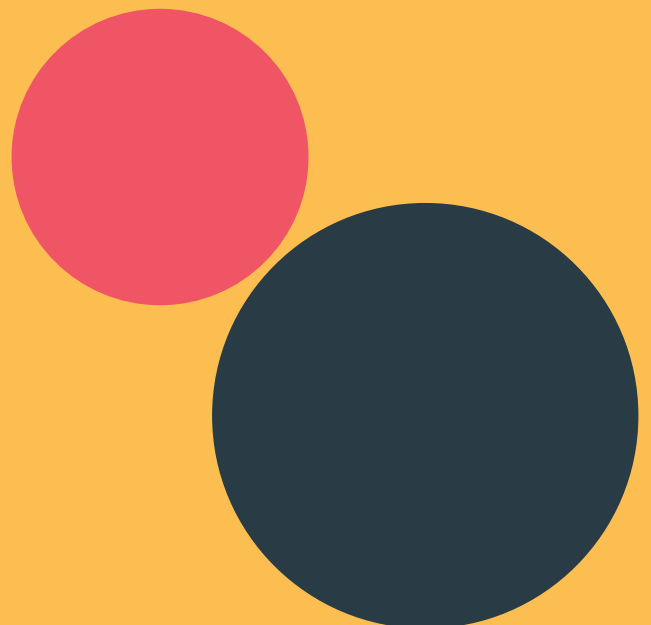
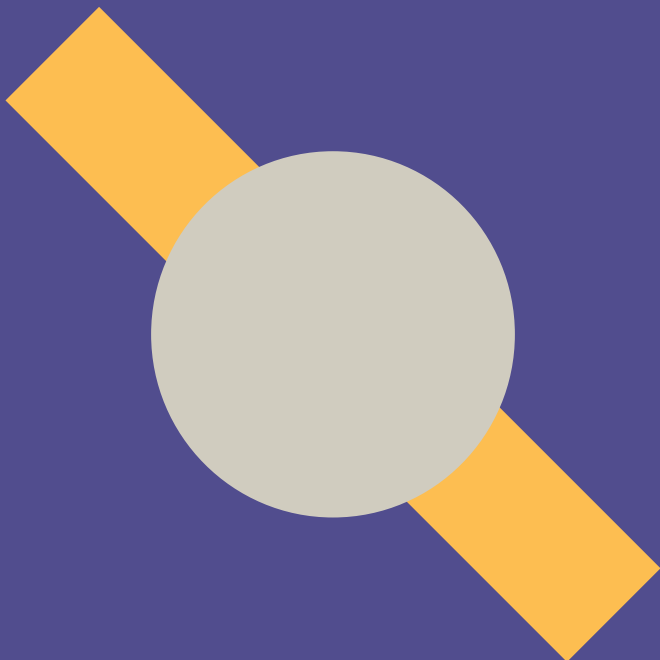


Transforming organisations from student to board: reflective guide

Kim Ansell and Mark Trezona



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Introduction

April and May 2021 saw Advance HE offering members a portfolio of materials, resources and opportunities to engage with others on the topic of organisational transformation from student to board. We considered three key ingredients in transforming organisations:

- + co-creation, clarity and shared understanding of the vision
- + authentic conversations and two-way communication, recognising the centrality of dialogue to support transformation, and
- + joined up, inclusive and collaborative implementation in which everyone involved feels a part of and takes responsibility for making happen.

We had participation and contributions from governors, professional staff and academic staff across our range of activities (we would also encourage students and external partners to contribute). This guide offers a reflection on what we heard and understood. We complement this with some insights and ideas from our experience of working with all communities in a diverse range of institutions that might help in the future.

Kim Ansell and Mark Trezona

Why transformation and why now?

No one would have foreseen fifteen months ago, at the start of the global Covid-19 pandemic, the level of disruption, uncertainty and enforced transformation our sector would have had to be equal to.

It is certainly true over the last year that everyone working in HE, whatever our role, has had to be even more resourceful, resilient, agile and, transformational than usual. The sector is likely exhausted, but should be very proud of how we and our institutions have responded during the Covid-19 crisis.

Undoubtedly there will be much we can learn and keep from what we have done through this period that worked well. However, the inherent risks at this point are that we assume:

- + successful crisis management could and perhaps should become a steady state, or
- + we wish to transform ourselves back into some version of our former selves, pre-Covid.

There are clearly new ways of working which are better than before, but within and across our institutions we now need to make the time and space for ourselves to reflect deeply on what the future is likely to be, what the new expectations from the people we work for and with are likely to be, and how we ideally want to shape ourselves for this.

We need to take time to reflect on our ways of working, ways of decision-making and the best ways for leading our transformation journeys. Whether we are at the start, middle or end of a formal strategy period, the world we now find ourselves in requires us, perhaps more than ever before, to think about where we ideally want to get to, what we ideally want to be when we get there, and how we will get there.

As we take this pivotal moment to pause, to imagine the future, however uncertain this may look, and consider what really does work better and what needs to be left behind, we need to ensure that we involve all stakeholders who are likely to be on that journey. In our #TransformingHE vision, 'Don't tell me, Show me', using the metaphor of a journey, we asked all stakeholders what we should leave behind and what we need to take with us in the form of images/pictures and words.

What we should leave behind?

Silos **Closed minds**
Misperception of segregation *Someone else's problem* *Tail wagging dog*
Them and us *Wilful exclusion*

What is important to keep and take with us on the transformation journey?

Collaboration **Partnership**
Vision *Diverse perspectives* *Inclusion*
Expect the unexpected
Compassion for all **Skill** *Kindness* **Practice what we preach**
Energy **Empathy**
Open heart/mind **Confidence to challenge status quo**

Notably the same emphasis on inclusion, empathy and human connection that emerges here will be repeated in the best practice guidelines for transformation we draw from researchers and experts in the field (eg Judith Glaser's neuroscience for conversational intelligence).

Diversity was a theme that came out strongly in the question about what we need to take with us and we were offered some great images to represent that. To make the visioning more inclusive, we also encouraged contributors to identify:

- + someone in your organisation who is least likely to be asked these questions, and/or
- + someone in your organisation who is critical to helping achieve your vision.



The eco system in which most higher education institutions (HEIs) exist has been, and is likely to continue to be, turbulent. Whether it is economic, political or social, we should expect the landscape to remain complex. Governing bodies and senior leaders are currently reconciling themselves to the fact that they must become comfortable to make decisions in uncertain times. Professional and academic staff have to maintain and deliver on commitments whilst being innovative and flexible enough to shape a different future. Students' expectations are also continually changing, not just about the type of education that they receive, but also about the role they want in this eco system.

As well as a global pandemic HEI's have faced the challenges of Brexit, changes in government priorities and funding, a change of regulator, and major disruptors such as TEF, KEF and Augur.

