Leading Change: The Key to Unlocking the Elusive Promise of Agility

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me, my daughter, and her shoes
“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

-George Bernard Shaw
What’s your groundhog day conversation?
1 What is **Structural Dynamics**?

2 What are **Four Actions** that all conversations need?

3 What are the **stuck patterns** of communication?

4 How do I **change the conversation** I’m facilitating?

5 Why is **communication** important to leading change?
What does it mean to “Read the Room”?
Reading the Room means...

1. Separate the WHAT from the HOW
2. Focus on the Structure
3. Help make the Structure more visible to the group
Structural Dynamics is a lens on the nature of discourse. It is a theory of how face-to-face communication does and does not work in human systems and it is also a model for Reading the Room.

David Kantor
There are two realities in every conversation.
Three Levels of Structure

1. Least Visible: Business Environment, Organization, Group
2. Most Visible: Doing the Work, Behavioral Preferences, Mental Models, Beliefs, Identity Forming Stories
3. Least Visible: Broader Social Structures, Face-to-Face Structures, Deeper Individual Structures
Four Levels in Face-to-Face Structures

Level 1: Action Modes
- Actions (Move, Follow, Oppose, Bystand)

Level 2: Communication Domains
- Communication Domains (Affect, Power, Meaning)
- Operating System (Open, Closed, Random)
- Heroic Mode (Fixer, Survivor, Protector)
- The 'Old' Internal Narrative & The 'New' Internal Narrative

Level 3: Operating Systems
- The Immutable Childhood Stories

Level 4: Childhood Stories
- The Immutable Childhood Stories

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Four Levels in Face-to-Face Structures

Level 1: Action Modes

Level 2: Communication Domains

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Level 4: Childhood Stories

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Level 1: Action Modes
The 4 Player Model

- **Move**: Initiates an idea and sets the direction.
- **Follow**: Supports or completes an action.
- **Oppose**: Offers correction or pushes back on an idea.
- **Bystand**: Provides a morally neutral perspective or bridges competing ideas.

Source: Reading the Room by David Kantor
Code each action...

- Let's meet for coffee next week. **MOVE**
- Next week is out for me. **OPPOSE**
- What about the following week? **MOVE**
- Yes, that works for me. **FOLLOW**
- Where would you like to go? **Bystand**
- Let's go to the new shop on the corner. **MOVE**
What percentage of your time do you spend...

**Move**
- Putting forth ideas, direction, or positions for others to consider.

**Follow**
- Offering support or following through on the ideas / decisions put forth by others.

**Oppose**
- Challenging and enhancing ideas, positions, or proposed direction.

**Bystand**
- Offering observations and perspectives that bridge competing ideas.

\[ \text{Move} + \text{Follow} + \text{Oppose} + \text{Bystand} = 100\% \]
Common Stuck Patterns

- Serial Moves
- Courteous Compliance
- Point Counterpoint
- Hall of Mirrors
- Covert Opposition
Intervening in Stuck Patterns...

Serial Moves
Point - Counterpoint

Courteous Compliance

Covert Opposition

Needs more Follow and Bystand

Needs Oppose

Needs a Bystand about what’s happening
And a call for an Oppose
Then, Follow an Oppose when it’s voiced

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Get your shoes on, please...

- ME: Are you shoes on? **MOVE**
- LAUREN: No. **FOLLOW**
- ME: What are you doing? **MOVE**
- LAUREN: Playing on the computer. **FOLLOW**
- ME: What are you playing? **MOVE**
- LAUREN: Building a house out of blocks. **FOLLOW**
- ME: The bus will be here at 7:50 to pick you up. **BYSTAND**
- LAUREN: Oh, I need to get my shoes on and my backpack. **MOVE**
- ME: Yes, that would be helpful. **FOLLOW**
### Facilitation Moves to Prompt Missing Actions...

**Prompt for MOVE**
- What would you add?
- What else?
- What’s missing?
- What would you suggest?

**Prompt for FOLLOW**
- Who agrees?
- What do you hear that you align with?
- What do like about what’s been said?
- What are you willing to support?

**Prompt for OPPOSE**
- Who sees it differently?
- Who wants to push back on this idea?
- What’s at risk?
- Where might I be wrong?

**Prompt for BYSTAND**
- Where is the group at right now?
- What are you noticing about how we’re working?
- What is your experience right now?
People do not change until they feel heard and understood.
Google set out to discover “What makes a team effective at Google?”

Researchers found that what really mattered was less about who is on the team, and more about how the team worked together.

- Google Project Aristotle
What’s important about that?
70,000 titles about ‘CHANGE’
me, my daughter, and her shoes
We assume that everyone sees and experiences the same reality we do.

Source: Build Your Model for Leading Change, Marsha Acker
We say we want people to collaborate...
...but we reward courteous compliance

“We don’t have time right now...we just need to deliver.”

“Asking questions looks like I don’t know what I’m doing!”

“If I ask what others think I’ll end up with a bunch of differing ideas – then what? “
“Collaboration Theater.”
We need to treat **conversations** as THE most foundational and necessary part of any change
The “soft” skills of communication...
Conversations are where we onboard new thinking, new understanding, and new insights — that lead to behavior change.

They are the core of being agile — not just “doing” agile
How to Read the Room....

1. Create a **Shared Language** with your Team
2. Separate the **WHAT** from the **HOW**
3. Focus on the **Structure** – Code what’s happening and prompt for missing actions
4. Help make the **Structure more visible** to the group
FREE Download:

READ THE ROOM CHANGE THE OUTCOME:
An Illustrated Guide to Changing Stuck Patterns in Communication
What’s the conversation you want to change?
Conversations are the foundation to Lead Change and truly Unlock the Promise of Agility
Connect with me..

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