

# Redrawing Our Change Management Map

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*In the middle of my life, he said, I drew the path of it upon a map and I studied it a long time. I tried to see the pattern that it made upon the earth because I thought that if I could see that pattern and identify the form of it then I would know better how to continue. I would know what my path must be. I would see into the future of my life. (Cormac McCarthy, *Cities of the Plain*)*

Early mapmakers often acted as the instruments or hands of imperial governments and kings. Map making was a way of locating and controlling resources. Unwittingly or not, These geographers to the kings defined reality to serve the interests of a few. For example, the old maps of England establish estate boundaries of noblemen as if they were natural environmental features. Where everyone else lived was empty space. Our "new" or "critical geographers" helps us understand how maps and mapmakers shape how we see the physical world. This new discipline shows us how a map can be seen as a manifesto or set of beliefs about the world. They can act as silent arbiters of power who controls what. Importance and position are can be dictated defined through these tangible representation models or pictures of our physical terrain. However, they are man-made constructions. They do not show us all that is there or all we need to look at. The map is not the territory.

We as organization consultants have seemingly become party to the map making of our clients.

If Marv Weisbord is right that "what we look at is what we see," then we, as Organization Development consultants, may be colluding with our clients by focusing too much attention on profit to the exclusion of other critical aspects of organizational territory. (For example, not considering the secondary costs to employees and the environment of so bountifully rewarding shareholders.) In our desire to serve our clients and continue working, we may have narrowed our perspective and may be, like them, out of balance. We have, in some ways, taken on their frequently single point of focus (i.e., profitability) and blinded ourselves to the rest. Is this what we want to see? Is this all of what we want to look at?

Assuming you have answered "no" to these questions, it is important to notice that we are in a position to help redraw this map. We can become more enlightened mapmakers to our own "imperial governments." We can, if we decide to, draw the maps we use to develop organizations so they more accurately reflect the whole human being and the complete context within which our organizations and we live.

We consultants seem to be finding it harder these days to keep our organizational maps as value-based and broad as we might want them to be or as they once were as they used to be. For example, many of our change management maps included developing humane organizations and more inclusive and far-sighted leaders, along with helping an organization serve its customers and reward its stockholders). A decade ago, when in a pinch, we were telling our clients that being inclusive, humane, and far-sighted would contribute to the bottom line. And, indeed they did. The demand for engaging everyone in making organizations more productive and profitable seemed endless. Organizations were replete with consultants hired to re-structure, re-design, re-engineer, and re-focus. The game of bait and switch was played and our Amidst the flurry of activity and the press for profits, our ability to pinpoint humane values on our maps was lost seems to have gotten lost.

Now, something else is being lost--our ability to include any descriptions of our great-grandchildren's future "map" onto in our organizational performance maps any descriptions of our great-grandchildren's future. Through their unconscious and unrestrained pursuit of profit, organizations are creating secondary consequences for the planet, for everyone who inhabits it now, and for everyone who will live here for generations to come. Our current maps seem to let us only "see" that which we have agreed we will look at: productivity and profit. This is what is expected of leaders in their roles. This is what they (and more often than not we) are rewarded for. So, what they most likely do see as human beings OUTSIDE the organization (environmental degradation, increasing divide between rich and poor) becomes more difficult to see IN their organizational roles. In their roles, they cannot consider what is outside the organization's map, therefore they do not see it.

We as consultants are not solitary travelers on this quest for new maps. We have help from important pathfinders. For example, Willis Harmon has written, " The fundamental question as we look ahead is not how we can stimulate more demand for goods and services and information, nor is it how we can create more jobs in the mainstream economy. The key question is a much more fundamental one. It is basically a question of meaning: What is the central purpose of advanced societies when it no longer makes sense for that central purpose to be economic production--because that is no longer a challenge and because in the long run focusing on economic production does not lead to a viable global future?" So what is the purpose

of advanced societies? How broad is the map we need to help us find our way to answer this provocative question?

Dee Hock, visionary leader and founder of Visa asked a similar question of business and Maori leaders in New Zealand a few years ago: "It doesn't matter so much who we have been to each other historically. The only questions that really matter are, 'Who are you becoming?' and 'What kind of world are we leaving for all of our grandchildren?'"

Hock's questions pose for us interesting challenges to our definitions of evolution and development. Are we applying rules about the physical evolution of our planet and all of its creatures (for example, survival of the fittest) to the development of organizations? Perhaps different rules apply. Perhaps we need to learn and apply different ways of thinking about how we develop our organizations.