Environmental, social and economic sustainability as a holistic concept is also becoming an ever higher priority on our agendas. For example, the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 'Peace, justice and strong institutions' talks of building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. These types of commitments require us to transform what we do and how we do it better, rather than simply trying to be a bigger or more profitable version of ourselves.

And these imperatives are recognised across the sector. In our visioning activity we asked our members what the ideal future looks like:

What is important to keep and take with us on the transformation journey?

Purpose led community **Authentic learning** **Celebrating**
Collaborative/ **Interdisciplinary and social interaction**
together
Fit for purpose **Sustainable Economically**
Everyone thriving **Fair** **Creative**
Sustainable Socially **Relevant** **Amazing results**
Sustainable Environmentally



What will you find in this guide

With these questions and the current context in the foreground, we have curated a collection of ideas drawn from the last two months, along with good practice models, tools and approaches for transforming your university in the ways you want and need to in the coming period.

In the following pages you will find:

- + **Mapping Transformational Change**
- + **Navigating the complexity of transformational change**, including resources such as The ChangeLab's 'Ready for Change Checklist' for successfully navigating the struggles and uncertainties that often accompany profound change at the Me, We and Us levels.
- + **Co-creating and sharing your transformation story**
- + **Inclusive and dialogic transformation**, including insights from the expert speakers from our Transforming Organisations webinar and helpful models such as Deloitte's six signature strengths for Inclusive Leadership.
- + **Balancing planned and emergent transformation**, with tools and approaches for leading emergent change, Kotter's 8 step model, and recent insights from Peter Senge's about transformation and his tools for navigating through the 10 Challenges we will encounter in the 'dance of change'
- + **Sustaining momentum** - a strengths based strategic action planning tool for sustaining transformational change
- + **Putting it all together: our map for transforming organisations from student to board**

Mapping Transformational Change

transform (v.)

mid-14c., “change the form of” (transitive), from Old French transformer (14c.), from Latin transformare “change in shape, metamorphose,” from trans “across, beyond” + formare “to form”. Intransitive sense “undergo a change of form” is from 1590s. Related: Transformed; transforming.

So if ‘to transform’ means ‘to change from something into something else’, we need a map to navigate our journey.

In some cases, it is a project plan, in others it is a process or way of working using metaphors and/or images to create a compelling picture of the future we want to make. We also need to find out where we are and what our options are when we feel lost or at a dead end.

“We are like sailors who must rebuild their ship on the open sea, never able to dismantle it in dry dock nor to reconstruct it out of the best materials”.

Otto Neurath

Purposes of A Map

- + to help us to get from A to B
- + gathering together what we ‘know’ about our terrain and/or what we imagine about yet-to-be-encountered terrain
- + to communicate a perspective - saying much about the viewpoints of the mapmakers
- + to communicate complex ideas with simplicity, immediacy and impact - a picture telling 1,000 words in an instant
- + to establish boundaries, allowing people to identify where they do – or don’t – belong/are welcomed or not welcomed
- + historically in western cultures linked to exploration – traditionally war and trade drove map-making, but these days science, technology and creativity all play key roles in the development & use of maps & map-making
- + traditionally in Aborigine cultures, maps are of territory – “dream time” – held in people’s heads to help guide people to travel where they need to get to – both geographically and spiritually.



This image was offered in response to our question, ‘how you would like to get there’.

Mapping Everyone

Any map, to serve its purpose, is dependent upon showing reliable information. If it only shows the perceptions of some of us, it will give us a false reading. Making sense of all aspects of ‘the territory’ we want to map has to be drawn from everyone’s views and perspectives to show us the most complete picture of ‘where we’ve been’, ‘where we are now’, and ‘where we want to get to’.

Architect Julia Dwyer’s guidelines for map making:

- + define for myself the question - or questions - I am trying to answer
- + consider all the different kinds of negatives that might enact on the situation and their potency and/or timeline
- + consider all the different levels of vulnerability at different times along the anticipated transformation journey or route
- + work iteratively – build up a picture piece by piece and keep coming back to re-view, re-imagine, re-map
- + start small and then get bigger
- + don’t try and get it right first time – keep trying out different possibilities
- + alone and with others - understand what there is there already as truthfully, accurately and specifically as possible.

Navigating the complexity of transformational change

Organisations cannot ask the question “What does success look like?”, without offering the opportunity to uncover and draw together a rich picture of a vision in which everyone concerned sees themselves and wants to help realise. It means truly consulting from student to board and taking time to listen. Leaders must find ways to create or find shared understanding about culture, identity and the organisations direction of travel in a way that unites. The creative ways we have to do this range through imagery, metaphors, storyboarding, rich pictures, drama, poetry and music. Peter Senge¹ uses the metaphor of being in a room with no lights on to consider transformation....

“..... you don’t take big steps and you don’t walk fast. You take a little step forward, you walk slow, you try to feel your way through and adjust, adjust, adjust. And to deal with the emotional complexity in the organisation and create a culture that is open to seeing ‘that’s not really worked’ demands a learning culture where we all are profoundly humble and see ourselves as part of the problem, and are prepared for a never-ending series of small steps that never quite work out but bring continual improvement with them.”

Peter Senge (McQuaid, 2021)

There is seldom any shortage of good ideas but these by themselves, and even with all our good intentions and positive feelings, will not change the fact that we often understand very little about what is actually going on within our truly complex eco system. Better, then, to assume that whatever we are going to do is not going to work. We may achieve some steps forward but equally we will encounter one step backwards and a few steps sideways.

Most transformational change fails

Despite all that we have learned about the complex ongoing realities of transformational change and the learning and growth that it can bring us, we seem to be stuck in outmoded and very simplistic success or failure measures, and the disheartening repeated statistic from Kotter’s and McKinsey’s research studies have it that 50-70% of change efforts fail (Ewenstein et al, 2015). While this statistic has been contested, the odds do seem to be against us in our transformation attempts:

“From years of study, I estimate today more than 70 per cent of needed change either fails to be launched, even though some people clearly see the need, fails to be completed even though some people exhaust themselves trying, or finishes over budget, late and with initial aspirations unmet.”

(Kotter, 1996)

In a recent podcast conversation with Michelle McQuaid, Peter Senge reflects that the nature of change and its problems remain the same as ever: no clear intellectual engagement and no sense of real mutuality. This, he says, is because transformation is usually driven by a small number of people at the top of the organisation who see a real need for change, but it is their idea and not shared by others. This then demands that we get engagement and means we have to advocate, sell or even tell people what we want to move forward. And because our transformations are most usually sited in ‘the organisation’, ‘the system’, ‘the structure’ or some other abstraction, the people who are most committed to making it happen don’t see it as being about them - “it’s not me that needs to change it is others who have to” – and this mindset will always backfire.

