to be people who can influence others to get things done (see Chapter 5 on power and influence). Recent research has discovered, however, that *positive energy networks* are far more powerful in predicting success than information or influence networks. In fact, being a positive energizer in an organization is four times more predictive of success than being at the center of an information network or even being the person with an important title or senior position. Displaying positive energy, in other words, tends to be a very powerful predictor of personal as well as organizational success (Baker & Cross, 2003).

Effective managers identify positive energizers and then make certain that networks of people are formed who associate with these energizers. Positive energizers are placed in positions where others can interact with them and be influenced by them. The research findings are clear that people who interact with positive energizers perform better, as well as do the positive energizers themselves, so make sure you and others rub shoulders with them often. In addition to forming positive energy networks, effective managers will also foster positive energy in other people by: (1) exemplifying or role modeling positive energy themselves, (2) recognizing and rewarding people who exemplify positive energy, and (3) providing opportunities for individuals to form friendships at work (which usually are positive energy creators).

(2) *Ensure a climate of compassion, forgiveness, and gratitude*. A second aspect of a climate of positivity is the appropriate display of compassion, forgiveness, and gratitude in organizations. These terms may sound a bit saccharine and soft—even out of place in a serious discussion of developing management skills for the competitive world of business. Yet, recent research has found them to be very important predictors of organizational success. Companies that scored higher on these attributes performed significantly better than others (Cameron, 2003a). That is, when managers fostered compassionate

behavior among employees, forgiveness for missteps and mistakes, and gratitude resulting from positive occurrences, their firms excelled in profitability, productivity, quality, innovation, and customer retention. Managers that reinforced these virtues were more successful in producing bottom line results.

Paying attention to these concepts simply acknowledges that employees at work have human concerns—they feel pain, experience difficulty, and encounter injustice in their work and personal lives. Think of people you know, for example, who are currently managing a severe family illness, experiencing a failed relationship, coping with hostile and unpleasant coworkers or associates, or facing overload and burnout. Many organizations don't allow personal problems to get in the way of getting the job done. Human concerns take a back seat to work-related concerns. Regardless of what is happening personally, responsibilities and performance expectations remain the same. To lead positive change, however, managers must build a climate in which human concerns are acknowledged and where healing and restoration can occur. Because change always creates pain, discomfort, and disruption, leaders of positive change are sensitive to the human concerns that can sabotage many change efforts. Without a reserve of good will and positive feelings, almost all change fails. Therefore, unlocking people's inherent tendency to feel compassion, to forgive mistakes, and to express gratitude helps build the human capital and reserve needed to successfully lead positive change. How might that occur?

Compassion. Kanov and colleagues (2003) found that compassion is built in organizations when managers foster three things: *collective noticing*, *collective feeling*, and *collective responding*. When people are suffering or experiencing difficulty, the first step is to notice or simply to become aware of what is occurring. An iron-clad rule exists at Cisco Systems, for example, where CEO John Chambers must be notified within 48 hours of the death or serious illness of any Cisco employee or family member. People are on the lookout for colleagues who need help.

The second step is to enable the expression of collective emotion. Planned events where people can share feelings (for example, grief, support, or love) help build a climate of compassion. For example, a memorial service for a recently deceased executive at which the CEO shed tears was a powerful signal to organization members that responding compassionately to human suffering was important to the organization (Frost, 2003).

The third step is collective responding, meaning that the manager ensures that an appropriate response is

made when healing or restoration is needed. In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 tragedy, many examples of compassion—and non-compassion—were witnessed in organizations around the country. While some leaders modeled caring and compassion in the responses they fostered, others stifled the healing process (see Dutton, et al., 2002).

Forgiveness. Most managers assume that forgiveness has no place in the work setting. Because of high quality standards, the need to eliminate mistakes, and a requirement to “do it right the first time,” managers assume that they cannot afford to let errors go unpunished. Forgiving mistakes will just encourage people to be careless and unthinking, they conclude. However, forgiveness and high standards are not incompatible. That is because forgiveness is not the same as pardoning, condoning, excusing, forgetting, denying, minimizing, or trusting (Enright & Coyle, 1998). To forgive does not mean relieving the offender of a penalty (i.e., pardoning), or saying that the offense is OK, not serious, or forgotten (i.e., condoned, excused, denied, minimized). The memory of the offense need not be erased for forgiveness to occur. Instead, forgiveness in an organization involves the capacity to abandon justified resentment, bitterness, and blame, and, instead, to adopt positive, forward-looking approaches in response to harm or damage (Cameron & Caza, 2002).

For example, because minor offenses and disagreements occur in almost all human interactions, especially in close relationships, most people are practiced forgivers. Without forgiveness, relationships could not endure and organizations would disintegrate into squabbles, conflicts, and hostilities. One explanation for the successful formation of the European Economic Union is forgiveness, for example (Glynn, 1994). Collectively speaking, the French, Dutch, and British forgave the Germans for the atrocities of World War II, as did other damaged nations. Likewise, the reciprocal forgiveness demonstrated by the United States and Japan after World War II helps explain the flourishing economic and social interchange that developed in subsequent decades. On the other hand, the lack of peace in certain war-torn areas of the world can be at least partly explained by the refusal of organizations and nations to forgive one another for past trespasses (Helmick & Petersen, 2001).

Forgiveness is enhanced in organizations when managers: (1) acknowledge the trauma, harm, and injustice that their organization members have experienced, but they define the occurrence of hurtful events as an opportunity to move forward toward a new goal. (2) Associate the outcomes of the organization (e.g., its products and services) with a higher purpose that provides personal meaning for

organization members. This higher purpose replaces a focus on self (e.g., retribution, self-pity) with a focus on a higher objective. (3) Maintain high standards and communicate the fact that forgiveness is not synonymous with tolerance for error or lowered expectations. Use forgiveness to facilitate excellence by refusing to focus on the negative and, instead, focus on achieving excellence. (4) Provide support by communicating that human development and human welfare are as important in the organization's priorities as the financial bottom line. This kind of support helps employees catch sight of a way to move past the injury. (5) Pay attention to language, so that terms such as forgiveness, compassion, humility, courage, and love are acceptable; this language provides a humanistic foundation upon which most forgiveness occurs. An analysis of the several organizations' successful turnaround after the trauma of downsizing reveals these five steps being demonstrated in institutionalizing forgiveness.

Gratitude. Observing acts of compassion and forgiveness—not to mention being the recipient of them—creates a sense of gratitude in people. Gratitude is crucial in organizations because it leads to reciprocal behavior, equity, and justice (e.g., returning a favor, doing good in return for receiving good, being fair). Simmel (1950) referred to gratitude as “the moral memory of mankind . . . if every grateful action . . . were suddenly eliminated, society (at least as we know it) would break apart” (Simmel, 1950: 388).

Feelings of gratitude have been found to have dramatic effects on individual and organizational performance. For example, Emmons (2003) induced feelings of gratitude in students by assigning them to keep journals as part of a semester-long assignment. Some of the students were required to keep “gratitude journals” on a daily or weekly basis. That is, they wrote down events or incidents that happened during the day (or week) for which they were grateful. Other students were assigned to write down events or incidents that were frustrating, and still other students were assigned to write down events or incidents that were merely neutral. Students keeping gratitude journals, compared to frustrated students and neutral students, experienced fewer physical symptoms such as headaches, colds, etc.; felt better about their lives as a whole; were more optimistic about the coming week; had higher states of alertness, attentiveness, determination, and energy; reported fewer hassles in their lives; engaged in more helping behavior towards other people; experienced better sleep quality; and had a sense of being more connected to others. In addition, they were absent and tardy less often and had higher grade point averages. Feelings of gratitude had significant impact on student classroom performance as well as people's personal lives.

In addition, Emmons found that expressions of gratitude by one person tend to motivate others to express gratitude, so a self-perpetuating, virtuous cycle occurs when gratitude is expressed. Gratitude elicits positive behaviors on the part of other people (e.g., they are more likely to loan money, provide compassionate support) as well as behave reciprocally. For example, a hand-written “thank you” on a restaurant bill by the server elicits about 11 percent higher tips, and visits by case workers and social workers is 80 percent higher if they are thanked for coming (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). People respond positively to expressions of gratitude. Thus, not only does gratitude help people feel good but do good as well.

Managers engender gratitude in an organization simply by expressing gratitude frequently and conspicuously themselves, even for small acts and small successes, and by keeping track of things that go right (not just things that go wrong) and expressing gratitude for them. Elaborate programs are not needed, just frequent thank you's.

(3) *Pay attention to strengths and the best self.* Identifying people's strengths (or what they do right), and then building on them, creates more benefit than identifying weaknesses (or what people do wrong) and trying to correct them. For example, managers who spend more time with their strongest performers (rather than their weakest performers) achieved double the productivity. In organizations where workers have a chance to “do what they do best everyday,” productivity is one and a half times greater than in normal organizations. People who are given feedback on their strengths are significantly more likely to feel highly engaged and to be more productive than people who are given feedback on their weaknesses. Students who are given feedback on their talents have fewer days of absenteeism, are tardy less often, and have higher GPAs than students who get no feedback on their talents. The strongest readers make more improvement in a speed reading class designed to improve reading than the poor readers (Clifton & Harter, 2003).

Another illustration of this principle that building on positive strengths is more effective than concentrating on overcoming weaknesses is a classic study of (American) bowling (bowling reference). To explain the study, let's assume that we decided to take a group of people to a bowling alley. The objective is to help these folks improve their bowling scores. We ask them all to bowl three games, and as they bowl, we video tape each person. Then, we ask that the entire group practice bowling for the next six months in order to improve their scores. However, to assist them, we will show them video tape of the three games we filmed. For half the group, we show

them only video footage of when they rolled strikes, or knocked all the pins down. For the other half of the group, we show them only video footage of when they did not roll strikes, or they did not knock all the pins down. Half the people are trying to capitalize on what they did right. Half the group is trying to correct mistakes. After six months of practice, we bring all the people back together and ask them to bowl three more games. We would discover that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups. One group would bowl significantly better than the other. Which would you predict would do the best?