To date, we have defined development as economic growth. However, now there is a catch. Today there seems to be an inexorable connection between economic growth and environmental deterioration. It might be true, probably is true, that the goals of economic development and desirable environment are fundamentally in conflict with one another. But this is a tough "map" to read. Drawn in such a way as to show this dilemma, it is very hard to look at. This map is depressing, full of despair. Painful any way we look at it. It is tempting these days just to acknowledge the outlines of this problem but not really draw it on any of our change maps. This way we can see it as an intractable problem and still not talk about it. We line it off the map, or at least place it somewhere vaguely in the silence of no man's land.

Joanna Macy provides some useful tools with which to approach this situation: compassion and insight. For the most part, there are no "bad" guys trying to destroy the world. Individually, each of us seems to care. Witness the research of Paul Ray and Sherry Anderson who found 50 million Americans or "cultural creatives" who have concern for the world's ecosystems, people, social justice, and peace. Collectively, however, we may be acting as "bad guys". If our definition of development means exclusively economic growth and this promised land is inexorably linked with environmental deterioration and to a decrease in people's sense of meaning, purpose and connection, then, through our blindness, we may be navigating ourselves to collective ruin. But, we don't have to sail off the end of the earth. We can and must redraw our maps. We can redefine the frames within which we see organizations, business, and their purposes. We can help our clients redraw these maps, redefining what is and is not included in their boundaries. We can redefine the frames within which we see change management.

"Change management" now seems to focus primarily on economic goals with attention paid only to people's response to change simply in order to help them "get over it and get on with it." Our change map needs to also consider people's sense of meaning and purpose, the quality of their lives, as well as what are we doing to our home, the earth, and our nest for ourselves and for generations to come. This is the insight and perspective we need to bring to our work.

With our re-mapping efforts we can bring compassion for ourselves and everyone else who is caught in this seemingly no-exit situation. At the same time we can help our clients to see what is going on; to see and question what map they are using ; to see the map that is limiting our own thinking about what is inside the boundaries and what is out. Compassion can provide us with the heat or energy to move forward, to do something about our situation without blaming, judging or disenfranchising people. Insight can provide cool and levelheaded discernment to say what we see. Thus, we can redraw the map so that more of what has been outside the boundaries is inside. And the map can more fully reflect the whole territory of our lives.

Why is it important for us to redraw the map? Dee Hock's words state it strongly: "Corporations have gradually freed themselves of all restraint and have become mechanisms for the capitalization of gain, and the socialization of loss. For example, all gain increasingly goes to shareholders, those with power and wealth, and not to the community or employees or customers. At the same time, the corporations demand the right to exploit irreplaceable natural resources with minimal payment, and to use the biosphere as a free sink for product waste. If a corporation fails, cuts twenty thousand jobs, or moves a plant overseas, the people and communities that supported them don't disappear, they become a social cost." Some of us understand the impact we are having on the world. We have used more natural resources since 1955 than in all of human history to that time. One sixth of the world's population account for 75 percent of energy and resource consumption. That one sixth is responsible for the bulk of industrial, toxic and consumer waste. Almost half of those six billion people live at a subsistence level or in abject poverty. According to Stuart L. Hart, faculty member in corporate strategy and the director of the Corporate Environmental Management Program at the University of Michigan Business School, "The total environmental burden of human activity (i.e., population, consumption, technology) exceeds sustainability on a global scale." And, even though the US population increases by only about three million a year, according to Bill McKibben, each of those three million will consume an average of forty to fifty times as much as a person born in the Third World. And, many in the U.S. do not see that as extravagant consumption. They think of this as a normal, decent way of life.

Redrawing our map is not just about the environment. It is also about what seems to

be a crisis of meaning and purpose in the world. According to a Merck study conducted in 1995, "Americans believe our priorities are out of whack. They believe materialism, greed, and selfishness increasingly dominate American life, crowding out a more meaningful set of values centered on family, responsibility, and community." A majority of those surveyed would be more satisfied if they were able to spend time with family and friends. Nearly half would be if they were doing more to make a difference in the community. How is it that our stated desires seem to differ so dramatically from our behavior? We seem to be saying that we want to behave responsibly and yet our actual individual and collective actions seem to be driven by the more real desires for position and possessions that we hope will fill the deeper needs for security, belonging, and fulfillment.