People naturally want to protect themselves and are unlikely to deeply engage or be ready to take the risks needed in any kind of change process and more likely to adopt a compliance mindset that does the minimum to appear to be onboard without any real commitment. And that’s not their fault – it’s often not clear to them why the transformation we advocate is needed, and why they need to change and not us.

William Bridges, in his work on transitions, gives us further insights into why people resist change so intensely. He identifies these three phases of transformation:

- 1 The Ending Phase: acute feelings of loss. This phase tends to bring ‘disengagement, disentanglement and disenchantment’ and demands the need to honour what has been before but now has to end. Good endings make for good beginnings and it is also helpful to emphasise what isn’t changing alongside what is.
- 2 The Neutral Zone Phase: Characterised by ‘disorientation, disintegration and discovery’. Simply talking about what it feels like is helpful with the invitation to imagine a new ideal future.
- 3 The Vision or New Beginning Phase: It is important to remember in this phase that a new vision can only take root after the old one has died, a vision can only be brought to life through dialogue and articulation of how people see things now and in the future.

“Difficulties with making new beginnings come not from a difficulty with beginnings per se, but from a difficulty with endings and neutral zones. Transition leaders must avoid that trap by implementing certain activities that will compensate for the losses people are feeling in the ending.”

(Bridges, 1986)

So much better, then, if we take what David Cooperrider calls an ‘invite and inquire approach’ that creates the space, expectation and genuine legitimacy for people to co-create solutions and ways forward together.

Transforming organisations from the inside out

Transforming organisations from student to board recognises that successful transformation is holistic. Listening is key as the Chair of the governing body at Deakin University Australia shared about the importance of listening and taking a holistic approach to transformation in this podcast.

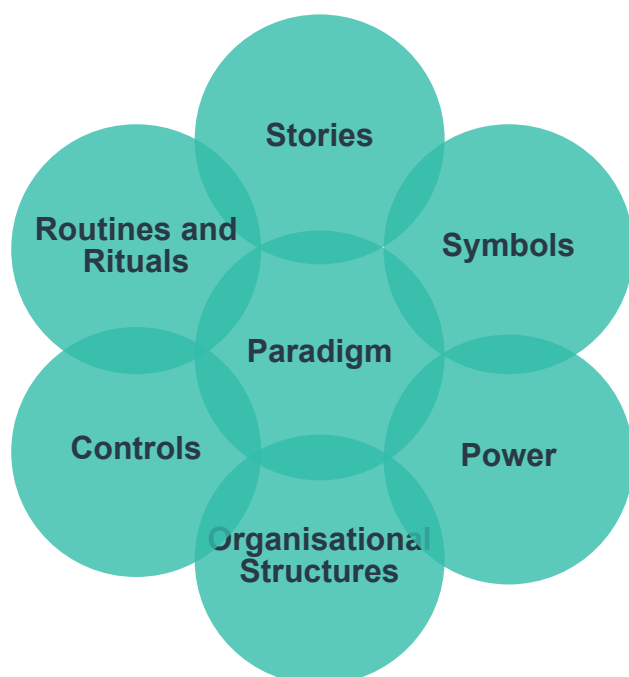
To transform organisations for the better, we must give people the opportunity to change the way they think and interact. This cannot be done through increased training or through command-and-control approaches: no one person, including a highly charismatic leader, can command other people to change their attitudes, beliefs, perceptions or level of commitment. Instead, the practice of transforming organisations involves developing tangible activities: new governing ideas, innovations in infrastructure, and new leadership methods and tools for changing the ways people work together. Given the opportunity to take part in these activities people will develop an enduring capability for change and the organisation will benefit from far greater levels of inclusion, commitment, innovation and diverse talent.

It is not enough to change strategies, structures and systems unless the thinking that produced those strategies, structures and systems also changes.

“We can’t expect things to change, if we continue doing the same things. Crisis is the greatest blessing for people and nations, because crisis brings on progress. Creativity is born from anxiety like the day is born from the dark night.”

Albert Einstein

The ChangeLab offers us a Ready For Change Checklist (Change Lab, 2020) which helps organisations understand when they have the right conditions and mindsets for change (see Resources).



The Johnson and Scholes cultural web also offers us a way to take a holistic approach to consider where we are now and where we want to be. (Johnson and Scholes, 2002)

Tools and techniques for co-creating and sharing a good transformation story

If universities, indeed when universities do great things but do not communicate them effectively, not only do they reduce the impact on value creation, but they miss the opportunity to engage stakeholders, create trust and build credibility.

The 2019 Advance HE Transformational Change in the Higher Education Sector: An inquiry into leadership practice research worked with six universities aimed to understand what it has meant for leaders trying to 'transform' their institutions. Leaders were asked what the transformation process had been like for them, what they have found themselves doing as leaders, and how they have subsequently come to think about what is important in leading change. One of its key findings was...

“Being able to tell a good story of change, which is uncluttered with cliché and jargon, which recognises the particular circumstances and identity of the community being addressed, and which brings that community into a different relation with themselves and with the story-teller, is one of the most important skills of leaders.”

(Mowles et al, 2019)

Neuroscientists over recent years have researched the different areas of the brain that respond to information by using an MRI to scan the brain's response. Our sensory cortex is responsible for transcribing actual things that happen to us, like the smell of hot chocolate or the way soft cotton sheets feel. According to the study: “Metaphors like ‘The singer had a velvet voice’ and ‘He had leathery hands’ roused the sensory cortex, while phrases matched for meaning, like ‘The singer had a pleasing voice’ and ‘He had strong hands’, did not.”

“Research shows our brains are not hard-wired to understand logic or retain facts for very long. Our brains are wired to understand and retain stories. A story is a journey that moves the listener, and when the listener goes on that journey they feel different and the result is persuasion and sometimes action.”

Jennifer Aaker, marketing professor at Stanford's Graduate School of Business

In short, storytelling illuminates' parts of our brain that are only active when we actually experience something. We understand the rich detail and action of a story in a more complex way than if we were simply processing pieces of information. Think of:

- + data/information as seeing a sentence synopsis of a movie, and
- + storytelling as going to see that movie in Imax 3D with smellovision.

The 2019 Advance HE work on integrated thinking and reporting also highlights that telling or communicating our story is important for shaping our understanding and celebrating difference, demonstrating transparency and engendering trust. If we don't tell our stories well, improve our story telling, or change the narrative, why should our people care about what we do? Why should our stakeholders trust us? And if our stakeholders don't trust us then how can we make informed decisions, build a community of advocates, and move our transformation forward?

None of this is new. But the urgency to get it more right than we often have has never been greater.