The research indicates that those who watched their past successes—they saw footage of their strikes—improved significantly more than those who watched footage of mistakes. That's because, even though when we start out almost any activity, we make mostly mistakes. Yet, we tend to learn how to do it right over time. We tend to make more and more strikes, hit the ball down the center of the fairway, swish the free throw, or improve our public speaking ability, even though we make a lot of mistakes in the beginning. In other words, focusing on the positive will bring superior results to focusing on the negative. The trouble is, most people, most of the time, are inclined to pay attention to what's wrong, the problems, the negative feedback, or the failures they experience. The research, however, demonstrates the potency of the positive.

An even more dramatic finding resulted from a study of top management teams engaged in strategic planning for their organizations. Our colleague Marcial Losada (2003) studied 60 teams of senior executives who met to set objectives, refine budgets, and identify plans for the up-coming year. The research focused on investigating why some teams, and their organizations, performed better than others. The teams used in the research were executives and top managers in well-recognized corporations.

The teams were categorized into three groups based on six measures of performance such as firm profitability, productivity, managerial capability, and so on. The three groups were: those that performed well, those that performed about average, and those that performed poorly. To explain differences among the groups, the communication patterns of the teams was carefully monitored and analyzed. The single most important factor in predicting success—which was four times more powerful in predicting success than any other factor—was the ratio of positive comments to negative comments. Positive comments are those that express appreciation, support, helpfulness, or compliments. Negative comments express criticism, disapproval, or blame. The results of the research were dramatic. In high performing teams, the ratio of positive to negative

comments was 5:1. Five times more positive comments were made than negative comments. In medium performing teams, the ratio was 1:1. In low performing teams, the ratio as .36:1. In other words, in low performing teams, there were three negative comments for every positive comment.

What these results show is that high performing teams have an abundance of positive comments compared to negative comments. Effective teams are far more complimentary and support than ineffective teams. It's not that correction and criticism are entirely absent—it's not Pollyanna or rose-colored glasses all the time—but the positive outweighs the negative by a ratio of 5 to 1. Teams that performed moderately well had about an equal number of positive and negative comments, and teams that performed poorly had more negative than positive comments. The same ratio, by the way, has been found in successful marriages. Marriages that are strong also have a ratio of 5 to 1 positive interactions. Marriages that end in divorce have more negative than positive comments (Gottman, 1994).

Obviously, the management skill demonstrated by effective leaders of positive change is to bias their communication toward positive, supportive comments rather than negative and corrective comments. Remember, however, that the ratio is not 100:1 or 5:0. That is, critical, confrontive, and corrective comments need to be present and cannot be ignored. It's just that effective managers are, by and large, more focused on positive than negative communication.

Reflected best self feedback. One technique that managers can use to enhance positivity and focus on strengths is called “reflected best-self feedback” (Quinn, Dutton, & Spreitzer, 2003) It is a technique developed and used extensively at the University of Michigan Business School and recently adopted at the Harvard Business School, MIT, and several major corporations. It is designed to provide people with feedback on their strengths and unique capabilities. This kind of information is not frequently given to people, if ever, but receiving it allows individuals to build on their unique strengths in a positive way. Figure 10.4 illustrates the kind of feedback resulting from this exercise.

Figure 10.4 goes about here

Begin at the bottom of the figure. Most of us have a lot of weaknesses—areas that are under-developed, areas in which we are uninformed, areas in which we have little skill. Most feedback systems provide information on what those areas are and how we compare to other people's capabilities in the same areas. Those are labeled *weaknesses* in Figure

10.4. We also all have areas in which we perform competently. We do fine—not stellar, but good enough. Those are areas of *competence*. A third category is areas of well-developed skill. We're outstanding performers in some areas. We have special capabilities or talents, and we do better than most people. These are areas of *strength*. Finally, we all have areas that are unique to us. If we don't contribute what we have, or if we don't share our capacities and gifts, no one else has the ability to do so. Our talent or skill is special. We refer to this area as *uniquenesses*. Research indicates that capitalizing on our strengths and uniquenesses produces more success than trying to work on and overcome weaknesses—even though weaknesses may be more numerous (Clifton & Harter, 2003).

You engaged in the reflected best-self feedback process as part of the Skill Preassessment section of this chapter. In this technique each person is asked to identify 20 other individuals who are acquaintances. These can be friends, co-workers, neighbors, or family members. Each of these acquaintances is asked to write three stories responding to this question: "When you have seen me at my best, or when you have seen me make a real contribution, what strengths did I display?" In other words, the 20 people write three stories about when the person was his or her best self. Those 60 stories identify the key strengths and unique talents of the individual—information that is both rare and extremely valuable. This information is analyzed by the person receiving the stories and summarized into a few key themes. Those themes represent the best-self strengths and uniquenesses of the person. The feedback comes in the form of incidents and stories, not numbers or trend lines, so it is connected directly to behaviors that the person has displayed in the past and which can be repeated and enhanced in the future. It captures emotions and feelings as well as intentional actions. These are the strengths and uniquenesses that can be built upon and enhanced. This kind of feedback does not even mention weaknesses or shortcomings. It does not motivate people to overcome areas of deficiency. Rather, it emphasizes the positive and helps people develop strategies to capitalize on it.

Of course, completely ignoring weaknesses and inadequacies is not healthy either. Focusing exclusively on the positive and disregarding critical weaknesses is not apt to be healthy in the long-run. It's just that most individuals, and most organizations, concentrate almost exclusively on the negative and are likely to ignore, or at least short-change, the positive. The reflective best-self feedback technique is a way to counterbalance that tendency.

Summary. In summary, being a source of positive energy and building positive energy networks leads

to higher levels of personal success and organizational success. Similarly, the expression of compassion, forgiveness, and gratitude in organizations is also associated with superior performance, personally and organizationally. And, focusing on strengths and talents—celebrating successes, complimenting on what is going right, recognizing what folks do well—produces superior performance as well. Therefore, as the first step in leading positive change, establishing a positive climate is a crucial prerequisite. Without it, resistance and negativity are almost certain to present major obstacles. The tendency of most people is to focus on the problems, challenges, and negative issues associated with change. With a positive climate, however, positive change is much more likely to be successful. Figure 10.5 shows the relationship among these three aspects of positive climate.

Receiving feedback on strengths and successes produces feelings of gratitude and compassion which, in turn, leads to being positively energized. Each factor, in turn, affects performance directly as well as in combination with the other factors.

Figure 10.5 goes about here

Creating Readiness

In addition to establishing a climate of positivity, individuals must feel a need for the change and to understand its importance and urgency. A positive climate is a crucial foundation, but leading positive change requires engaging individuals in the actual process of change. The second step in leading positive change, therefore, is to create readiness among those to be involved in the change. Many techniques are available, but three are mentioned here.

(1) Benchmark best practice, and compare current performance to the highest standards. One way to create readiness for change is to compare current levels of performance to the highest standards you can find. Identifying who else performs at spectacular levels helps set a standard toward which people can aspire. It identifies a target of opportunity. This is referred to as *benchmarking*, and it involves finding best practice, studying it in detail, and then planning to exceed that performance. "Shooting ahead of the duck" is the principle. Identifying best practice doesn't mean copying it. It means learning from it and exceeding it. Planned performance goes beyond the best practice, otherwise benchmarking is merely mimicking. Several different kinds of best practice standards are available for comparison.

- *Comparative standards*, or comparing current performance to similar individuals or organizations (e.g., “Here is how we are doing relative to our best competitors.”)
- *Goal standards*, or comparing current performance to the publicly stated goals (e.g., “Here is how we are doing compared to the goals we have established.”)
- *Improvement standards*, or comparing current performance with improvements made in the past (e.g., “Here is how we are doing compared to our improvement trends of the past year.”)
- *Ideal standards*, or comparing current performance with an idea or perfect standard (e.g., “Here is how we are doing relative to a zero defect standard.”)
- *Stakeholder expectations*, or comparing current performance with the expectations of customers, employees, or other stakeholders (e.g., “Here is how we are doing in meeting customer demands.”)

Which standard of comparison is most appropriate depends, of course, on what opportunities exist, which standard has the most legitimacy with organization members, and which standard is perceived to be reachable. The purpose of these comparisons is to highlight the opportunities available by finding a higher level of performance and showing the possibility of achieving it.

Identifying benchmark standards also helps ensure that new information, new ideas, and new perspectives will be imported, and that standards not considered possible before may become realistic. Studying others who may be doing the same job better than you may be accomplished by sponsoring visitors, holding learning events (symposia and colloquia) or conferences, creating study teams, and scheduling visits to other sites. The objective is to unfreeze people from reliance on past practice by learning that there may be a better way.

(2) Institute symbolic events. Leaders of positive change must signal the end of the old way of doing things and the beginning of a new way of doing things by means of symbols. This means that an event is used to signify a positive change or a new future. The symbolic event should be tangible and clearly identified with the positive change.

For example, during the 1980s Chrysler was experiencing very dark days. The company was bankrupt, and no one knew for sure if it would survive. Lee Iacocca was hired to be the new CEO. Tens of thousands of cars sat idle in the “sales bank” (Chrysler’s term for cars parked in vacant lots) waiting to be sold. In his first closed-door speech to senior executives, Iacocca announced that the sales

bank would be abolished. All cars in the sales bank would be sold at “distressed prices.” “But,” he said, “I want to keep one. You know what people do when they pay off the mortgage; they burn it on the front lawn. I want to burn that last car on the front lawn of headquarters, so the whole world knows it’s over!” (Cameron, 1985). A symbolic event was held, in fact, in which the last car in the sales bank was burned, symbolizing a new future under Iacocca.