Many of our clients have little time for community or politics, sometimes even for relationships. Nobel Prize winner Robert Fogel worries about what he sees as the spiritual deprivation in American "largely as a result of capitalism's success." He does not mean faith or religion, he is talking about "a dearth of such qualities as self-esteem, a sense of family, a sense of discipline, an appreciation of quality, and--most important of all--a sense of purpose." Is a sense of purpose, self-belief, and family crucial to society's cohesion and our individual sense of connection and belonging? We think so. As Willis Harman stated, "the allurements of affluent industrial society fail to provide the kind of shared meanings that make a society cohesive and inspire mutual loyalty."

How do we respond to this situation without getting overwhelmed? How do we contend with the fact that there seems to be no viable or agreed-upon strategy for global development? Without that larger context or agreement within which to act, looking at wider issues and redrawing our maps can seem overwhelming. Where do we focus our attention? On the purpose and vision of our client's organization? On the values and role of the board and the shareholders in driving corporate behavior? On production and packaging practices? On marketing messages? On how we collude with our clients to focus everyone's attention on profits at the expense of the quality of life and sense of meaning of employees? On how decisions could be made in relation to the impact on the seventh generation? At first blush, all of this is overwhelming. When we sit across from a leader and ask her what her concerns are, what keeps her up at night, issues like globalization, the end of the rain forests, or her overworked staff are not likely to be in the fore front of her mind. How to satisfy the investment advisors, how to maintain market share, how get to the market first, how to meet and beat profit targets most probably are her primary concerns. Where this is reality, we are faced with the challenge of finding out how to raise such "soft" sounding yet huge concerns to leaders whose every map is filled with the challenges of just keeping their organization solvent.

We need to draw our maps in such a way that the new lands we are showing our clients look like paradise and not dragons; that they look like possible lands to visit, not a fabled, but unattainable territory. We need to frame the question so it is not so big that it scares us into non-action.

In this context, the questions we have been asking ourselves are: What are the gifts we have to offer? What and who have we been serving? Each of us has been wrestling with these questions for several years now. When we began to write about this in the *OD Practitioner*, we were asking: What needs to be done? Now, we are asking ourselves: What is ours to do?

Here are some nascent answers. Since we think we have some words to describe what we care about, we are writing and speaking about it. We have moved out of the San Francisco Bay Area to Humboldt County. It is a microcosm of the challenges facing all communities in the world. It is a place of awesome physical beauty. It is hard to make a living there. The decline of the timber and fishing industries has made it even harder. There seem to be significantly polarized views about what development means, what is okay and not okay to do. There are the "tree huggers" and there are "loggers." It is fertile ground for us to deliberate the question of how to develop leaders who can learn to braid into their leadership practices the three threads that are equally key to the future:

- Running successful organizations (serving clients, maintaining solvency, rewarding stakeholders and/or shareholders)
- Collaborating with, honoring, including people in the organization and the community surrounding the organization
- Making decisions that support the organization and the community to prosper in the present AND ensure the ability of the coming generations to prosper in the future

This is our response and how we keep it viable for us.

The questions we want to ask you and ourselves are:

1. What are we willing and able to pay attention to?
2. How can we stay awake to the boundaries in the maps we are using? How can we frame questions in such a way that our clients can see what we see and do something useful in response? How can we effectively question what is NOT currently in focus on our change management maps? How can we take a point of advocacy and serve our clients?

3. How significantly can we redraw the maps with our client to include more collaboration? To make sure that people's sense of meaning and purpose is pinpointed? To push the boundary lines out far enough to include protecting the environment, contributing to global sustainability, or at the very least "doing no harm?"
4. How can we expand the frame of change management so that it includes the original goals and values of Organization Development? How can we frame questions so that these values and the impact of the organization on the employees, the surrounding community and the environment are given serious consideration in deliberations about purpose, strategy, vision, and action?

As consultants we can work with our clients to redraw the maps of change so they that are broad enough to enable us to see all of what we need to see. We can start by becoming aware of the boundaries of the maps we use currently, defining the purposes and people they serve, and understanding the consequences of defining the organizational territory in the way we have. With compassion and insight we can challenge our clients and ourselves to ask the deeper questions about the purpose of organizations and work, and paint a picture of the desired future to which they and we hope to contribute. Such conversations may allow us to redraw the maps of change management to pinpoint our humane values and locate our grandchildren's future.

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