

# Integrated Strategic Change

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## Changing the metaphor for organisations



# Basic Assumptions About Change

## Organisations as machines

**Focus on things, parts, separate objects**

**Strategy, Knowledge Management, Change Management, Communications**

**Linear 'cause and effect' thinking**

**Change is manufactured and engineered - unfreezing, change and refreezing**

**Impartial, rational, objective observation possible**

**Control, prediction, harmony, equilibrium**

**Intelligence lies at the top of the organisation, expert views predominate**

## Organisations as complex adaptive systems

**Focus on processes, patterns, information flows and connectivity between parts, integrated whole**

**Strategising, Learning, Changing, Communicating**

**Non-linear, cyclical, spiral processes of change**

**Change, development and adaptability as natural life flows**

**Observer always participates in and influences what he/she studies**

**Unknown future, emergence, creative tension between order and chaos, importance of diversity for innovation, dynamic equilibrium**

**View from the top is partial, distributed collective intelligence, whole can't be known from any one place**

# Approaches for Complex Systemic Change

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- Attending to the whole system
- Working with the emergent
- Unblocking change
- Mapping system patterns
  - at behavioural and belief level
- Success/failure loops
  - appreciating and sustaining success loops
  - interrupting failure loops - minimal intervention
  - identifying triggers for failure loops and success loops

# Some Approaches:

## (i) Notice What's Working Well

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- Taking an appreciative frame
  - is the glass half full/ half empty?
- What's currently working well?
- Where are there positive patterns you can amplify?
- What was successful about previous initiatives?
- What was sustained?

# Some Approaches:

## (ii) Working with Patterns

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- Case - behaviour
- Pattern/Mindset
- Emotional Ground
- Systemic change approaches
- Living and feeling the systems – enactment, story, pictures, metaphor
- System mapping – success & failure loops, archetypes
- System levels – relational dance – tops, middles, bottoms



# Some Approaches:

## (iii) Taking Account of System Positions (Oshry)

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- TOPs feel burdened by unmanageable complexity and responsibility
  - Response – to differentiate, fall into turf wars
- MIDDLEs feel torn between demand of others, e.g. tops and bottoms, customers, end-to-end processes...
  - Response - to get burnt out , isolated, competitive
- BOTTOMs feel “Done To” by Tops and Middles
  - Response – to act in unison – Us v Them, groupthink

No one sees their part in creating any aspect of the above “dance of the blind reflex”.

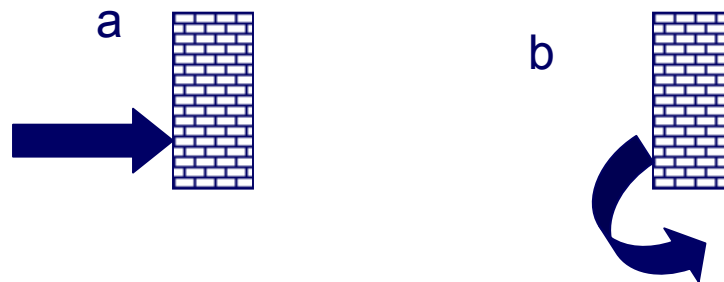
## Some Approaches: (iv) “Catching the Disease”

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- Understanding the system by understanding your own reactions to it:
  - How are you being affected by the system?
  - What is being said, felt, or left unsaid that represents patterns in the system?
  - Is this pattern repeated or paralleled throughout the system?

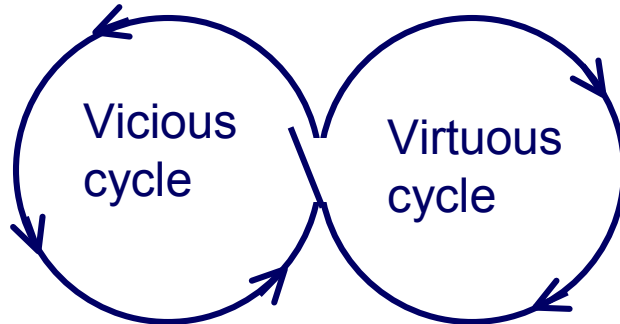
# Some Examples: (i) Fast-trial Experiments