In that same speech, Iacocca asked all top managers to take out a piece of paper and write down all they had achieved in Chrysler during the past 12 months. After they had done so, they were instructed to tear up that paper and throw it away. They were to take out another piece of paper and write down all the things they were going to achieve in the next 12 months for the company. That was the document Iacocca instructed them to hang on their wall and explain to their coworkers. Symbolically, Iacocca was communicating the message: “You may have succeeded in the past, but the future is where we will now put our emphasis.” The symbolic imagery communicated that message far more powerfully than merely stating it in a speech. The point is, symbolic images capture hearts and well as heads, and that resource is required for positive change to occur.

(3) Create a new language. Another way to create readiness for change is to help organization members begin to use different language to describe old realities. When new language is used, perspectives change. For example, a key goal for the theme park division at Disney Corporation is to provide the best service in the world. The trouble is, most of Disney’s theme park employees in the summer months are college students working at temporary jobs and not particularly invested in being a park sweeper or concession stand cashier. Disney addresses this challenge by making sure that all new employees at Disneyland are taught that they have been hired by central casting, not the personnel department. They are cast members, not employees. They wear costumes, not uniforms. They serve guests and audience members, not tourists. They work in attractions, not rides or arcades. They have roles in the show and play characters (even as grounds keepers), not merely work in a job. During working hours, they are on-stage and must go off-stage to relax, eat, or socialize.

The intent of this alternative language is to change the way these employees think about their work, to place them in a mindset that they wouldn’t have considered otherwise. At Disney, summer employees are in show business—on stage, playing a role, performing for an audience. Changing language helps unfreeze old interpretations and helps create new ones. Another example is CNN.

When the network was first formed, employees were fined \$100 if they ever spoke the word “foreign.” The reason: at a worldwide news organization, no one is foreign. Thinking globally requires that language change, and foreign became a forbidden word. Leading positive change requires that optimistic words replace pessimistic words, and language that blocks progress is shunned. Intel, for example, forbids phrases such as “It can’t be done;” “It won’t work;” “It’s just like an idea we already tried;” “It will never get approved.” These phrases are all “creativity killers,” and they inhibit positive change, innovation, and improvement.

Bennis (1984) observed that the most successful leaders in education, government, business, the arts, and the military are those who have developed a special language. Most notable is the absence in their vocabularies of the word *failure*. These individuals simply haven’t allowed themselves, or others around them, to accept the possibility of failure. Alternative descriptors are used such as temporary slowdown, false start, miscue, error, blooper, stumble, foul-up, obstacle, disappointment, or nonsuccess. These leaders use an alternative language in order to interpret reality for their organizations, to foster a willingness to try again, and to foster an inclination toward positive change. This language communicates the fact that failure is not an option. Success is just around the corner.

In sum, creating readiness is a step designed to mobilize individuals in the organization to actively engage in the positive change process. It involves more than merely unfreezing people. Making people uncomfortable is a frequent prescription for getting people ready for change, and it often works. Making people uncomfortable, however, usually involves creating fear, crisis, or negative conditions. There is no doubt, of course, that change also creates its own discomfort. Interpersonal relationships, power and status, and routine ways of behaving are disrupted by change, so change is usually interpreted as anything but a positive condition. Leading positive change, on the other hand, focuses on ways to create readiness in ways that unlock positive motivations rather than resistance, and provides optimistic alternatives rather than fear. Benchmarking best practice, positive symbols, and new language are three practical ways to do it.

Establishing positivity and creating readiness for change does little good, of course, if there is not a clear idea of where the positive change is heading. That is why the third step in the framework refers to articulating a clear, motivating vision of abundance.

Articulating a Vision of Abundance

Positive change seldom occurs without a leader articulating a vision of abundance (see Figure 10.1). By abundance we mean a vision of a positive future, a flourishing condition, and a legacy about which people care passionately. This kind of vision helps unleash human wellsprings of potential since it addresses a basic human desire—to do something that makes a difference, something that outlasts one’s own life, and something that has enduring impact. Visions of abundance are different from visions of goal achievement or effectiveness—such as earning a certain percent profit, becoming number one in the marketplace, or receiving personal recognition. Rather, these are visions that speak to the heart as well as the head.

For example, the vision of Richard Bogomolny, the CEO of Finast Supermarkets in Cleveland, Ohio, was to improve the quality of life for residents of blighted areas of Cleveland who would otherwise never have access to a reasonably priced grocery store with competitive prices. He invested in new, state-of-the-art supermarkets in poor urban neighborhoods, stocking shelves with ethnic foods that were not popular in suburban stores, and providing an environment of safety and cleanliness along with offering prices competitive with suburban shopping centers. Finast stores have now become the social gathering places for entire neighborhoods, have provided training and employment for the chronically unemployed, and, at the same time, have become a highly profitable investment for the company (Bollier, 1996). Without the leader’s clear statement of a vision of abundance, the overwhelming tendencies toward addressing obstacles, problem solving, and negative feedback drive out positive change.

Most organizations have some kind of mission statement or have established goals, but a vision statement is something different. Visions include the universalistic values and principles that will guide behavior. They provide a sense of direction. They help identify what the future holds. They provide glimpses of possibilities, not just probabilities. They evoke deeper meaning than mission statements or goals. They provide optimism and hope.

For example, goals that call for a 20 percent increase in ROI, an improvement in product quality, timelier responses to customers, or lower costs all are valuable and important to organizations. Yet, they are not visions. They are examples of targets that the organization wants to achieve. Visions, on the other hand, are focused on helping individuals’ *think* differently about themselves and about their future. They possess several important characteristics, several of which were reviewed in Chapter 9 on team building and teamwork. We reiterate some of those principles here, however, since they are so central to the positive change process.

1. Include left-brain and right-brain features. Many years ago, neurosurgeons discovered that the brain consists of two hemispheres that can actually work independently when surgically separated. The left hemisphere controls the right side of the body, but it also controls rational cognitive activities such as sequential thinking, logic, deduction, numeric thought, and so on. Activities such as reading, solving math problems, and rational analysis are dominated by left-brain thinking.

The right hemisphere, on the other hand, controls the left side of the body as well as nonrational cognitive activities such as intuition, creativity, fantasy, emotions, pictorial images, and imagination. Composing music, story-telling, and artistic creation are most likely tied to right-brained activity.

Of course, neither hemisphere operates autonomously from the other, and both kinds of mental activity are required in complex tasks. But that is precisely the point. Vision statements of leaders must contain rational targets, goals, and action plans (left-brain components), as well as metaphors, colorful language, and imagination (right-brain components). Unfortunately, most managers and most organizations emphasize the left-brain side in their mission statement or strategic planning documents (they focus, for example, on increased market share, becoming number one in the industry, or raising quality standards). Fewer paint pictures of the future, use exciting language, and speak to the imaginations of members. In the Skill Analysis section of this chapter, several corporate vision statements are provided for you to analyze. Note the differences among them in the relative emphasis on right-brain versus left-brain thinking.

Articulating the *left-brained* side of the vision is facilitated by answering the following questions:

- What are our most important strengths as an organization? Where do we have a strategic advantage?
- What major problems and obstacles do we face? What stands in the way of significant improvement?
- What are the primary resources that we need? What information is required?
- Who are our key customers? What must be done to respond to their expectations?
- What measurable outcomes will we accomplish? What are the criteria to be monitored?

Articulating the *right-brained* side of the vision is aided by answering the following questions:

- What is the best we can achieve? What represents peak performance?
- What stories or events can we tell that characterize what we stand for?
- What metaphors or analogies can we use that will identify what the future of our organization will look like?
- What symbols are appropriate for helping capture people's imaginations?
- What colorful and inspirational language can exemplify what we believe in?

The most motivating vision statements—for example, Churchill's "Never Give in" speech, Kennedy's "Ask Not what Your Country Can Do for You" speech, Mandela's "A Dream for Which I am Prepared to Die" speech, Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech—all contain both left-brained and right-brained elements. Leaders of positive change pay attention to both in articulating their vision statements.

2. Make vision statements interesting. Murray Davis (1971) published a now classic article on what causes some kinds of information to be judged interesting while other information is uninteresting. The truth or veracity of the information has little to do with that judgment, according to Davis. Rather, what's interesting depends on the extent to which the information contradicts weakly held assumptions and challenges the status quo. If new information is consistent with what is already known, people tend to dismiss it as common sense. If new information is obviously contradictory to strongly held assumptions, or if it blatantly challenges the core values of the organization's members, it is labeled ridiculous, silly, or blasphemous. Information that helps create new ways to view the future, that challenges the current state of things (but not core values), is viewed as interesting. New insights are created and people are drawn to the information because it makes them think, or it uncovers a new way to think.

Inspiring vision statements are interesting. They contain challenges and prods that confront and alter the ways people think about the past and the future. They are not outlandish or cavalier in their message, just provocative. For example, Ralph Peterson, CEO of CH2MHill (a large environmental and engineering firm) indicated that "corporate immortality" was the ultimate objective of the company, meaning that the firm was in business to create outcomes that would last well beyond the lifetime of any individual. Jeffrey Schwartz, CEO of Timberland, the shoe and clothing

company, espoused a vision related to doing good in order to do well—organizational virtuousness is equally important to organizational profitability. Tom Gloucer, CEO of Reuters, espoused the vision that Reuters would become the fastest company in the world. Ross Perot, while serving on the board of directors at General Motors, articulated his vision of the new GM if he were at the helm. “From this point forward, GM’ers will fight in the marketplace, not with each other. Starting today, GM’ers will work together using brains, wits, creative abilities, and initiative as substitutes for money. Starting today, as GM goes through a transformation, all sacrifices will start at the top” (1988).