Inclusive and dialogic transformation

What sort of organisation climate will encourage people to stick their necks out and trust that nothing bad will happen to them? They need to care – otherwise why bother? They need to feel some modicum of safety, and feel unfearful of failing because they know there will be people around them to pick them up and look at what can be learned to discover what to try next.

“Regardless of the hierarchy, every single person in the organisation has the right to expect to be really honoured and respected and listened to – an equal in that respect. If you don’t have that, then all the change initiatives in the world are not going to overcome it.”

Peter Senge (McQuaid, 2021)

Michelle McQuaid, David Coopridge et al, carried out research into what was working best in US and Australian workplaces during the pandemic conditions of 2020 and 2021.

McQuaid says they found that when we “invite all of the voices into the change conversation with the genuine belief that every voice matters and has something valuable to offer, and that in order to successfully go forward together we need to honour what people care enough to own, we not only see the objective efforts of the change and report it as being more successful, but that the people involved in the change also are reporting high levels of wellbeing.” (Change Lab, 2021)

The researchers formed the following A-Ha conclusions:

- + Successfully navigating the struggles and uncertainties that often accompany changes in workplaces requires support: at the ‘Me’ level by helping individuals to have confidence to navigate disruption; at the ‘We’ level by helping teams understand the reasons for change and improving their ability to cope with uncertainty; and at the ‘Us’ level by normalising change as a positive, ongoing part of the work that enables individual and collective learning and growth.
- + HR and OD colleagues need to help their workplace improve their levels of change literacy to help leaders and staff confidently navigate the inevitable chaos and uncertainty that can come with change. In addition, leaders should prioritise conversations about what’s working, where we are still struggling and what we can be doing differently as teams and organisations to work together to create a new normal.

Consider what happens when organisations leave people behind

“I automatically stop trying when I feel unwanted or left out. I won’t reach out to you if it’s not mutual. I don’t beg.”

ANON

Some of the contributors to our #visioninghe padlet offered this contribution about being left behind:

How would you feel if you were not part of this journey?

Demotivated Isolated **Devalued**
Deflated
Hell of Bereft *Meh* Insignificant
loneliness
Afraid **Out in the cold**
Forced to be passive Abandoned



According to Judith Glaser, the CEO of Benchmark Communications and the author of *Conversation Intelligence: How Great Leaders Build Trust and Get Extraordinary Results*, the key to success in life and in work is to prime your brain for trust, mutual respect, and partnership (Glaser, 2013).

Glaser offers top tips to help us build our conversational intelligence and gives us new thinking and expertise about how we can leverage our brain's natural tendencies to better situations and relationships for greater conversational connectivity. Here are some of the key understandings to emerge thus far:

- + our brains are designed to be social
- + appreciation reshapes neural networks
- + empathy activates our executive brain
- + uncertainty destabilises the brain
- + we move toward pleasure and away from pain.

The more and the better we listen, the greater will be people's sense of trust, belonging and engagement. The Golden Rule: You don't need to be interesting. You just need to be interested.

These capabilities were recognised by people who joined in the Tweetchat #Advance-hechat #LTHEChat in an exploration into what helps and what hinders Transforming Organisations. During this we asked: Transformative conversations with colleagues and students can help us re-think approaches and outcomes. What is needed to make this happen?

Here is a sample of what people said that underscore these ideas about what is needed for people to feel included and trusted...



Bravery, openness, trust, willingness to set ego aside.

Safety, trust, humility, and bravery! I like Arao and Clemens concept of 'brave spaces' as a coun-ter to 'safe spaces'. Transformative change can be painful and sometimes traumatic

Make connections, build tentacle relationships. Be purposeful and enquiring.

Perhaps understand that not everything can be quantifiable (eg charisma, a capacity to clari-fy and make sense, humour, kindness, and a genuine interest in students)

My initial response would be the time to just breathe and listen and the headspace to under-stand what is being communicated. But, I think, core to this is generating TRUST between both people.

Trust is built on the fact staff and students know you will take action after people have spoken and you will tell them about it. There is progress. This is one of the most motivating things for people.

We have created an enquiry framework which aims to give you a way for making your own transformative conversations. It is designed to be strong enough to hold them and flexible enough to let them grow into what you need and want to make happen. The transformative conversation framework has four steps to work through, offered in each case through individual and leader/manager perspective.

“And, as well as doing everything we can to facilitate dialogue at all levels and staying hyper alert to hearing voices that often get missed, it is also invaluable to get people talking with each other, (not just with the senior staff, or whoever is conducting a consultation exercise).”

Sara Corcoran, Director of People and Organisational Development,
University of Suffolk.

Who is involved in the transformation?

At a strategic level, the senior Executive work with the governing body to set the mission, strategic direction, overall aims and values of the institution. In ensuring the sustainability of the institution the governing body actively seeks and receives assurance that this is being progressed as agreed.

At Advance HE, working with many different universities, we frequently hear:

- + from governors - “the executive present a polished strategic document and that governors input at a formative stage is limited, more of a rubber stamp” – even though we know this is still changing
- + from staff and students – “we are presented with the strategy and asked for a view on how to implement the change required”.

But we question whether this is too late in both cases.

Of course, we do see and hear about examples of good practice and it is always worth looking for what we can learn from this at least as much as from what is not working.

Working (and living) in a state of transformation cannot be sustained indefinitely without a real sense of moving towards something better and worth straining towards. We need to offer time to reflect, time for conversations and expert ways of listening which give all stakeholders the opportunity to be heard and a part of the same journey we envision and that they want to belong to the destination we are trying to get to.

In the Transforming Organisations webinar Sheila Gupta, Vice-Principal (People, Culture and Inclusion) at Queen Mary, University of London, cited Deloitte’s Inclusive Leadership model to help make this happen well.

“We used the Deloitte model as a base to build our framework which we consulted widely on. The concept of inclusive leadership is really important to define the behaviours and expectations we have of our leaders. And also, perhaps like most universities, women and people of colour are under-represented at the most senior levels of our institution. By having a clear leadership framework it enables us to have fair succession planning route which is absolutely key to having that pipeline of future leaders so that we can enhance diversity at all levels of the university, and makes sure that voices from across our diverse community are embedded within our decision making structures.”

Sheila Gupta

Six Signature Strengths of Inclusive Leadership

“Equality is being invited into the room, diversity is getting a seat at the table, inclusion is sharing your views and being heard. Inclusive leadership enables all of this to happen.”

(Sweeney, 2016)

If inclusive leadership reflects a new way of leading teams, then we need to look beyond traditional leadership assessment tools and frameworks. Since 2011, Deloitte Human Capital researchers Bernadette Dillon and Juliet Bourke have researched inclusion as a leadership capability, with their initial exploration leading to greater certainty about “inclusion” itself - what it means, how it is experienced by others, and how to measure it.

