Foreword

Human beings have a passion for certainty. We tend to avoid chaos, ambiguity, risk, uncertainty, and change. Instead, we feel secure with stability, cling to tradition, and migrate toward that which is familiar.

Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on one's perspective), change is ever with us, and it invades our lives with ever-increasing rapidity. Not only is the pace of personal change quickening, but organizational change is also occurring at a faster rate. We have entered a world in which data accumulation doubles in just a matter of years. One projection has been made: By the year 2020, data accumulation will double in just a matter of months, even weeks. The ability of both individuals and organizations to adapt to rapidly changing conditions will be of increasingly critical importance in the years, months, weeks, and days ahead.

While we endure change, we seldom welcome it. Yet our attitude is governed not so much by a dislike of change as by a distaste of *being changed.* We are much more amenable to evolutionary change than to revolutionary upheaval. To avert the pressures of revolutionary transformation, we need to have a well-guided process of change in place, especially in terms of institutional change and, for our purposes here, school change. Guiding the change process requires attention to developing a repertoire of effective strategies that bring participants into the process and lead them to claim a stake in it, to make a commitment to it, and to share in the leadership of it.

This book shows leaders of the educational change process how to develop the flexibility, openness, and trust needed to make change as painless and as effective as possible. By acquiring the skills of the facilitator, leaders of the change process will know how to navigate uncharted pathways, develop the required skills of their fellow participants, communicate openly and honestly, seek consensus, make intelligent decisions, and solve problems amidst the dynamics of the change process itself and among the many different constituencies that are parties to this process. Facilitation as it is described herein involves locating and developing resources, demands overcoming obstacles and celebrating accomplishments, and requires maintaining faith in the process and the people involved. Facilitation means fostering patience, persistence, and perseverance in the unending, cyclical change process from initiation and development through implementation and evaluation. This is no small task for change agents, and it is for that purpose that this helpful resource was compiled.

Educators once believed that if we learned what successful facilitators do and then did it, our schools would respond. We developed principles,

guidelines, and profiles for leaders to learn and follow; however, we have found that behavioral, linear algorithms of leadership do not govern dynamic, living systems. To be effective in the "chaos" and "disequilibrium" of the twenty-first-century school, we need a new vision of leadership and learning that develops healthy and responsive learning organizations, a vision grounded in both scientific and spiritual disciplines. We need change facilitators who can think, act, and lead with integrative, systemic, and "spirit-full" strategies. The activities presented in this book contribute to such a logic and sequence of change, while also recognizing the intellectual intrigue, the emotional satisfaction, and the social engagement of change.

The role of facilitator is not assumed by one or a few persons in positions at the "top" of the administrative hierarchy. Rather, all members of the organization assume the role of change agents; all participants can become facilitators of change and participate in the continuing process of self- and organizational improvement. This book assists all members of the organization in becoming initiators of change.

Several authors referenced in this book identify trust as the essential condition for change. Without trust, no learning takes place, no change occurs. Without trust, energy is drained from the group in nonproductive ways and may even result in the groups or individuals resorting to creative subversion, subverting the change process to their own mischievous ends. Bruce Williams implies that assuming the identity of a facilitator means developing trust in at least four arenas:

1. Trust in oneself as a facilitator. Only when facilitators trust themselves can they build trust with others. Facilitators consciously plumb their own motives and intentions to assure that they are honorable and altruistic; they place faith in their own abilities to enhance the group's growth; and they trust their capacity to learn from the experience—to monitor, evaluate, and modify themselves as needed. In this book, the motive of change is clearly focused and defined: to enhance student achievement and learning. The facilitator keeps this value clearly in mind as the guiding principle and driving force of the change process—as decisions are made; as resources of time, money, and energy are allocated; and as progress is assessed. Facilitators set aside personal motives so that they continually focus on the central purpose behind the change: What is best for learners?

2. Trust in relationships with others. The process of change is enhanced when all parties trust and respect each other. This requires that facilitators become expert, nonjudgmental listeners who practice skills such as:

- using silence or wait-time to allow group members opportunities to contemplate, process, reflect, and interact;
- asking goal-directed questions that stimulate the group's thinking and further the group to set priorities and make decisions;
- summarizing accomplishments, illuminating ideas, and synthesizing various perspectives in nonjudgmental ways;
- empathizing with group members as they express emotions, fears, and anxieties about the change process;
- clarifying tasks, terminology, values, and concepts and encouraging individuals to become precise in their communication so that all

members of the group understand each other and their assigned tasks; and

- knowing how to generate and use data as a basis for decision making and action.

Facilitators not only demonstrate and employ these skills themselves, but they also assist the members of the group in learning to practice, perfect, and assess their use of these skills.

Wise facilitators serve as role models. They model trust and assume that group members are trustworthy. They model the belief that people have their own inner resources to achieve excellence. Through the change process, participants form bonds of interconnectedness and interdependence. It is through such experience that differences are resolved, diversity is valued, beliefs are shared, and people learn to appreciate each other's styles, beliefs, and uniqueness. All parties in the process stretch to accommodate and transform their thinking and perceptions to form a wider bond of trusting relationships.

3. Trust in the processes of change. As facilitators and their colleagues work together in a nonthreatening, reciprocal relationship, their faith in the change process increases. As groups progress, they become more committed and foster a sense of ownership in the change process.

The wise facilitator is quick to illumine accomplishments that result from the processes and strategies employed. Groups are more willing to commit to strategies that produce satisfactory results. Individuals do not become committed to change because change is mandated or is proven by research to be feasible. Rather, they are convinced because their own experience of success, in their own settings, persuades them. Their attitudes toward innovation improve when they produce evidence of the innovation's effectiveness for themselves.

Furthermore, it is *not* necessary for change agents to become committed to *these* processes per se; it is necessary for change agents to be empowered through these processes. The processes are merely vehicles for emancipating and confirming individual and organizational creativity, for enhancing intellectual power, for clarifying and translating the organization's mission and goals into action, for building greater awareness of individual members' efficacy, for developing a common vocabulary and shared vision, and for developing the resiliency and stamina needed to confront and overcome obstacles as a team.

Over time, with successive accomplishments, individuals and groups place greater faith in the processes of change and in the facilitator's ability to lead the process. Nothing breeds success like success. Caution, suspicion, and hesitation soon give way to commitment, ownership, volunteerism, and celebration of accomplishment.

Group members realize that the employed processes can be transferred and applied elsewhere. They realize that the intent of these processes is not only to modify the organization but also to modify those who lead the change process—to increase individual participants' capacity to grow intellectually, to learn more about learning, and to increase their capacity for self-change.

4. Trust in the environment. The workplace often signals norms and values that are more influential on staff performance than are the skills,

knowledge, and training imparted through staff development. Thus effective facilitators create, monitor, and maintain a stimulating, mediative, and cooperative environment that enhances the intellectual growth of all members in the learning organization.

This environment gives the organization a sense of congruence, coherence, and integrity. The values inherent in the change processes, the outcomes of the change processes, and the processes of change themselves are as one—continual learning and empowering for all, not only for students but also for all the members of the educational enterprise. People and organizations do not merely endure change—they seek, sponsor, and enjoy change as a continuing process of lifelong learning. That's what schools are for, and that's what this book is about.

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