These examples are not intended to illustrate the best vision statements, of course, nor even vision statements that energize you personally. But, in each case, they carried a strong and motivating message for those in the organizations mentioned. They helped paint a mental picture. One of the chief reasons is that these vision statements are interesting. They identify a message that people care about but which challenges the normal perception of things. The statements confront the status quo and provide a new way to think about what people do in the organization everyday. The fact that they are interesting is what captures attention and positive energy.

3. Ensure source credibility. Articulating a vision can be off-putting to people if they don’t believe in the leader or don’t have a sense that the leader is believable. Kouzes and Posner (1988) identified characteristics that followers expect in effective leaders and found that the most important characteristic is (1) honesty, integrity, or trustworthiness. Leaders must be trusted by followers—i.e., maintain a consistent set of principles and standards—otherwise talking about a vision is just puffery. The other three characteristics of effective leaders in Kouzes and Posner’s research were (2) competence, knowledge, or skillfulness, (3) enthusiasm, inspiration, or energy, and (4) vision or a sense of direction. Without the first attribute (credibility based on integrity), however, the knowledge, passion, and vision were not effective and had little positive impact.

This finding is not surprising since it is almost identical to the attributes associated with “source credibility” in the research on communication. That is, when individuals are exposed to information, they make judgments about the extent to which the information can be believed. They accept what they hear if the source of the information has credibility. The three attributes of source credibility are (1) trustworthiness, (2) expertise, and (3) dynamism (**ref**). Note that these three attributes match exactly the characteristics followers expect of leaders. In

other words, when leaders articulate a vision, the extent to which followers believe it and are willing to accept it depends a great deal on the credibility of the leader. For leaders to be believed, they must demonstrate honesty and integrity, knowledge and expertise, and passion and enthusiasm for the vision. When vision statements possess these attributes, they are credible (Kouzes and Posner, 1988).

Three specific hints for articulating credible visions include:

- Ensure that the vision statement reinforces *core values* about which you feel strongly. Instead of focusing on end results such as profit growth, expanded market share, higher shareholder returns, or customer satisfaction measures, for example, the vision statement should relate to something fundamental about which people can feel passionate. This is likely to be associated with human flourishing, interpersonal relationships, or an ultimate good—that is, things that make life worth living. Outcomes such as assistance to mankind, helping to make life or work more rewarding, increasing the freedom of individuals, or improving the quality of life all are more attractive and motivational than instrumental outcomes. People believe in these kinds of aspirations.
- The vision statement must be straightforward and simple. A common error of leaders is to be too complicated, too lengthy, or too multifaceted in their vision statement. Most great leaders acknowledge that they have only three or four major objectives in mind. Their visions help people focus. Ronald Reagan, Michael Eisner (Disney), Jack Welch (GE), Bill Gates (Microsoft), Jim Hackett (Steelcase) all are well-known examples of leaders who publicly espoused a simple and straightforward vision—usually with only three or four key parts. Contrast that with the former CEO and chairman of Whirlpool Corporation who wrote a 15 page document outlining his vision for the company. Employees complained that they couldn’t understand exactly what he wanted or where the company was going. It was difficult to sign-up for 15 pages! One senior manager dismissed the document by stating, “He simply has too much vision!” It was only when the vision statement was condensed to four key points that it became credible in the organization.
- Credibility doesn’t mean an absence of exciting and energizing language. Effective, believable vision statements use

superlatives. Language makes a difference in the way people perceive and think. Language that exudes passion, excitement, and encouragement is more credible and motivating than passive or unenthusiastic language. Notice the difference in how you feel about the following comparisons: “exceptional performance” compared to “acceptable performance;” or “passionately engaged” compared to “committed to;” or “explosive growth” compared to “substantial growth;” or “awesome products” compared to “satisfactory products.” The former phrases engender more enthusiasm and commitment than do the latter phrases. Note the extent to which inspiring phrases are included in the vision statements in the Skill Analysis section of this chapter.

4. Attach the vision to a symbol. Effective vision statements are associated with a symbol. This is more than a symbolic event that helps create readiness for change. Rather, people must associate the vision with something tangible they see or hear. Not only does the vision identify expectations and direction for individuals in their day-to-day activities, but they should be reminded of it regularly by the presence of a symbol. That symbol may be a logo, a phrase from a speech, a flag, a physical structure, or any number of things that can serve as a reminder of where the vision is taking the organization.

The turnaround at Ford Motor Company after William Clay Ford took over was symbolized by the resurrection of the blue Ford oval on the headquarters building. Chrysler returned to the classic Chrysler logo instead of the five-pointed star. Maulden Mills reconstructed a plant that had been devastated by fire on the same property to symbolize human commitment and corporate compassion. The replacement structures for the World Trade Center towers are targeted specifically to symbolize a positive and uplifting future after the devastating tragedy. Logos such as the golden arches, Nike Swoosh, or Mickey Mouse are carefully publicized, even protected, because of the symbolic messages that they communicate about the companies they represent.

One of us served as a dean in a Midwest business school for a time, and a key responsibility was to articulate a motivating and energizing vision in order to set new direction for the school. The vision being articulated focused on enhancing the school’s reputation, engendering a spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation, and building a sense of pride in scholarly excellence. Speeches were made about these aspirations—we have all heard these kinds of talks—but speeches given by the dean seldom if ever have lasting impact. A symbol was needed to make

the vision real and to serve as a constant reminder. That symbol ended up being the construction of a new building, designed by the world’s most famous architect. The new building symbolized a best-in-class, one-of-a-kind structure, and it signified that the school would be an innovative, entrepreneurial, out-of-the-box kind of place. Pride in being unique in the entire world was an important symbolic message. To get a sense of how a building could serve as a symbol of such things, look at the final building model in Figure 10.6.

Figure 10.6 about here

You can see that this design can communicate strong messages to both internal and external constituencies. It was interpreted as representing the 21st century rather than the 18th or 19th century (which are more typical of most ivy-covered college campuses in America). It was used to represent innovation and the entrepreneurial spirit. It communicates humaneness, comfort, and interaction. It symbolizes movement, fluidity, and dynamism. It epitomizes best-in-class. The building was designed to foster lots of interaction, representing the fact that learning is mainly a social activity. It touches the whole person, emotions and spirit as well as intellect. It stimulates extraordinary thinking (Cameron, 2003b). Speeches about a vision, in other words, were not nearly as powerful as a visible symbol that could be experienced every day by the people who saw it.

Generating Commitment

Once this vision of abundance has been articulated, it is necessary for leaders to help organization members commit to that vision, to sign-up, to adopt the vision as their own, and to work toward its accomplishment. The whole intent of a vision is to mobilize the energy and human potential of individuals who are to implement and be affected by it. Among the ways to generate commitment to a vision are four discussed below. Others are discussed in depth in the chapters on motivation, empowerment, and teamwork.

1. Apply principles of recreation. An interesting truism was identified by Chuck Coonradt (1985): *“People will pay for the privilege of working harder than they will work when they are paid.”* Think about that for a minute. “People will pay for the privilege of working harder than they will work when they are paid.” In other words, under certain circumstances, individuals are more committed to doing work that actually costs them money than they are to doing work for which they receive remuneration. Sometimes people will pay to work when they will not work when they are paid. How can that be? In what circumstances might that be the case?

Consider the following hypothetical example. Suppose you live in Utah in the winter and, as you arrive at work, you find that the furnace is out of order. As the temperature falls to 65 degrees Fahrenheit you put on a coat. At 60 degrees you complain that it is too cold to work. At 55 degrees you leave, confident at no one could expect you to perform in such adverse conditions. Then you put on your \$300 ski outfit, grab your \$750 skis and boots, race off to the slopes in order to pay \$75 for a lift ticket, \$25 for gas, and \$30 for a junk-food lunch. You will spend all day long in 10 degree weather working much harder skiing than you would have worked at the firm where you could have been paid. If this sounds unusual, consider the skyrocketing absenteeism rates in companies and schools when the first big snow falls in ski areas, when the surf is up in cities close to the beach, or the first day of hunting or fishing season. People regularly choose to pay to work harder than they would consider working when they are paid.

Well, you say, that's because it's fun. It's recreation. And you're right. But there is no reason why the work performed in a regular job cannot be characterized by the same principles that characterize recreation. In other words, what causes people to *want* to engage in recreational work can also be what causes them to be equally committed to their occupational work. At least five characteristics are typical of recreational work (Coonradt, 1985).

- (A) goals are clearly defined;
- (B) scorekeeping is objective, self-administered, peer-audit, and compared to past performance;
- (C) feedback is frequent;
- (D) personal choice is present; rules are consistent and don't change until the season is over;
- (F) a competitive environment is present.

Consider the game of (American) football. Each year the University of Michigan averages about 106,000 fans per game, every one of whom knows exactly what the goal is—to score more points than the opponent. There is no need for a periodic performance appraisal system, because the score changes only when a team crosses the goal line or kicks a field goal. There is no guessing about how to get ahead. Feedback is not only frequent, it is continuous. If the clock goes down, they stop the game. No one would consider playing if the time and the score were not kept continuously. Within the rules of the game, every participant and fan has personal choice. Players can go full speed or not; fans can cheer or not; the team can run the ball or pass. No one forces people to perform a role that

they don't want to perform. Coordination and control occur because everyone knows the rules, and the rules don't change. Off-side is off-side, a first down is a first down, and a touchdown is a touchdown. When a receiver is wide open and makes an easy catch in the end-zone, no one could imagine an NCAA committee deliberating about how many points the score is worth. No one would say, "Easy catch; wide open; worth only 4.5 points." No one would stand for that, and 106,000 people would go crazy. The rules simply don't change in recreation. Plus, the environment is one of competition—both against an opponent and against personal past performance. The stimulation of competing against something is fun. Playing against someone who is markedly less skilled—beating them 100 to 0, is not as much fun.