This research revealed that when people feel that they are treated fairly, that their uniqueness is appreciated and they have a sense of belonging, and that they have a voice in decision making, then they will feel included.

To achieve these aims, highly inclusive leaders demonstrate six signature traits - in terms of what they think about and what they do - that are reinforcing and interrelated. Collectively, these six traits represent a powerful capability highly adapted to diversity. Embodiment of these traits enables leaders to operate more effectively within diverse markets, better connect with diverse customers, access a more diverse spectrum of ideas, and enable diverse individuals in the workforce to reach their full potential.

These are the six signature strengths critical for inclusive leadership identified by Dillon and Bourke, mapped here to their Values In Action (VIA) Character Strength equivalents:

Inclusive Leadership	Values in Action (VIA)
Awareness of bias: They show awareness of personal blind spots as well as flaws in the system and work hard to ensure meritocracy.	Fairness – treating people equitably as an abiding principle, not letting personal bias blind your decisions and judgements, and sharply attuned to notice any unfairness - because staying the course is hard
Curiosity about others: They demonstrate an open mindset and deep curiosity about others, listen without judgment, and seek with empathy to understand those around them.	Curiosity – taking an active interest in anything and everything, always asking questions and relishing ambiguity - because different ideas and experiences enable growth
Cultural intelligence: They are attentive to others' cultures and adapt as required.	Social Intelligence – being aware of and adapting to the different people's motives and feelings, preferences and strengths - because not everyone sees the world through the same cultural frame
Visible commitment: They articulate authentic commitment to diversity, challenge the status quo, hold others accountable and make diversity and inclusion a personal priority.	Bravery – taking action and coming to the aid of others in spite of significant risks and dangers - because talking about imperfections involves personal risk-taking
Humility: They are modest about capabilities, admit mistakes, and create the space for others to contribute.	Humility – showing modesty, unpretentiousness, preferring to let accomplishments and other's contributions take the spotlight - because bias is a leader's Achilles' heel
Effective collaboration: They empower others, pay attention to diversity of thinking and psychological safety, and focus on team cohesion.	Teamwork – social responsibility, being willing and able to put the needs of the group before your own - because a diverse-thinking team is greater than the sum of its parts

Balancing planned and emergent transformation

In the same webinar, Professor Katie Normington, Vice Chancellor at De Montford University, cited Kotter's 8 Step Model (Kotter, 1996) as one of the tools she found to be particularly helpful.

“One of the important things from this was creating the energy for the change - why standing still and doing what you're doing at the moment isn't going to work. This is really key because if you don't do that part successfully enough then you don't get people on board.”

Katie Normington

Kotter's research lies amongst others previously mentioned by Senge that showed that 70% of all major change efforts in organisations fail. He contends that this is because organisations don't take the holistic approach required to see the change through. His 8 Step process offers an alternative approach for continuous learning, helping to avoid failure and increase adeptness for change.

Kotter's 8-step change model



Things that you might do to use Kotter effectively are:

Step 1: Create Urgency

What you can do:

- + identify potential threats, and develop scenarios showing what could happen in the future
- + examine opportunities that should be, or could be, exploited
- + start honest discussions and give dynamic and convincing reasons to get people talking and thinking
- + request support from beneficiaries, outside stakeholders and HE sector people to strengthen your argument.

Step 2: Form a Powerful Coalition

What you can do:

- + identify the true leaders in your organisation, as well as your key stakeholders
- + ask for an emotional commitment from these key people
- + work on team building within your change coalition.
- + ensure that you have a good mix of people from different departments and different levels within your organisation to maximise your collective reach and influence.

Step 3: Create a Vision for Change

What you can do:

- + determine the values that are central to the change
- + develop a short summary (one or two sentences) that captures what you “see” as the future of your organisation
- + articulate in what ways the changes will help to achieve this vision
- + ensure that your change coalition can describe the vision in five minutes or less.

Step 4: Communicate the Vision

What you can do:

- + talk often about your change vision
- + address peoples’ concerns and anxieties, openly and honestly. Apply your vision to all aspects of operations – from training to performance reviews. Tie everything back to the vision
- + lead by example.

Step 5: Remove Obstacles

What you can do:

- + put in place the structure for change, and continually check for barriers to it. Removing obstacles can empower the people you need to execute your vision, and can help move the change forward.
- + identify change leaders whose main roles are to deliver the change
- + look at your organisational structure, job descriptions, and performance and compensation systems to ensure they're in line with your vision
- + recognise and reward people for making change happen
- + identify people who are resisting the change and help them see what's needed
- + take action to quickly remove barriers (human or otherwise).

Step 6: Create Short-Term Wins

What you can do:

- + look for sure-fire projects that you can implement without help from any strong critics of the change. Look for early targets that are low cost and high gain
- + thoroughly analyse the potential pros and cons of your targets. If you don't succeed with an early goal, it can hurt your entire change initiative
- + reward the people who help you meet the targets. Celebrate successes, talk up any achievements and changes that are in line with what you want.

Step 7: Build on the Change

What you can do:

- + after every win, analyse what went right, and what needs improving. Set goals to continue building on the momentum you've achieved. Consciously practice continuous improvement
- + keep ideas fresh by bringing in new change agents and leaders for your change coalition.

Step 8: Anchor the Changes in Organisational Culture

What you can do:

- + talk about progress every chance you get. Tell success stories about the change process and encourage people to look for and share their success stories
- + include the change ideals and values when hiring and training new staff
- + publicly recognise key members of your original change coalition, and make sure the rest of the staff – new and old – recognise their contributions
- + Create plans to replace key leaders of change as they move on. This will help ensure that their legacy is not lost or forgotten.

This provides a helpful framework for when we have a high level of agency and control over the transformation we are wanting to make.

We acknowledge that change, however well planned, often doesn't neatly follow linear models like this, it is worth noting that the levels are helpful in checking that you have covered all the bases properly, even if you find that you are catapulted in to start at one of the higher or even lower levels.

The reality is that often our transformation map will look more like a snakes and ladders board and we will be forced to recognise the conditions of emergence, more akin to the realities of change identified by Peter Senge in his Dance of Change challenges.



“Emergent change processes engage the diverse people of a system in focused yet open interactions that lead to unexpected and lasting shifts in perspective and behaviour.”

