

- But the truth is, what people are raving about is the power and clarity of a new insight they are having (and the speed with which they get to it). And we all know there is a big gulf between insight and the ability to act upon it.

- Building on our colleague Ronald Heifetz's heuristic distinction between "technical" and "adaptive" challenges, we can say that some personal-change goals—especially those we know we must accomplish but still cannot—require that we ourselves "get bigger"; that is, we must adapt in order to accomplish them.

- But we began with a bigger aspiration that prompts an additional question: "And does it also promote advances in mental complexity, the kind of change that will permit a whole range of new abilities, not just meeting the single initial improvement goal?" If the answer to this were yes, then the payoffs for investing in an adaptive approach to personal improvement would be many, many times the value of accomplishing a single goal.

- Not long ago a medical study showed that if heart doctors tell their seriously at-risk heart patients they will literally die if they do not make changes to their personal lives—diet, exercise, smoking—still only one in seven is actually able to make the changes.

- The problem is the inability to close the gap between what we genuinely, even passionately, want and what we are actually able to do. Closing this gap is a central learning problem of the twenty-first century.

- The field of "leadership development" has overattended to leadership and underattended to development. An endless stream of books tries to identify the most important elements of leadership and help leaders to acquire these abilities. Meanwhile, we ignore the most powerful source of ability: our capacity (and the capacity of the people who work for us) to overcome, at any age, the limitations and blind spots of current ways of making meaning.

- True development is about transforming the operating system itself, not just increasing your fund of knowledge or your behavioral repertoire.

- The accounts and stories you will find here suggest a route to genuine development, to the qualitative expansions of mind that significantly increase human capability at work—not by rehiring but by renewing existing talent.

- Coping and dealing involve adding new skills or widening our repertoire of responses. We are the same person we were before we learned to cope; we have simply added some new resources. We have learned, but we have not necessarily developed.

- In reality, the experience of complexity is not just a story about the world. It is also a story about people. It is a story about the fit between the demands of the world and the capacity of the person or the organization. When we experience the world as "too complex" we are not just experiencing the complexity of the world. We are experiencing a mismatch between the world's complexity and our own at this moment.

- There are only two logical ways to mend this mismatch—reduce the world's complexity or increase our own.

- Three plateaus in adult mental development
- Self-Authoring Mind Let's contrast all this with the self-authoring mind. If I view the world from this level of mental complexity, what I "send" is more likely to be a function of what I deem others need to hear to best further the agenda or mission of my design. Consciously
- But mental complexity strongly influences whether my information sending is oriented toward getting behind the wheel in order to drive (the self-authoring mind) or getting myself included in the car so I can be driven (the socialized mind).
- The self-transforming mind can stand back from its own filter and look at it, not just through it. And why would it do so? Because the self-transforming mind both values and is wary about any one stance, analysis, or agenda.
- But the discussion of how information flow is conceived and handled also suggests that these formal mental properties translate into real actions with real consequences for organizational behavior and work competence. The implication is that a higher level of mental complexity outperforms a lower level.
- Using separate performance assessments, Eigel also evaluated the CEOs' effectiveness in terms of the ability to: • Challenge existing processes • Inspire a shared vision • Manage conflict
- Source: L. Lahey, E. Souvaine, R. Kegan, et al., A Guide to the Subject-Object Interview: Its Administration and Analysis (Cambridge, MA: The Subject-Object Research Group, Harvard University Graduate School of Education, 1988).
- Solve problems • Delegate • Empower • Build relationships
- Taken together, the cumulative data speaks anew to the problem of complexity: we begin to see how being at a given level of mental complexity can make a "complex world" more or less manageable.
- Heifetz distinguishes between two kinds of change challenges, those he calls "technical" and others he calls "adaptive."
- However, many, if not most, of the change challenges you face today and will face tomorrow require something more than incorporating new technical skills into your current mindset. These are the "adaptive challenges," and they can only be met by transforming your mindset, by advancing to a more sophisticated stage of mental development. Heifetz says the biggest error leaders make is when they apply technical means to solve adaptive challenges.
- Distinguishing adaptive challenges from technical ones again brings our attention back from the "problem" to the "person having the problem."
- "complexity" is really a story about the relationship between the complex demands and arrangements of the world and our own complexity of mind.
- losing weight is not a technical challenge; it is an adaptive one. Solving it with a technical means—dieting—will not work.

- Change fails to occur because we mean both things. It fails to occur because we are a living contradiction. "My immunity map," Peter said, "is a picture of me with one foot on the gas and one foot on the brake!"

- As we will see, the third-column commitments are the most powerful entry points to adaptive change, so it is important to recognize that while many people can share the same obstructive behavior, the real motivation for that behavior (the thing that makes it brilliant) might be quite different.