Despite the inherent motivation and commitment associated with these principles, many leaders behave inconsistently with them. Their vision is not stated clearly and precisely. There is no objective, self-administrated evaluation system. The scorekeeping system is controlled hierarchically, by managers one step above, instead of being peer-audited and continuous, as in recreation. Criteria of evaluation are vague and inconsistently administered. Organization feedback often comes only when quarterly earnings statements are tabulated, and then it is often focused on what went wrong. Personal freedom is too often constrained, as evidenced by the elaborate bureaucratic structures that typify most large organizations. It is not unusual to have the criteria of success change in the middle of the game, especially if a new manager takes over. And, most employees never see how what they do makes any difference at all in obtaining the ultimate goal, or winning against a competitor.

The point is, one way for leaders to generate commitment to the vision is to identify clear, consistent goals associated with the vision; identify the criteria that will indicate progress toward reaching the vision which each organization member can monitor; provide mechanisms for frequent feedback to organization members; give individuals personal choice and the maximum discretion possible; maintain a consistency and stability of the rules of the game and expectations; and identify a competitive standard against which performance can be evaluated. Like commitment to recreation, commitment to visions, if based on similar principles, will also become strong and long-lasting.

2. Ensure public commitments. Another well-documented way to enhance commitment to a vision is to have people state their commitments aloud, in public. Individuals are motivated to behave consistently with their public declarations (Salancik, 1977). The internal need for congruence ensures that public statements will be followed by consistent

actions. After making public pronouncements, individuals are more committed and more consistent in their behavior to that which they have espoused (Cialdini, 1999).

For example, during World War II good cuts of meat were in short supply in the United States. Lewin (19) found that a significant difference existed between the commitment level of shoppers who promised out loud to buy more plentiful but less desirable cuts of meat (e.g., liver, kidneys, brains) compared to those who made the same promise in private. In another study, Hayes (198) divided students in a college class into two groups. All students set goals for how much they would read and what kinds of scores they would get on exams. Only half the students were allowed to state these goals publicly to the rest of the class. By mid-semester, the students who stated their goals publicly averaged 86 percent improvement. The non-public goal setting students averaged 14 percent improvement.

When the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) was attempting to build a dam in the late 1940s, it found that local farmers vehemently resisted the efforts because of the land that would be flooded. To overcome this resistance and elicit farmers' commitment to the project, the TVA made local farmers members of the board that would supervise the construction efforts. These local farmers began to make public statements of behalf of the TVA project and, over time, became strongly committed to it (Selznick, 1949).

This point is, leaders of positive change look for opportunities to have others make public statements in favor of the vision or to restate the vision themselves. Assigning individuals to represent the vision to outside groups or to other employees, or forming discussion groups so that others can help refine or clarify the vision, are examples of how opportunities for public statements can be fostered in order to enhance commitment.

3. Institute a small wins strategy. People become committed to change when they see progress being made or success being achieved. We are all more committed to winners than to losers. Fans attend more games when the team has a good record than when it has a poor record. The number of people claiming to have voted for a winning candidate always exceeds by a large margin the actual number of votes received. In other words, when we see success, or progress being made, we are more committed to respond positively, to continue that path, and to offer our support.

Leaders of positive change create this kind of support by identifying small wins—changes that are easy to implement and that build momentum (Weick, 1981).

For example, we have observed leaders, when beginning a major change initiative, beginning with small things such as a new coat of paint, abolishing reserved parking spaces, adding a display case for awards, flying a flag, holding regular social events, instituting a suggestion system, and so on. Each of these small changes (and hundreds more) are designed to create commitment to the visualized change.

A small wins strategy, in other words, is designed to create a sense of momentum by creating minor, quick victories. The basic rule of thumb for small wins is: *Find something that's easy to change. Change it. Publicize It, or recognize it publicly. Then, find a second thing that's easy to change, and repeat the process.*

Small wins create commitment because (1) they reduce the importance of any one change. "It is no big deal to make this change." (2) They reduce demands on any group or individual. "There isn't a lot to do." (3) They improve the confidence of participants. "At least I can do that." (4) They help avoid resistance or retaliation. "Even if they disagree, it's only a small loss." (5) They attract allies and create a bandwagon effect. "I want to be associated with this success." (6) They create the image of progress. "Things seem to be moving forward." (7) If they don't work they only create a small flop. "No major harm is done and no long-lasting effects occur." (8) They provide initiatives in multiple arenas. "Resistance cannot be coordinated or organized in a single area" (Weick, 1994)

4. Communicate the vision frequently. Effective leaders of positive change communicate the vision, then they communicate it again, then again, and then again. If leaders stop communicating the vision, or if they change themes as they address organization members, the members tend to think that the vision isn't important anymore. Unless leaders continually and consistently articulate and re-articulate the vision, it loses its power and commitment erodes. Being accused of repetition is much less serious than being accused of neglect. Persistent and continuous delivery of the vision message is required, but surprisingly, it is a frequent shortcoming of leaders. They give a speech or hand out a sheet on which the vision is written; then they think their job is complete. In reality, it has only begun. No one ever heard Nelson Mandela speak in South Africa, for example, without having him rearticulate his vision of human dignity and equal treatment for all persons.

Communicating the vision must also occur using a variety of methods. This means referring to the vision in public statements, newsletters, celebrations and ceremonies, speeches, memos, and everyday interactions. Leaders model the vision in their

personal behavior. There should be no questions, by observing and listening to leaders, what the vision is. From example, Jan Carlzon, the former president of Scandinavian Airlines (SAS), took control of the airline when it was losing \$20 million a year. In the first year he increased revenues by \$80 million and led his company to being voted “the best airline in the world” by Fortune Magazine. Here is what he said about communicating his vision.

...good leaders spend more time communication than anything else. From my first day at SAS I've make communicating, particularly with our employees, a top priority. In fact, during the first year I spent exactly half my working hours out in the field talking to SAS people. The word going around was that any time three employees gathered, Jan Carlzon would probably show up and begin talking with them.

When we began reorganizing SAS, our critics scoffed at our efforts as mere promotional gimmicks. They claimed we had become too marketing oriented, but in fact we hadn't increased our marketing budget on cent. Rather, we were spending our money more effectively on messages that were easily understood (**Carlzon**, 1987: 88, 92).

Creating commitment is enhanced, in other words, by applying principles of recreational work, providing opportunities for public statements of commitment, instituting small wins, and communicating the vision frequently, consistently, and broadly. In essence, leaders will achieve commitment to that which they say, that which they do, and that which they reward, but without consistency and frequency, not necessarily to that which they want.

Institutionalizing the Vision

The final challenge for leaders of positive change is to make the change a part of on-going organizational life. General officers in the United States Army refer to this step as “creating irreversible momentum,” that is, ensuring that the positive change gains such momentum that it cannot be thwarted (U.S. Army, 2003). The challenge is to separate the vision from the visionary, to get others to own and become champions of the change, to create processes that reinforce the positive change without having to continually rely on the leader. The objective is to ensure that even if the leader leaves, the positive change will continue because of the sustainable impetus put in place. If Bill Gates was incarcerated for unfair business competition, Jan Carlzon got in an airplane crash, Lee Iacocca was run over by a car, or Jack Welch was electrocuted by a faulty refrigerator wire, Microsoft, SAS, Chrysler, and General Electric

would not have missed a step. The positive changes championed by these leaders would still have been pursued, because they had become embedded in their organizations' cultures. They were institutionalized and had gained irreversible momentum.

Institutionalizing change doesn't happen quickly, of course, and the four previous steps in positive change—establishing a climate of positivity, creating readiness, articulating a vision, and generating commitment—all must be successfully accomplished first. However, institutionalization is the necessary final step if the organization is to successfully achieve positive change. How do leaders institutionalize their positive changes? Three hints are provided.

1. Turn Students into Teachers. Most of the time we assume that it is the leader's responsibility to articulate the vision of abundance, and everyone else listens to it and accepts it. Teachers teach what students need to know and students learn it for the exam. The chief gives direction and the rest of us follow.

The most effective leaders, however, provide an opportunity for everyone in the organization to articulate the vision, or to teach others about the desired positive change. This process requires that every person develop “a teachable point of view” (Tichy, 2000). Developing one's own teachable point of view means that individuals come to believe in something, and they can clearly explain what it is and why. In other words, people get to the point where they can articulate the vision in their own words. They are given opportunities to teach others what they understand the positive change to be. They are required to develop their own perspective on the positive change in a way that it can be explained and illustrated to someone else. They are transformed from students or listeners into teachers or visionaries.

Researchers at the National Training Laboratories in Bethel, Maine, developed a “learning stair” (see Figure 10.7). Their studies found that people remember only 5 percent of what they hear in a lecture, 10 percent of what they read, 20 percent of what they view in a video, 30 percent of what they observe being demonstrated, 50 percent of what they discuss in a group, 75 percent of what they apply, and 90 percent of what they teach to others. That is, by teaching someone else about the vision or the intended positive change, individuals remember it, become committed to it, and make it a part of their own personal agenda.

Figure 10.7 goes about here

One manifestation of this principle was at Xerox under Rex Kern, a remarkable leader who turned around that company in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Kern's focus was on rapidly institutionalizing a positive change process by turning students into teachers. He spent time sharing his vision of positive change with his top leadership team. Then these leaders were required to apply what they heard, that is, to implement personal action agendas and make personal changes. Then, most importantly, they were required to teach the positive change vision to someone else. Who would they teach? They taught the next level of leaders in the firm. They were also required to assess or monitor the positive change. This was in order to identify measurable indicators, milestones, and hard data to ensure that the positive change was really taking place. It was a way to guard against lip service with no real substance. What did they assess? It was the action agendas and managerial experiments implemented by the leaders they taught. The process continued down through all the organizational levels. Each person, in other words, was exposed to the vision four times: when they learned it from their leader; when they applied it; when they taught it; and when they assessed it. Within a year, Xerox achieved stunning results. It is widely acknowledged that this process was key in turning Xerox around as a company and in labeling Rex Kern as one of the great corporate leaders of the 20th century.