(Holman, 2010)

Planned Change	Emergent Change
+ Controllable + There is a clear beginning, middle, and end + Driven by management + Promise success and draw a line under the past + Slow + Time-consuming + Often resistance + Out-of-date by time implemented	+ Demands being okay in the liminal space, blurry and hard to fix down + Continual process of experimentation and adaptation + Simultaneously multi-layered and cross-organisational + Messy, sometimes inefficient + Iterative + Leader's role is to strengthen the culture and values so that good change can occur + Needs to let go of management's controlling behaviour + Effects often unpredictable

Three essentials tend to distinguish emergent change leadership approaches:

- + working with the whole system
- + involving the people of that system in finding their own answers
- + the assumption that organisational change occurs as a “continuous process of experiment and adaption” with the goal of adjusting the organisational processes and competences to a continuously changing environment.

This highlights two important aspects of leading transformational change:

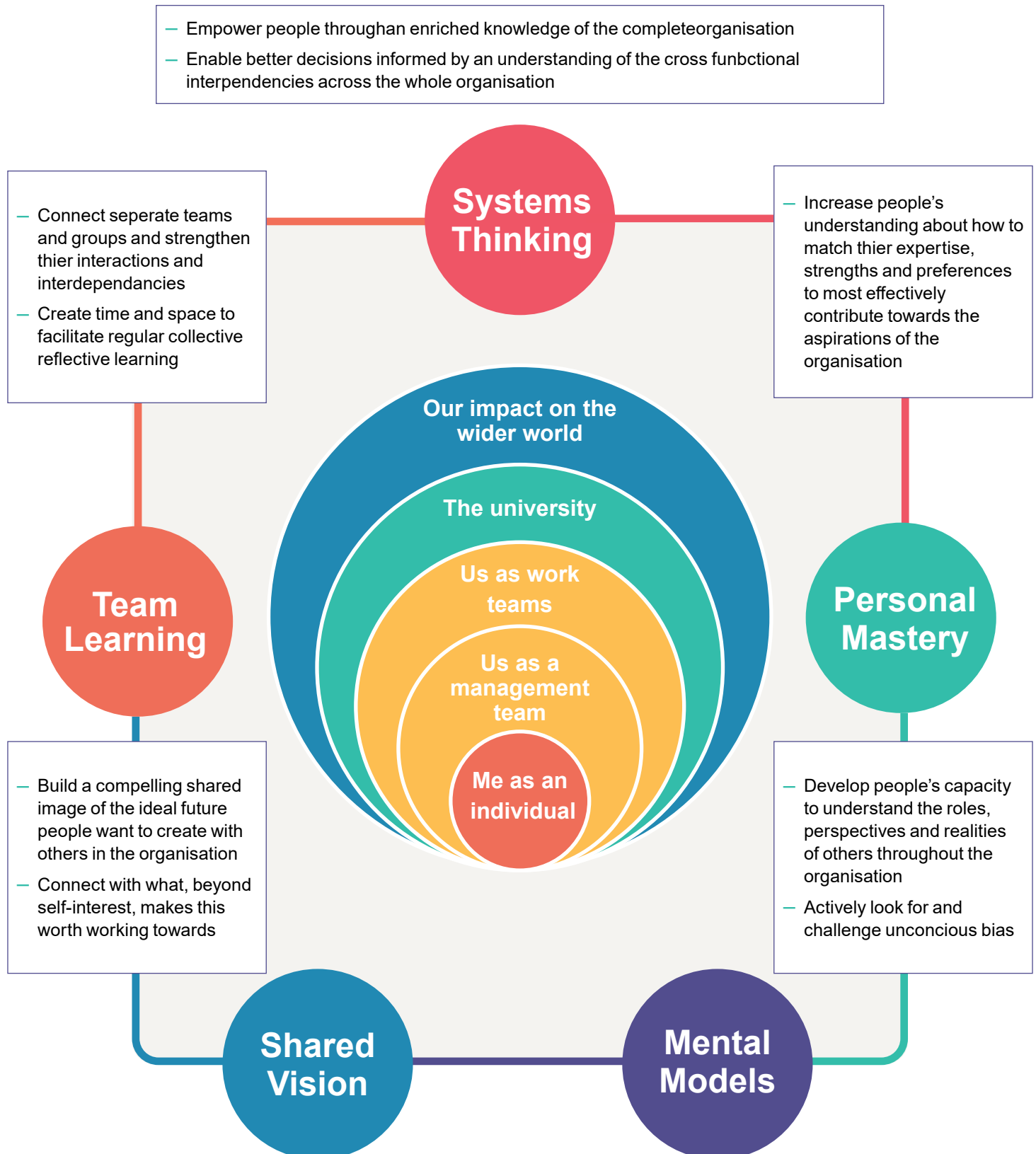
- + the need to identify, explore and, if necessary, challenge the assumptions – mental models - that underlie leadership decisions
- + understanding that organisational change is a process that can be facilitated by perceptive and insightful planning and analysis and well-crafted, sensitive implementation phases, while acknowledging that it can never be fully isolated from the effects of serendipity, uncertainty and chance.

Emergence as a process is order arising out of chaos. For many organisations and leaders, to even acknowledge that they have a hidden chaos that seems to be preventing them from being more effective is taboo. But in reality, transformation is not fixed or linear and complexity theory helps to reveal its emergent nature.

- + Emergent change takes place in an “open” complex system. In this context, “open” means that the system receives a regular supply of energy, information, or matter from its environment. The system is complex because of its number of components and their non-trivial and purposeful interaction, which results in a coordinated behaviour.
- + The non-trivial interaction in this system is challenged by internal constraints leading to the breakdown of current behaviour between the individual components. This creates a disruption in the system.
- + The system then goes through a process of differentiation in which innovation and distinction among its parts takes place. Higher complexity can be achieved through this differentiation.
- + When the system achieves a new state of coherence, it is more organised than before. This new order is achieved without a director or any explicit mandates. The parts in the system are self-organised.
- + The changed system then expresses new patterns of interaction, which emerge as new behaviours. The changed system also exhibits radical novelty (such as new properties or coherence); stable system interactions; dynamic wholeness that is always changing; and downward causation as the system shapes the behaviour of its parts.
- + Once coherence is reached at the higher level of complexity, adaptation is set into motion. When adaptation occurs across generations in the system, the system evolves. The evolution of the entire system gives rise to large-scale effects. Once evolution is achieved, the change is irreversible.

Here is our palimpsest model for leading emergent change that unites the needs of thinking through the integral Me, We and Us levels with Peter Senge’s five essential discipline for perpetual organisational learning:

Leading Emergent Change



Peter Senge's 10 Challenges of Successful Transformational Change (adapted from: Peter Senge et al, 1999)

Senge et al use the metaphor of a dance of change in their 1999 book of the same name. In this they identify three integral dimensions of transformation, and the interconnected challenges that affect and potentially disrupt the transformational momentum:

- + initiating transformational change
- + sustaining transformational change
- + re-designing and re-thinking for transformational change

Each Challenge is both a 'danger' AND an 'opportunity'. They are the conditions of the environment that limit and/or promote (regulate) growth.