- The reason a diet will not work for most of us is that we need a better (nontechnical) formulation of our problem. We need to see that we are in the grip of an adaptive challenge.

- It is not change that causes anxiety; it is the feeling that we are without defenses in the presence of what we see as danger that causes anxiety.

- This means that if we want to increase mental complexity, we need to move aspects of our meaning-making from subject to object, to alter our mindset so that a way of knowing or making meaning becomes a kind of "tool" that we have (and can control or use) rather than something that has us (and therefore controls and uses us).

- Ultimate anxiety is no longer a function of being excluded from or disdained by one's tribe but instead may be about the threat of falling short of our own standards, of being unable to realize our agenda, of losing control, or of having the pen with which we are writing the script of our life run dry.

- it would be optimal conflict: • The persistent experience of some frustration, dilemma, life puzzle, quandary, or personal problem that is ... • Perfectly designed to cause us to feel the limits of our current way of knowing ... • In some sphere of our living that we care about, with ... • Sufficient supports so that we are neither overwhelmed by the conflict nor able to escape or diffuse it.

- Creating a picture of our immunity to change surfaces an optimal conflict.

- The three dimensions of the immunity to change

- "It doesn't matter how great your learning technology is," Peter said. "To figure out your immunity to change around some improvement goal that isn't the most important thing for you to change is a waste of everybody's time and money."

- Peter and his cabinet wanted all the members of the executive committee to create their own immunity maps, but not to be the sole deciders of what would go in their first columns. "None of us should just decide for ourselves," he insisted. "We should all get inputs from the people around us." For weeks before the offsite, each member of the EC had conversations—with the person to whom they reported, with peers, with someone who reported to them. The topic of the conversation, in all cases, was the same: "What's the single thing you think is most important for me to get better at?"

Feedforward technique

- I started to realize this cannot be just about work. I'd say, "You've got to give it the spousal test." They'd say, "Well, what's that?" I went to my wife. I said, "Dear, I'm focusing on one-big-thing, and you might be surprised to know I've got a little bit of a problem with control." We're in bed and she looks at me and she starts to laugh. She says, "You've got to be kidding me!" I said, "No, really." She says, "I've been married to you for twenty-three years. You're just figuring this out? 'A little problem with control,' you say? You are a control freak!" All right, so we are getting somewhere, right? I think I'm on the right path. This is what I call passing the "spousal test."

- what we might call 720-degree feedback—including key people in your private life as well as your public life—dramatically increased people's attachment to improving on their first-column goals.

- I think the next place for each person to take what they've learned is to their coach, and that it's very good we have made these one-on-one coaching relationships available."

- Now understand: we've been working together for fifteen years. Fifteen years! It wasn't like he just joined six months ago. And I think we knew, deep down inside, that this kind of dance was going on, but we never had a language for it. We never had permission. We probably never had the courage to really sit down and face it directly, and the "one-big-thing" approach,

- he called "the canary in the mind." "By that I mean you have given permission to others on your senior management team to talk about these things, to talk about the behavior that they see exhibited, whether it's by me or by others, because we've laid the groundwork for that. And I thought that that was very, very powerful. We need to just nip this in the bud the first time I do something dysfunctional.

- I think, in turn, our senior management gained greater credibility within the organization because there was this openness about their own challenges in terms of behavior that others in the organization saw and applauded and tried to emulate over time. We created a corporate buzz. People started to come to me. "I want to know what my 'one-big-thing' is." People who were not involved with senior management. People sometimes who were not involved in management at all, because they could hear the excitement of what was going on. Everybody wanted to discover and work on their one-big-thing. And, you know, obviously that's a very, very positive thing for the growth cycle.

- And secondly, there was a sudden easing of compassion for each other around the things that drove each other crazy.

- LINKING PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- If you oversimplify in the face of complexity, you do enormous damage. You bring a sledgehammer to bear in circumstances where what's needed is a scalpel or whatever.

- Key to this, he says, is recognizing certain parallel processes between the very personal nature of the work the organization does with its clients and the very personal nature of the work that professionals—from the commissioner on down—need to do with themselves in order to increase the chances they are part of the solution rather than the problem.

- The whole set of issues around if I'm trying to assist someone to change, what am I bringing to that interaction, to that engagement that's getting in the way?

- So we're now very excited at the notion that we can take the four-column exercise and use it both as a managerial practice with management teams in our twenty-nine area offices, where they both develop the language of the four-column exercise, have a conceptual frame for their self-reflection in their team-building work with their colleagues, but it's the same language that the social workers in their office will be trained in and thinking about in their relationship with the families. That's spectacular!