This is similar to the process used by certain divisions within Hewlett Packard. These divisions require engineers to spend time recruiting on college campuses. Having engineers actually recruit students—from disciplines in business, mathematics, physical sciences, arts and humanities, as well as engineering—is highly risky since engineers are not trained recruiters. However, the strategy pays off because H-P engineers are required to articulate the vision, publicly praise Hewlett Packard, and teach interested job candidates about the company. Former H-P “students” are required to become the “teachers.” These engineers may not convince many rookie recruits, but by articulating the H-P Way, they internalize it themselves. They become inoculated. As a result, Hewlett Packard has the lowest turnover rate in the industry among engineers, one of its stated core competencies.

2. Build Human Capital. For positive change to have staying power, for it to last beyond the lifetime of the leader, people throughout the organization must have developed the capability to lead the vision themselves, to institute positive change, and to carry on under their own initiative. In other words, well-developed human capital is always the chief predictor of growth in financial capital. The skill set of the people is the bedrock upon which organizational success is built. No company can make money over

time without well-developed human capital—meaning capable and skillful employees. Institutionalizing positive change occurs as individuals throughout the organization develop the capacity to lead positive change themselves. This can happen in many ways, of course, but a good example of the core principle is illustrated by a large Asian company in which we conducted research.

This particular company requires that each time a senior manager is promoted, he or she is required to take a three month leave of absence. The person must actually leave work for three full months. For one of the months the manager is required to intensively study religion or ethics, and then document it, usually with a written report. For another month the individual is required to study history or a major historical figure, and then document it. The third month must be spent studying business, broadly defined. So, at the end of three months, three documents have been prepared. If, after the three months, the business has run smoothly with no major hitches, then the promotion occurs. That is, the promotion occurs at the end of the three month leave, not before. Why would a large company implement such a strange promotion system at substantial risk and expense? Why not just send the manager to a week long executive education program at a university?

The reason is that this is part of the process for institutionalizing the vision of the company. A key value in the company relates to developing human capital, in addition to financial capital and physical capital. They know that human capital is the key driver of long-term success. The three month leave of absence, of course, provides a chance for self-development, personal enrichment, and broadened perspective. Senior managers are required to study religion or ethics because all business decisions are based on some set of values or standards. The firm wants to make certain that these people have spent time intelligently thinking through their own value system. To avoid the trap of becoming short-term in orientation, studying history helps broaden viewpoints and helps assure that the mistakes of the past aren't repeated. Studying business principles helps expand the knowledge base and competence of the managers. Most importantly, however, the leave of absence is really a test. The key value in this company is that human capital must be developed if success is to be achieved, so the leave of absence serves as a test of whether the manager has really developed his or her employees. If the organization performs less well when subordinates are in charge, then the manager is not prepared to be promoted. All managers have the responsibility to help develop others to be as competent as they are in leading positive change, and managers are held accountable for that development.

The point is, a key to ensuring that positive change continues is to have capable people in place. Providing organization members with developmental opportunities—i.e., chances to increase their own skill set—is an investment in the long-term future of the organization and in the continuity success of positive change.

3. Metrics, Measurement, Milestones. A third aspect of institutionalization is the establishment of *metrics* (or specific indicators of success), *measures* (or methods for assessing levels of success), and *milestones* (or benchmarks to determine when detectable progress will have occurred). These three factors help ensure accountability for change, make it clear whether or not progress is being made, and provide visible indicators that the change is successful. The adage, “You get what you measure” is an illustration of this principle. Change becomes institutionalized when it becomes a part of what people are held accountable to achieve. When it is clear what the measures are, people tend to respond to those measures. If I am measured on my test scores in a class but not on the extra reading I do, I will likely spend more effort and time studying for the exams than reading extra materials. It is only when I am measured on different criteria that I shift my focus. Consequently, institutionalizing positive change means that clear metrics are identified, a measurement system is put into place, and a milestone is identified for when the change must have been accomplished.

As an illustration of these points is Jan Carlzon’s (1987; 108-9) approach to institutionalizing his vision in the once-struggling Scandinavian Airlines.

...employees at all levels must understand exactly what the target is and how best to achieve it. Once the frontline personnel...have taken on the responsibility of making specific decisions, these employees must have an accurate feedback system for determining whether the decisions they are making are, in fact, the ones that will accomplish the company’s overall goals....The necessity of measuring results is particularly crucial for those employees who affect customer service but don’t have face-to-face contact with these customers. Ticket agents get immediate feedback on their job performance hundreds of times a day from the customers they serve. However, other workers such as baggage handlers have no such advantages. In fact, loading and unloading cargo is probably the most thankless job we have at SAS....The baggage handlers never come into contact with the passenger, and so they never get

positive or negative feedback from them. Lacking this, they need clear targets and other means of measuring how well they are meeting their goals.

The keys to establishing effective metrics, measures, and milestones for positive change are: (1) Identify two or three metrics or indicators that specify the result that is to be achieved. (A common mistake is to measure too many things. The key is to focus on a few core items.) These should not be metrics associated with effort or methods, but they should focus on results or outcomes. Specifically, they should address the outcomes desired from the vision of abundance. At SAS Airlines, one metric includes the elapsed time between the plane pulling up to the gate and the first bag being delivered on the carousel. (2) Determine a measurement system. Data should be collected at certain time intervals in particular ways. This may be reports, surveys, or face to face meetings. At SAS, daily logs are kept of baggage handler performance. These measures do not focus on hours worked or how many bags are handled. They focus on the key outcomes desired, namely, speed and accuracy of delivery. (3) Milestones are specified, meaning that at a certain point in time, a measurable amount of progress will have been achieved. For example, by the end of the month baggage handler timeliness will have improved one percent. By the end of the year, it will have improved 15 percent. Milestones simply create a time frame for keeping track of real progress.

Institutionalizing a vision of abundance and positive change, in sum, depends on making it a part of daily life and the habitual behavior displayed by individuals throughout the organization. No positive change can survive if it depends solely on the leader. Therefore, helping people develop a teachable point of view about the positive change and providing opportunities for them to teach, building human capital through developing others’ leadership skills, and instituting metrics, measurements, and milestones to ensure accountability all are actions that can help ensure successful institutionalization of positive change.

Behavioral Guidelines

Figure 10.9 summarizes the skill set involved in leading positive change. Because change is so pervasive in organizations, every leader must manage change much of the time. However, positive change cuts across the grain and goes against the tendencies of most leaders. Negative, problem focused concerns consume most leaders and managers. Leading positive change requires a different skill set. The following are the behavioral guidelines for achieving positive change:

Figure 10.8 goes about here

1. Establish a climate of positivity by:
 - A. Creating positive energy networks
 - 1) Place positive energizers in places where others can interact with them and be influenced by them.
 - 2) Model positive energy yourself.
 - 3) Recognize and reward positive energizers
 - 4) Provide opportunities for people to form friendships at work.
 - B. Ensuring a climate of compassion, forgiveness, and gratitude.
 - 1) Enable collective noticing of human concerns.
 - 2) Enable the expression of collective emotion.
 - 3) Enable the collective responding to difficulty, pain, or distress.
 - 4) Publicly and personally acknowledge trauma and harm
 - 5) Identify higher purpose outcomes that people can point toward.
 - 6) Maintain high standards and look toward the future after mistakes.
 - 7) Provide personal support to people who have been harmed.
 - 8) Pay attention to language so that virtuous words are acceptable.
 - 9) Express gratitude frequently and conspicuously, even for small acts.
 - 10) Keep track of things that go right (not just that go wrong).
 - C. Identifying and giving people feedback on their strengths and unique competencies.
 - 1) Implement a reflected best self feedback process.
 - 2) Spend the most time with the strongest performers.
 - 3) Work to capitalize on strengths rather than focusing on overcoming weaknesses.
 - 4) Use five positive comments for every negative comment in your interactions with others.
2. Create readiness in others to pursue positive change by:
 - A. Benchmarking best practice, and comparing current performance to the highest standards.
 - 1) Use comparable others as standards.
 - 2) Use stated goals as standards.
 - 3) Use past improvement as a standard.
 - 4) Use an ideal as a standard.
 - 5) Use others' expectations as a standard.
 - B. Instituting symbolic events to signal the positive change.
 - C. Creating a new language that illustrates the positive change.
 3. Articulate a vision of abundance by:
 - A. Focusing on creating positive deviance rather than correcting negative deviance.
 - B. Including left brain images by asking question such as:
 - 1) What are our most important strengths as an organization?
 - 2) Where do we have a strategic advantage?
 - 3) What major problems and obstacles do we face?
 - 4) What stands in the way of significant improvement?
 - 5) What are the primary resources that we need?
 - 6) What information is required?
 - 7) Who are our key customers?

- 8) What must be done to respond to their expectations?
- 9) What measurable outcomes will we accomplish?
- 10) What are the criteria to be monitored?

C. Including right brain images by asking question such as:

- 1) What is the best we can achieve?
- 2) What represents peak performance?
- 3) What stories or events can we tell that characterize what we stand for?
- 4) What metaphors or analogies can we use that will identify what the future of our organization will look like?
- 5) What symbols are appropriate for helping capture people's imaginations?
- 6) What colorful and inspirational language can exemplify what we believe in?

D. Making the vision interesting by challenging weakly held assumptions.

E. Ensuring credibility of the vision through demonstrating:

- 1) Integrity in demonstrating a consistent set of principles.
- 2) Knowledge regarding the implications of the vision.
- 3) Enthusiasm and personal passion for the vision.
- 4) Association with core personal values.
- 5) A straightforward and simple message.
- 6) Exciting and energizing language.