These challenges articulate 10 things that tend to block or prevent the trigger to change. They are 10 possible reasons that people can have for feeling unable or unwilling to move out of the familiar stability of their previously known ways further out towards the edge of chaos.

Although the symptoms may appear isolated from each other, the 10 Challenges are interdependent:

- + **Success in one challenge may make it easier, or harder, to deal with others.**
- + **To be effective, leadership has to work simultaneously with any of these challenges as they occur together.**

The Challenges of INITIATING CHANGE . . .

. . . develop as soon as any 'pilot group' begins to conduct work in unfamiliar ways...

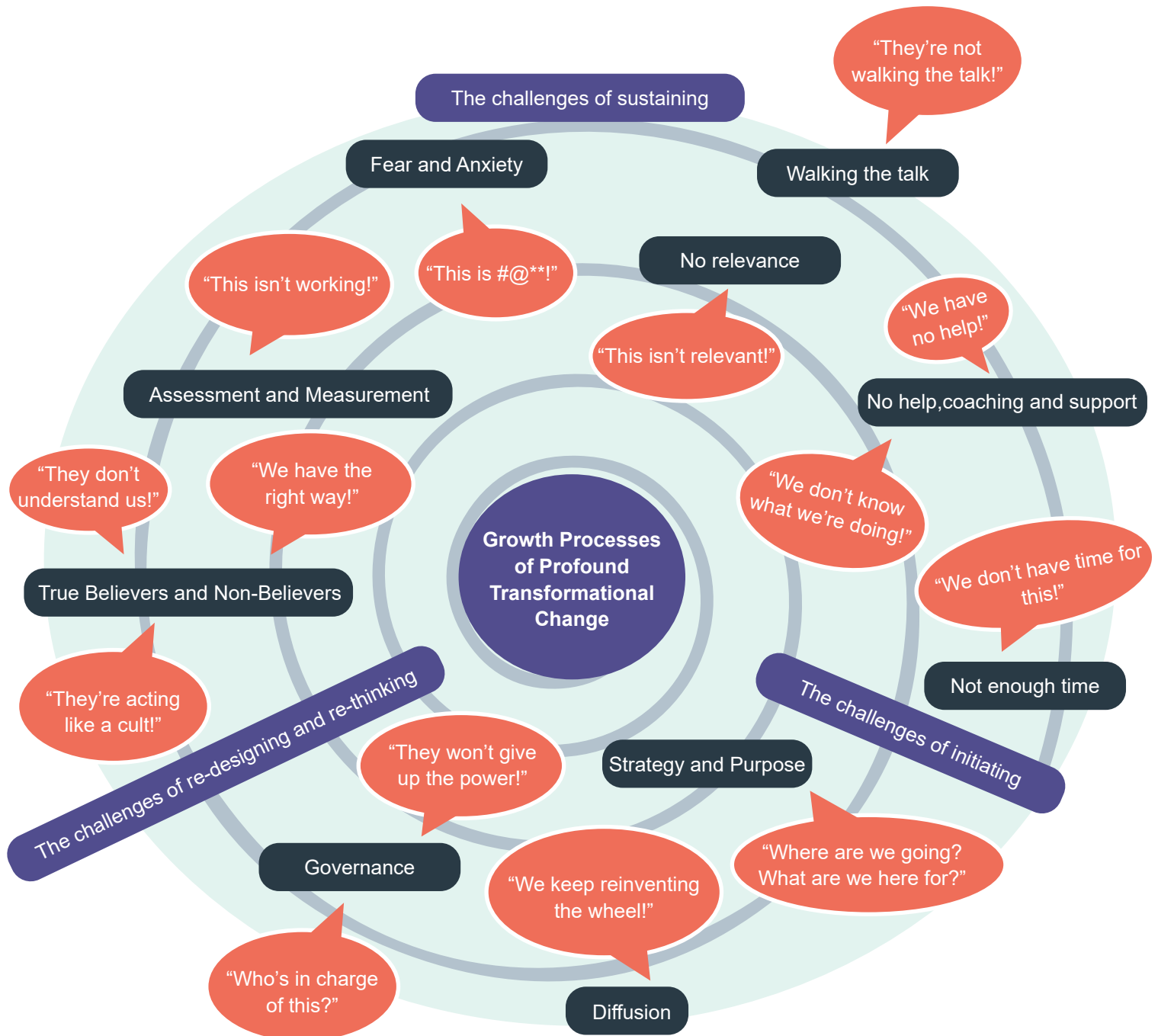
The Challenges of SUSTAINING CHANGE . . .

. . . takes place within a pilot team as it achieves early success, and between the team and the larger organisational culture...

The Challenges of RE-DESIGNING and RE-THINKING . . .

. . . appear when change initiatives gain broader credibility and confront the established internal infrastructure and practices of the organisation...

The 10 challenges of Transformational Change (Senge et al, 1999)