- Basically, I said to people, "Look, if this really is your 'one-big-thing,' if you've really dug deep enough, if you've really gotten personal, everybody already knows. I know. Others know. So, there's this sort of illusion out there that you are sharing something so private, that nobody knows. Trust me, they know! They know and they talk about it. Now, where do they talk about it? Behind closed doors, at lunch, after work, but they talk about it."

- I found myself saying, "Haven't we all had the experience of working for someone whose ego structure just means we have to spend huge amounts of time working around it?" We've all had that experience, the amount of energy we have to expend "managing up" to the personal predilections and character and style of one or another particular boss. I've yet to run into someone who has not had some version of this experience. And then I say, "Well, here comes the hard part: the shocking thing is that there are other people who experience us exactly the same way! The hard part to accept is—that person we experienced who just drives us crazy? Well, we are that person for someone else!" And if we can, kind of, get this, we can begin to do the work.

- This idea that "we might have something to do with it" is probably a prerequisite for a group to get anywhere in a shared consideration of its collective immunity to change.

- We then asked them to collectively create a "fearless organizational inventory" of obstructive behaviors: "What are the things you collectively do (not just a few of you) or fail to do that work against your improvement goal?"

- As you saw in chapter 2, the big "aha" of mapping one's individual immunity to change comes with the third column—the commitments that "have us" (as opposed to the first-column commitments "we have").

- How do we help people (whether individuals or groups) to make their third column commitments visible? We begin by surfacing the biggest fears that arise in considering doing the opposite of any or all of the second-column behaviors. In this case, the question for the senior faculty is, "What would we collectively be most concerned or worried about if we were to try to do the opposite?" You can probably guess the form these replies took, sometimes with laughter by the speaker or the listeners, or both: "If they didn't take on all those advisees, then we'd have to!" "If they taught less, we'd have to teach more!" "If they didn't do the heavy lifting on the governance committees, then we'd have to!"

- As is usually the case, they found the third column (the collective hidden competing commitments) to be the most difficult to complete, and ultimately their biggest learning opportunity.

- But wait, Ben; we aren't problem solving right now. We aren't trying to argue ourselves out of these beliefs. We are trying to figure out what the beliefs really are. We can go to work on them later.")

- Most of these collective success stories received a big assist from the fact that key participants had also diagnosed—and were working to overcome—their individual immunities to change.

- Many practical guides, such as Robert Heller's *How to Delegate* and Gerard Blair's *Starting to Manage: The Essential Skills*, offer excellent advice—excellent, that is, if learning to delegate is, for you, a technical challenge. For most people, however, we suspect that it's more of an adaptive or developmental challenge, of the kind we described in chapter

- We've chosen David as one of our cases in part because the goal he identifies is a version of one of the most common we see. Whether someone says he or she wants to get better at "holding others accountable," "leading from behind," "empowering others," "shifting from 'hero on the field' to 'coach on the sidelines,'" or "letting more people lead," the thread that runs through all of these aspirations has to do with delegation.

- Another solution—a more adaptive one—would be to create a bigger frame on who he is that includes delegation; that is, to undertake a developmental shift that makes delegating consistent with his self-definition. This more inclusive frame asks, "Is it possible for David to respect and feel good about himself, be true to his roots and be a good delegator?" While David initially tells us through his map that this is absolutely not possible, in less than a year his way of leading and his own words end up answering this question with a resounding "yes!"

- Whereas being a "tradesman" had led David to focus on his own performance only, being an "architect" has meant attending to other people's development and their capacity to deliver on the business's mission.

- "This is because I now believe that the biggest single impact isn't from doing details," he explains. "It's from doing lots of thinking and planning on my part, while having a real picture of what's going on, and finding the best way to bring all my resources to bear."

- He has discovered that he can add value by knowing differently how to get the work done. His revised assumption is this: "It's not that I need to do it, but I need to know it. I need to understand how the parts fit together in order to do the big-picture work effectively. Maybe it's not even having the skill to do the work, but it's having the detailed information."

- From there, David's own view was that the two most influential steps he took were understanding his immunity to change ("that was the biggest leap") and acting on that understanding by telling people what he personally wanted to change.

- David's continuum of progress

Tabla critica para empeeazar el planning phase

- A few weeks later, David used another tool, the overturning-immunity survey, which he sent to all his team members. As most people who use the survey do, he identified a small group of “witnesses” (usually six to eight) at the start of his work. These are typically people from within and outside your work life who would be in a position to notice real changes around your improvement goal if you made them. The surveys are short, simple, and anonymous. (You can see David’s survey in figure 5-3.)

- At more subliminal levels, the surveys create an internal and external “audience” for your progress. Sharing your commitment to change and knowing that others will comment on your progress make you much more likely to stick with your personal program.