F. Attaching the vision to a symbol to constantly remind people of the vision.

4. Generate commitment to the vision by:

A. Applying principles of recreation to the work associated with the vision:

- 1) Clearly define goals.
- 2) Ensure that scorekeeping is objective, self-administered, peer-audit, and compared to past performance.
- 3) Ensure frequent (or continuous).
- 4) Provide opportunity for personal choice.
- 5) Ensure that rules are consistent and don't change.
- 6) Provide a competitive environment.

B. Providing opportunities for people to publicly commit to the vision.

C. Instituting a strategy of small wins by finding something easy to change, changing it, and publicizing it; then repeating the process.

D. Communicating the vision frequently.

5. Institutionalize the vision, or create irreversible momentum, by:

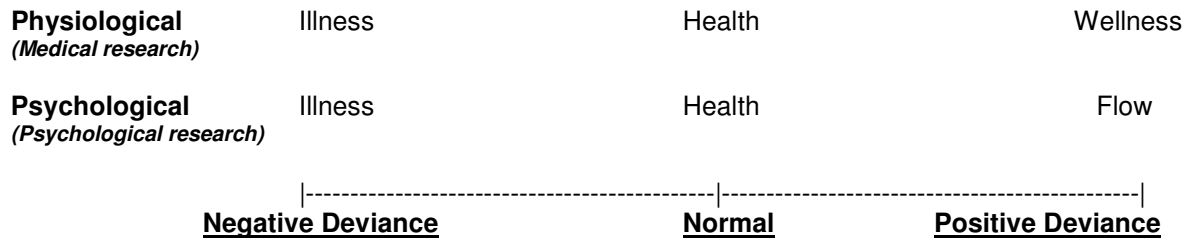
A. Turning students into teachers by providing opportunities for people to develop a teachable point of view and to articulate the vision themselves.

B. Building human capital by ensuring training and development opportunities for others to be leaders of positive change.

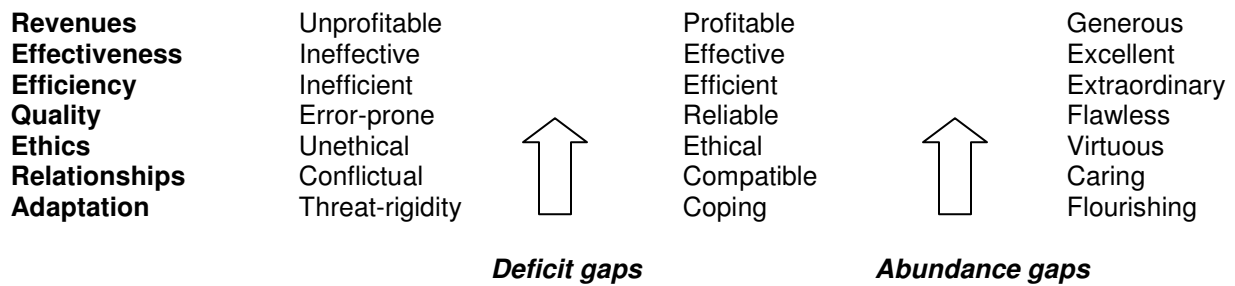
C. Identifying metrics, measures, and milestones to maintain accountability for success of the positive change.

Figure 10.1 A Continuum of Negative and Positive Deviance

Individual:

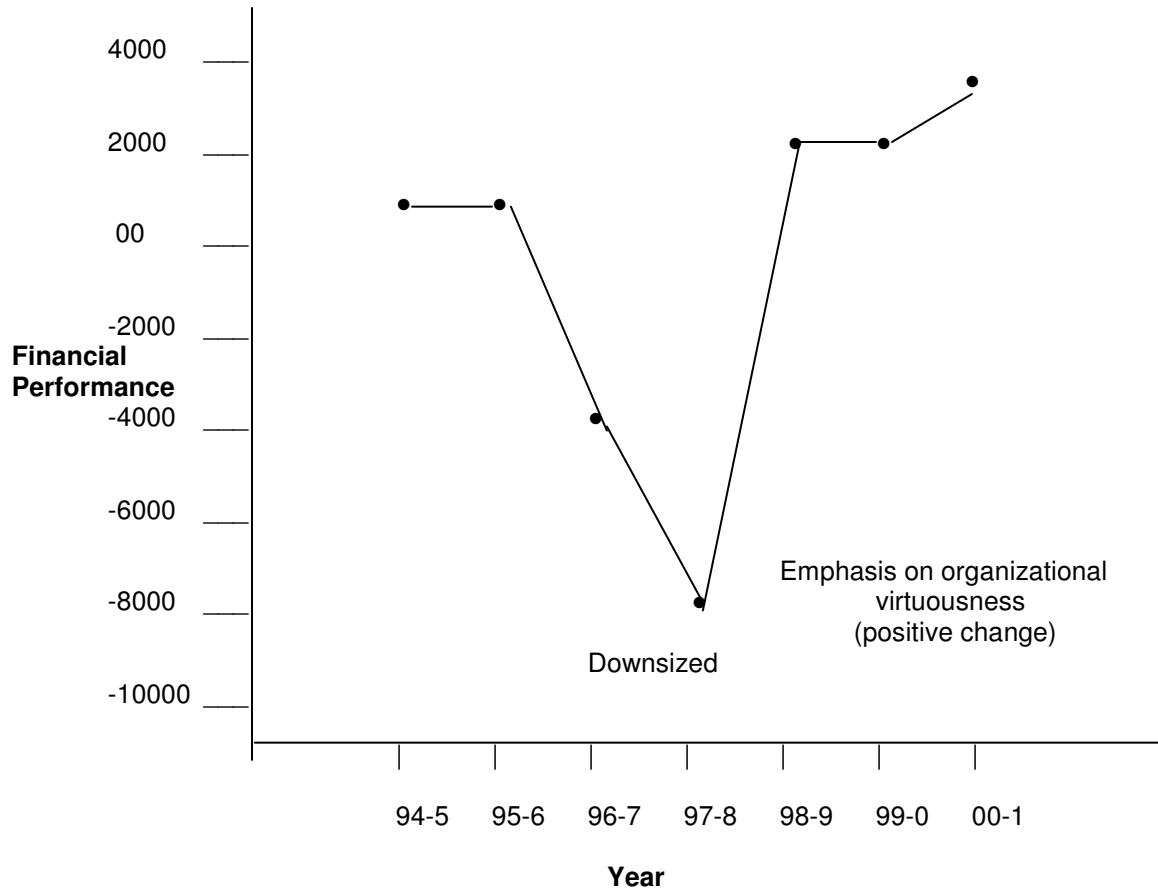


Organizational and Managerial:
(Management and organizational research)



SOURCE: Cameron, 2003.

Figure 10.2 Financial Performance of a Hospital After Positive Change (Revenues in 000s)



SOURCE: Cameron, Gaza, and Bright, 2003.