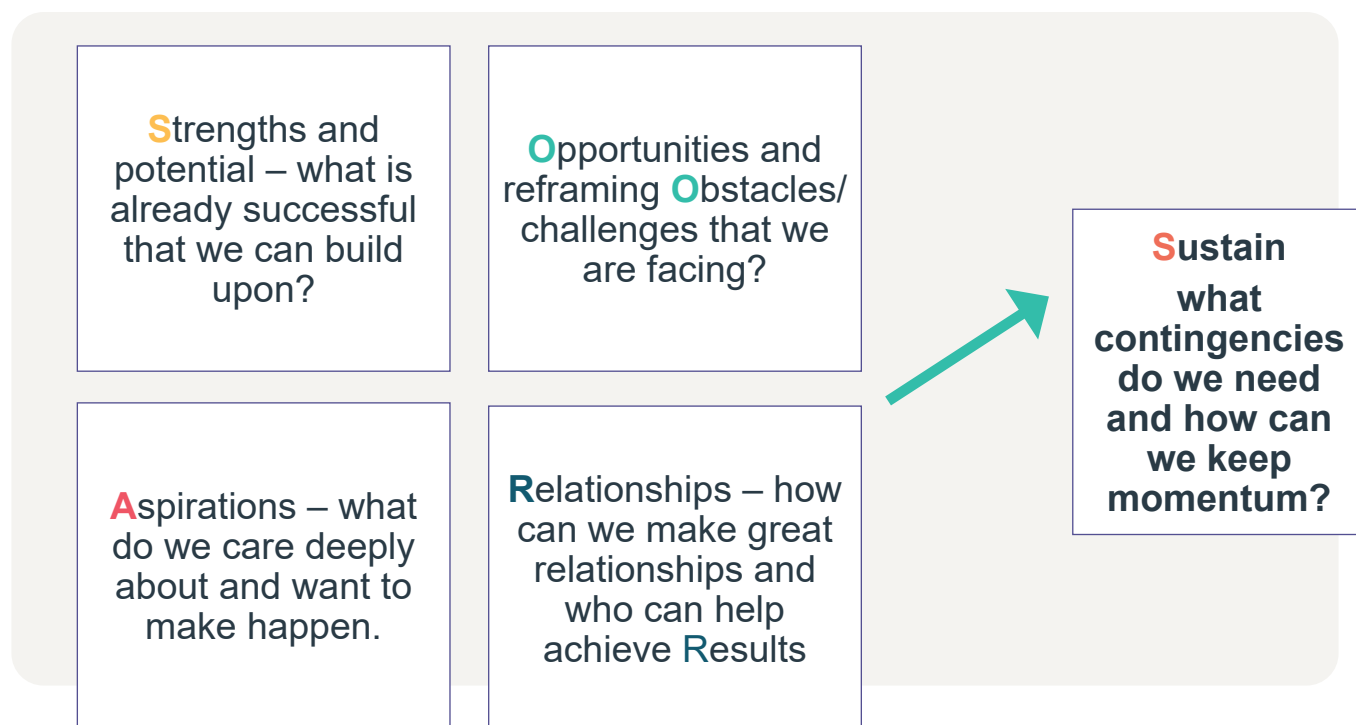


You can find [Senge's 10 challenges](#) - or main constraints - to transformational change that are likely to limit or even hijack successful change, and that need to be anticipated, managed or controlled, expressed through the symptoms that can be noticed when the challenge emerges.

Sustaining Transformation

SOAR(S) is a strengths based solution oriented perspective for enabling positive change, used by management consultants we have adapted this to be practically future oriented. The conversations start with a dialogue about where we are now and what the future looks like. This surfaces obstacles or challenges which in this approach are converted to opportunities. It is collaborative and we have added a practical focus on keeping up momentum (S).

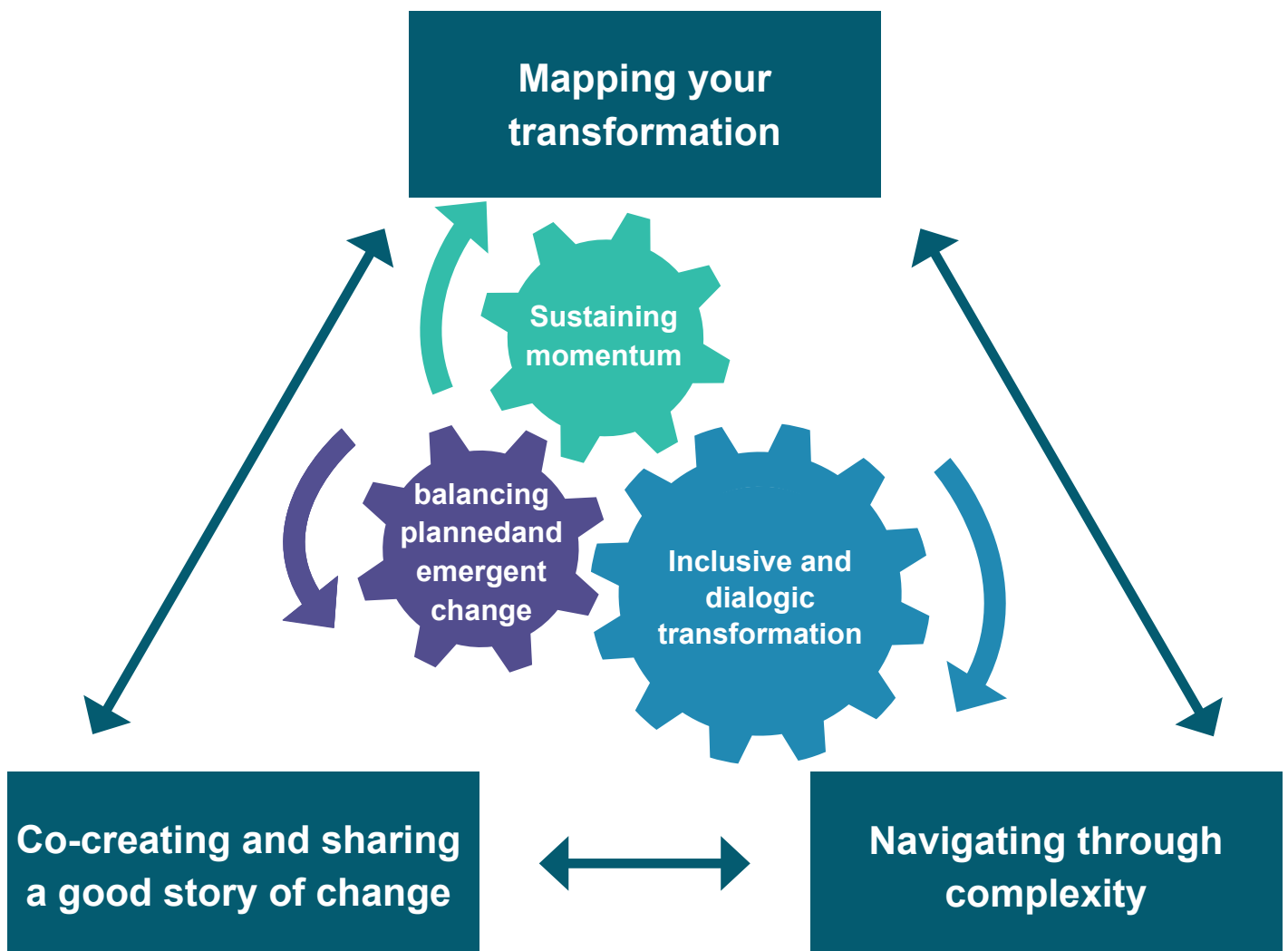
This whole system approach is inherently inclusive and encourages university leaders to build credibility and trust by creating an authentic approach to transformation. It is complimentary to Cooperriders appreciative approach and also very versatile. We have used the approach for Board/ Exec away days, Faculty/School culture reviews and department team building, to name but a few.



Putting it all together: our map for transforming organisations from student to board

Here, then, is our map for transforming organisations from student to board that puts all of these elements together.

We hope this provides you with a way to chart your way forward and navigate your way through the transformations you want to make with the fullest involvement of everyone who will be affected and can be pivotal to making it happen.



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Resources

[Transformative Conversations Enquiry Framework](#)

[Transforming Organisations Webinar \(20 May 2021\)](#)

[The governing body role in stakeholder engagement podcast](#)

[Transforming Organisations from student to Board](#)

[“Every good conversation starts with listening” – how conversations can support organisational transformation](#)

[Feeling Left Out Sayings and Quotes](#)

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