Example:  
Aerospace company



- Identified the emotional blockage: need to properly grieve the loss of being a company that made whole aeroplanes
- Found appropriate mechanisms, rituals, etc to express the collective grief
- Found ways to begin to re-engage as people emerged in the upswing of the Transition Curve

# Some Examples: (ii) Triggering the System's Naturally Occurring Processes

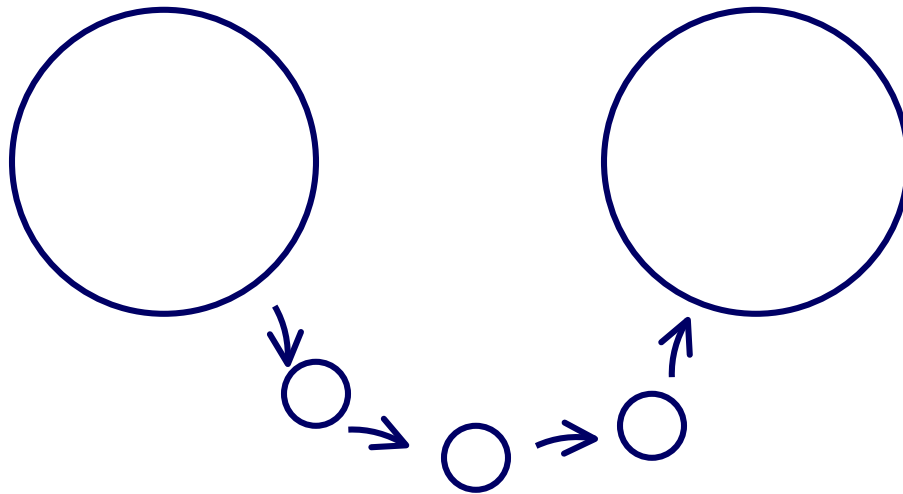


Example:  
Large bureaucracy

- **Two distinct cycles noted: a formal, bureaucratic cycle which was slow, ineffective and based on blame, and a highly effective informal cycle based on cross-functional task groups**
- **Traced the paths back to find the trigger that switched the response mechanism from one to the other**
- **Worked with the client to find an early warning system and to use it to set up processes to short-circuit the 'vicious cycle' trigger**

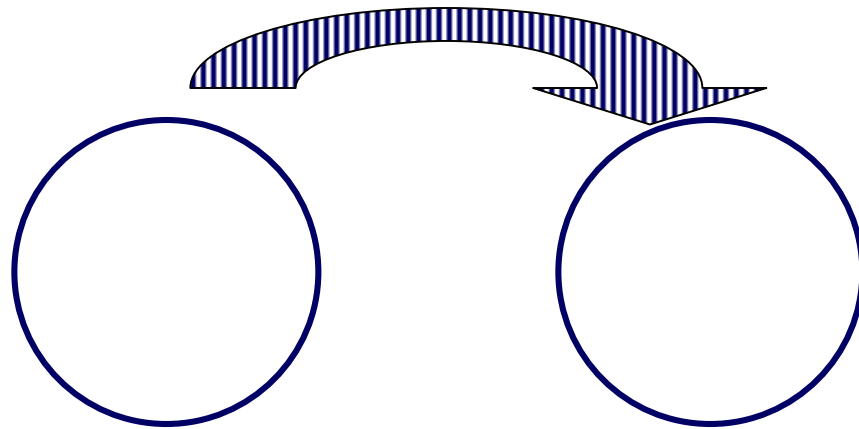
# Some Examples: (iii) Multiple Cycles

Example: European Business School



- **Need to move to a new psychological contract based on collaborative working and enhancing the corporate brand**
- **Hived off a small group to start up the new way of working and experiencing the benefits**
- **Mainstreamed the group when the momentum was right**

# Some Examples: (iv) Change Contagion



Example:  
Venture Capital  
company

**Finding the intervention that fits with an element of the existing dynamic**

- **Support/infrastructure needs ignored in favour of investment opportunities, leading to major blockages and inefficiencies**
- **Involved investors in the projects**
- **Repackaged these needs as new investment opportunities**
- **Projects then entered the fast stream for quick actioning**