Figure 10.3 A Framework of Positive Change

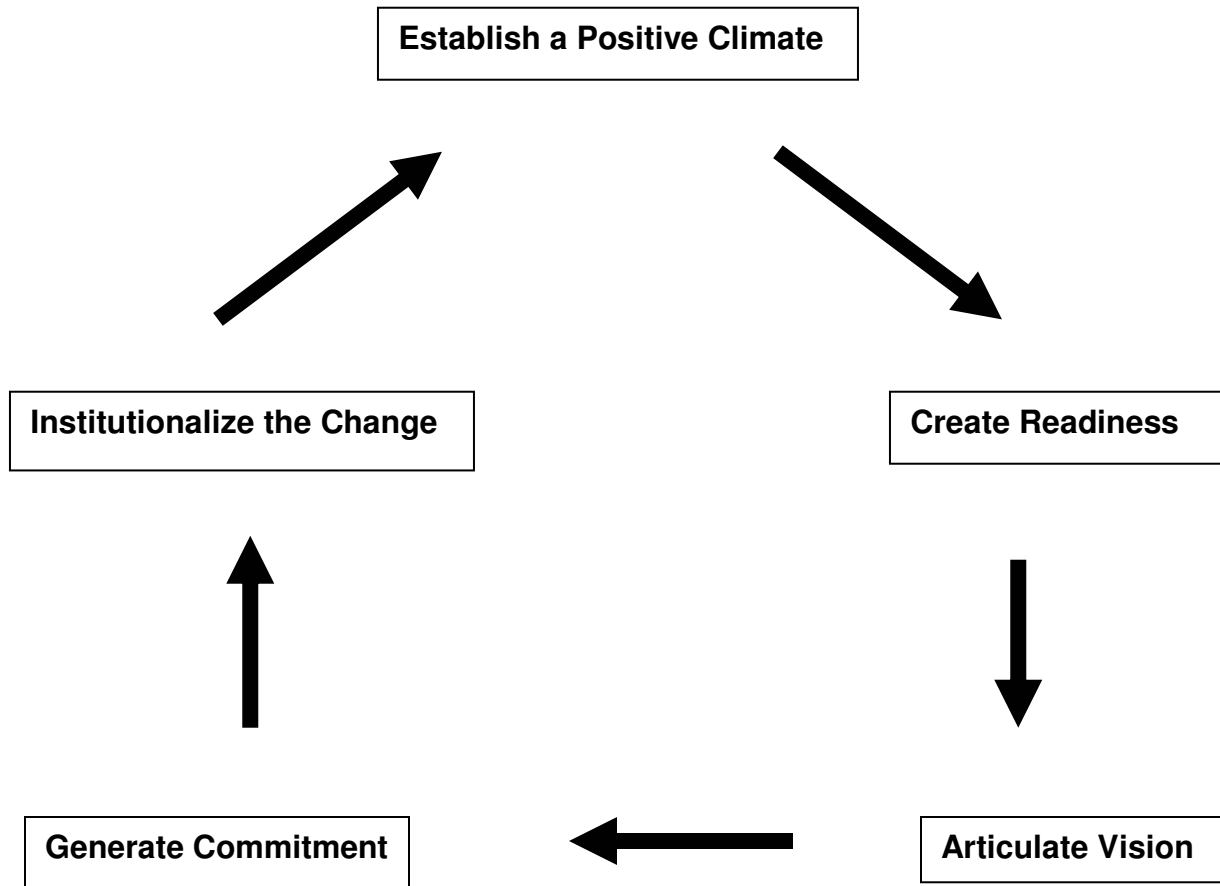


Figure 10.4 Personal Weaknesses, Competencies, Strengths, and Uniquenesses

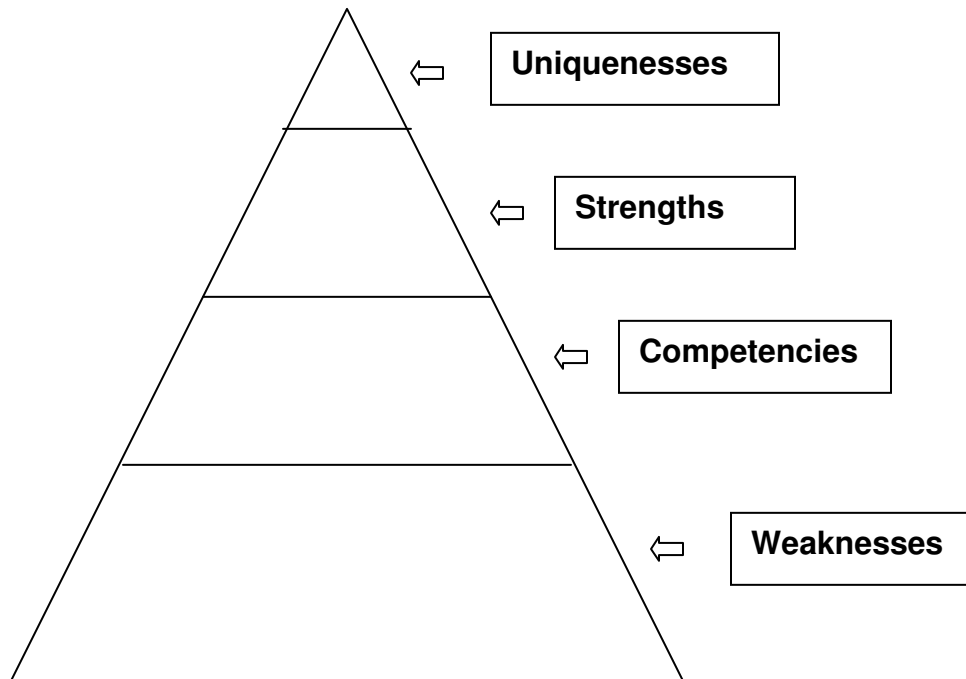


Figure 10.5 Relationships Among Factors in a Climate of Positivity

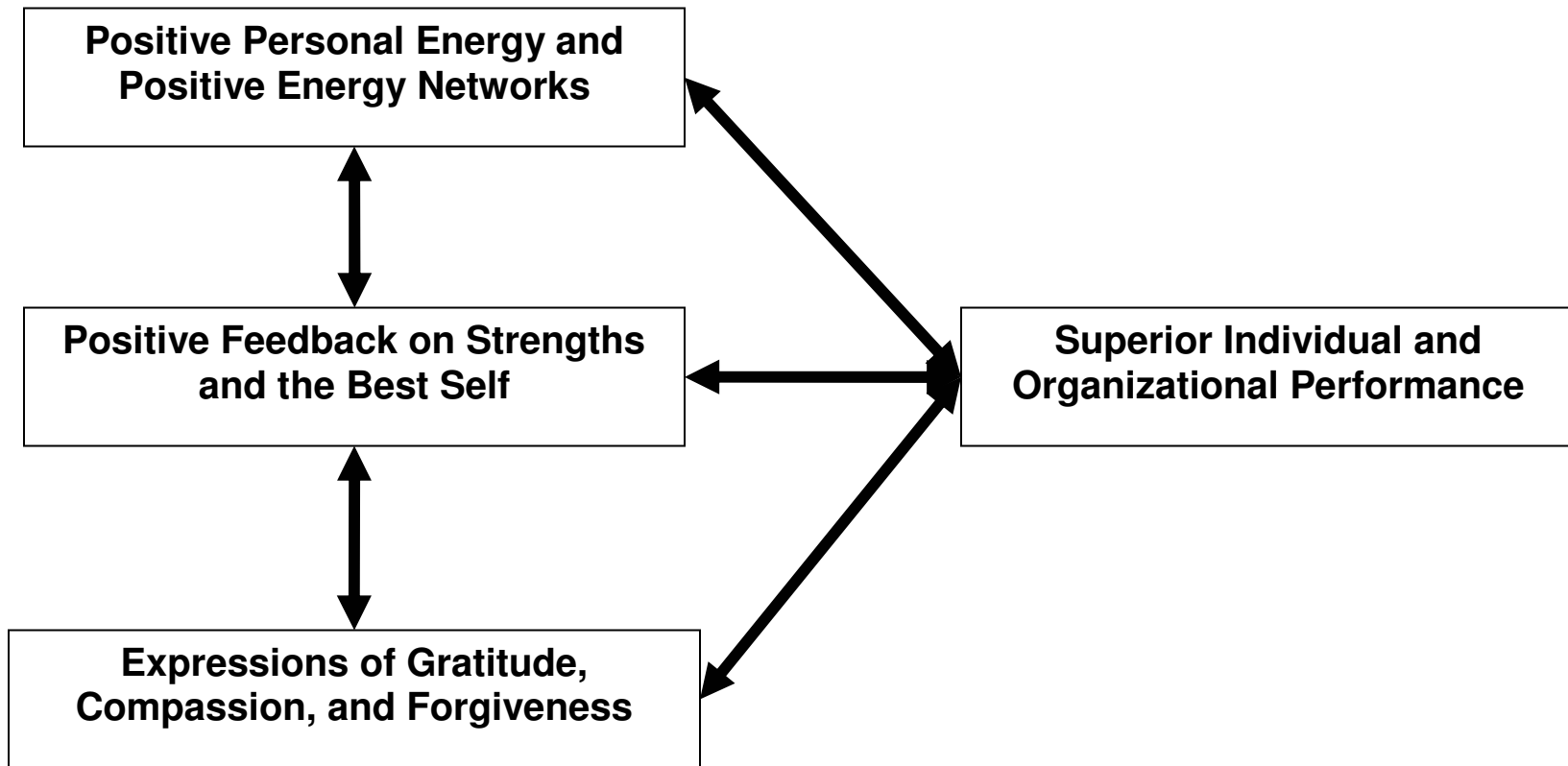


Figure 10.6 **An Example: A Symbol of Positive Organizational Change**

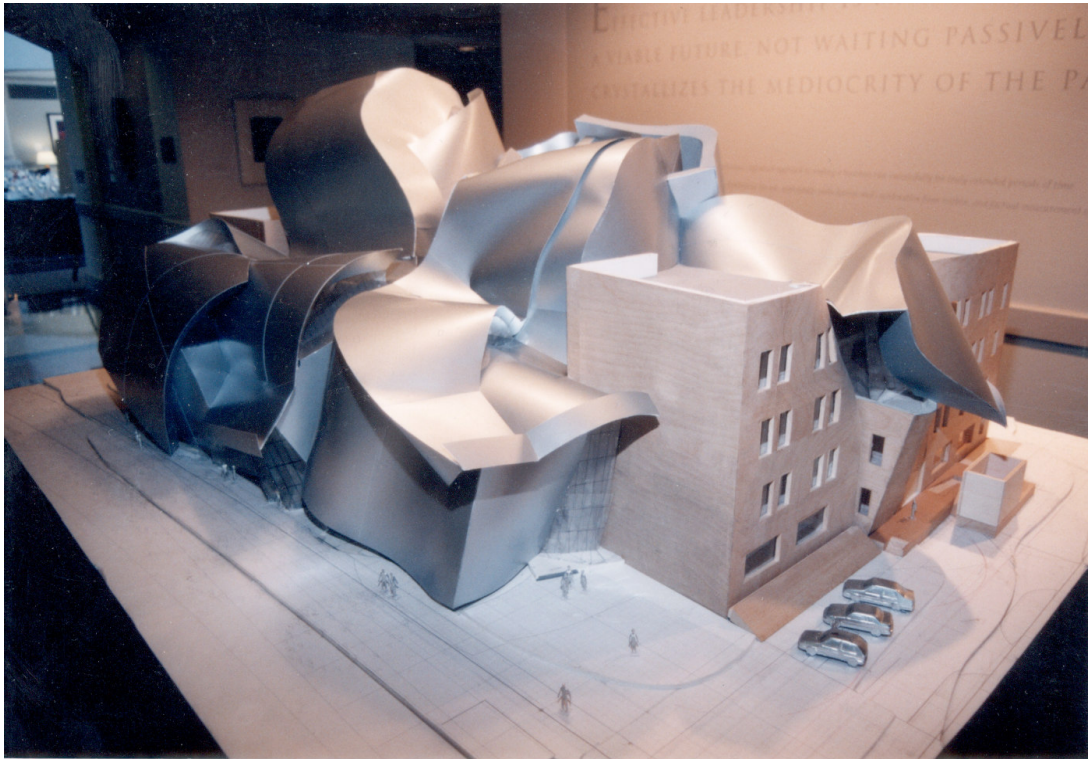


Figure 10.7 The Learning Stairs (from the NTL Institute)

Figure 10.8 A Framework for Leading Positive Change