- It has consistently impressed us how willing people have been, across a wide variety of organizations, to produce rich and thoughtful feedback. As sometimes occurs,

- FIGURE 5-3 David’s survey form

- Asked what the implications are for his leadership, he is clear that there are three “right” activities for him: • Attract and grow talent—then we can achieve big. Should I get hit by a bus, there should be two people who can step in. If not, I’m not doing my job well. • Provide direction. • Fight for resources.

- The immunity-to-change process creates just the sort of behavior meant to usefully trouble the existing mindset. David’s behavior, which is getting him good results from the perspective of performance improvement, is also informing a process of gradually reworking his mindset,

- Our goal with David over the next few weeks was to create as many opportunities as possible for him to see whether he could feel fully good about his three new categories of leadership behavior. His next assignment was to pay attention to what happens in his gut when he engages in these three leadership behaviors. We also asked him to review his calendar (current and over the past six months) using the three “right” activities as a filter, and to circle everything that didn’t fit. From there, he could answer questions like, “What’s the ratio of ‘right’ to ‘wrong’ time? What’s the trajectory over time? Is there any theme to the ‘wrong’ behaviors? What purpose might those behaviors serve? What do I get out of those?”

what are the key behaviours i want to have as a leader? Check calenadr wuth that in mind and see where your time goes

- Doing the calendar assignment turned out to be another turning point for David.

- David has stepped out of his own picture. He can look at it, rather than merely playing his part within it.

- One feature of a good column 3 statement is that it is self-protective. Cathy is saying that she is committed to never letting herself or a team down, no matter what, even if it means getting overstressed. Never letting anyone down means, for her, giving her best to everything, being the go-to person and not doing anything that might suggest otherwise

- the kind of self-protection we are looking for here is less about self-care than it is about protecting or defending the self we want others to see, or the way we want to see ourselves, even when that self may be costly. Cathy makes very clear what those costs are to her in the last sentence in column 3.

- Let's turn to her big assumptions in column 4 to explore the mental model that keeps her immune system intact. You'll notice that some of these assumptions follow from the formula, "If (opposite of col. 3), then __," whereas others are straightforward assumptions.

- Understanding how Cathy's goal to better manage her emotions is an adaptive (rather than technical) one has implications for helping her succeed. Methods that focus on stress reduction alone, such as exercise, breathing techniques, or yoga, are not likely to change Cathy. Our prediction is that she would engage in those activities 150 percent too! For her to improve, she needs to revise her limiting beliefs and assumptions.

Key

- This is exactly what we mean when we say that unlocking immunities allows people to access more of their potential. The "energy" released from no longer expending oneself in two countervailing directions shows up not only behaviorally (e.g., the ability to work harder and longer), not only emotionally (e.g., feeling freer, less burdened, less exhausted, less restricted), but intellectually, as well: when we develop we are able to use our intelligence in ways that most people would call being smarter.

- She continued the overturning-immunities process by enacting new behaviors, then asking herself what she was learning about her new mindset as a consequence of what happened when she acted differently.

- I was saying to myself, "This guy is telling me we need to turn this all into a presentation for the next day and it's now 9:00 at night." I then started to write a scathing response. But I stopped myself and asked, "What's in my control here?" In just that second I thought to myself, "He probably doesn't know what's happening." So I explained to him, "I don't have a visual aid or a message approved yet, and I will not have one until next Friday at the earliest. I know I was supposed to have this done. Can I have a new date?" He responded very favorably.

Your reaction based on what you can control is your power

- We are bound to be disappointed (and disillusioned) if we expect our conventional learning methods and means—which generally address only technical challenges—to support truly adaptive changes. Both David's and Cathy's stories suggest that any bigger investments made in providing such supports are likely to return very handsome dividends, since what each of them accomplishes far exceeds their original aspirations. A hallmark of adaptive change is that one's grasp exceeds one's reach. "Good problems," we say, "solve us": They bring into being, or strengthen our purchase on, a whole new developmental plateau, a new self-paradigm.

- The immunity-to-change technology enables the development of a more complex self, which, as we described in chapter 1, is always a matter of being able to look at something that,

before, we could only look through. We overcome a kind of blind spot by getting some distance, or perspective, on a way of making meaning to which we had been captive.

- Cathy's change is an enormous one ("a whole weight lifted from me," "no longer living in fear," an ability "to see things [in my work] I would have missed before," "to see the forest and not just the trees") precisely because she has been able to make this subject-to-object move, an altering of her core way of knowing. She is now authoring a far more spacious, less defensive, more open self, one that is based on a firmer sense of an intrinsic worth that frees her up in a host of ways within her work and beyond. If you don't need to do everything in order to establish your worth, you can really begin to delegate, ask for help, and let others shine.