

# The Change Handbook

*From the Preface*

**This book is about effective change. It describes methods for changing "whole systems," that is, change based on two powerful foundation assumptions: high involvement and a systemic approach to improvement.**

High involvement means engaging the people in changing their own system. It is systemic because there is a conscious choice to include the people, functions, and ideas that can affect or be affected by the work. Whole system change methods help you initiate high-leverage, sustainable improvements in organizations or communities.

"High-leverage" is emphasized because in any improvement effort, we want the highest possible value for the effort invested. We believe that involving people in a systematic way is a key to high leverage and that the methods in this book can provide this leverage for you. You'll need to determine the one(s) best suited to moving your organization or community to the culture you want. We wrote this book to support your efforts.

The book is intended to answer questions such as:

- \* What methods are available that have proven successful in addressing today's needs for organizational or community change?
- \* What are the key distinctions among these methods?
- \* How do I know if a method would be a good fit for my organization or community?
- \* How do I get started after I select one or more methods?

To make a good choice, you'll need some basic information. Rather than provide details of how to do each method, we give you an overview of what's available and some tools to help focus your exploration.

## Finding and Including Today's Best Methods

We sent out a call for proposals, attracting over 100 methods for our review. We used ten criteria for inclusion. The first eight came from our review of successful, sustained change efforts. Each selected method:

- Involves people in a meaningful way, improving individual and collective awareness and connectedness,
- Enables people to discover and create shared assumptions about their work processes and ways of working together; fostering the emergence of collective thought and action,
- Has been practiced for at least five years to establish a track record,
- Is a systemic approach to change,
- Achieves dramatic and lasting results with a moderate amount of people's time and other resources,

- Provides support from multiple sources (e.g., books, articles, Web sites, practitioner networks, user conferences, user groups/communities, training programs and materials, etc.),
- Has been applied in a variety of environments, cultures, and industries, and
- Is grounded in solid theory, and makes strong theoretical and practical contributions to the field of change.

In addition, when considered in totality, the collection of methods:

- Approaches change from a variety of disciplines (e.g., systems thinking/dynamics, quality improvement, organization development, creativity), and
- Reflects international and gender diversity.

While many methods are rooted in organization development, others bring rich traditions from community development, total quality, social science, system dynamics, public participation, the wisdom of indigenous cultures and studies of intelligence, creativity, and the arts. Practitioners from these different disciplines independently embodied the eight criteria in their approaches. The implications for changing organizations and communities are profound, as these practices from different fields have influenced each other and contributed to a rich and growing practice field.

Numerous methods met our criteria. To make the hard choices among them, two factors played a major role: Was there a vibrant community of practice growing around the approach? Was there an underlying generosity of spirit, a willingness to share?

We felt that a multifaceted support base—books, Web sites, formal or informal practitioner associations, training as well as consulting practices—indicated generous access to critical knowledge and support. In a few cases, though proprietary, if we felt the work contributed something important to the theory and practice of the field and there were at least some tools for self-study, we included it. We also included a handful of processes with less than five years of history because of their promise. There were many hard calls! We hope these selections serve you well.

Most of the in-depth chapters were chosen because they are well-established practices with sizable, international communities of practice: Appreciative Inquiry, Dialogue and Deliberation, Open Space Technology, Technology of Participation, World Café, Future Search, Scenario Thinking, Rapid Results, and Six Sigma. We believe that no book on high-participation, system wide change would be complete without the pioneering work of Whole-Scale Change and foundational methods based in Open Systems Theory: Search Conference and the Participative Design Workshop. While most of these approaches have their roots in organization development, we widened our reach to include methods of engaging people from other disciplines. Charrettes originated in the world of architecture and urban planning and Playback Theatre has its roots in the performing arts. We've also included in-depth chapters on two of the most frequently used supporting practices for change: Online Environments and Visual Recording

and Graphic Facilitation. Finally, we've added a bit of spice by offering three "young" methods that we believe are exciting contributions to the field: Collaborative Loops, a design-it-yourself practice; Community Weaving, a highly original approach to change that started life in communities; and Integrated Clarity, an exciting application that integrates Nonviolent Communication into work with organizations and communities.

The thumbnail chapters are brief overviews that showcase the range of applications available. Some of the processes are longtime practices; others are new, just finding their "legs," but bringing something original. A few are innovative hybrids of well-established methods that we believe contribute something original. There are creative adaptations of "foundational" practices. For example, Scenario Planning inspired Large Group Scenario Planning. Appreciative Inquiry is the root of SOAR and the Appreciative Inquiry Summit. Our intent is that the thumbnails provide enough information for you to see what might fit your situation, and visit online to learn more.

Action Learning  
Action Review Cycle/AAR  
Ancient Wisdom Council  
Appreciative Inquiry  
Appreciative Inquiry Summit

Balanced Scorecard

Civic Engagement  
Collaborative Loops  
Collaborative Work Systems Design  
Community Summits  
Community Weaving  
The Conference Model  
Consensus Decision Making  
Conversation Cafe  
The Cycle of Resolution

Dialogue and Deliberation  
The Drum Cafe  
Dynamic Facilitation  
Dynamic Planning Charrettes

Employee Engagement Process

Future Search

Gemeinsinn-Werkstatt  
The Genuine Contact Program

Human Systems Dynamics

Idealized Design  
Integrated Clarity

Jazz Lab

Large Group Scenario Planning  
Leadership Dojo  
The Learning Map Approach

Online Environments  
Open Space Technology  
Open Systems Theory  
OpenSpace-Online Real-Time Methodology  
Organization Workshop

Participative Design Workshop  
PeerSpirit Circling  
Playback Theatre  
Power of Imagination Studio  
The Practice of Empowerment

Rapid Results  
Real Time Strategic Change

Scenario Thinking  
Search Conference  
SimuReal  
The Six Sigma Approach  
SOAR  
Strategic Forum  
Strategic Visioning  
Study Circles

Technology of Participation  
Think Like a Genius  
21st Century Town Meeting

Values Into Action  
Visual Explorer  
Visual Recording and Graphic Facilitation

Web Lab's Small Group Dialogues  
Whole-Scale Change  
Whole Systems Approach  
WorkOut  
The World Cafe

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