

Transformational consultants are catalysts for the transformative process in the leaders and the organizations to which they consult. Those of us who undertake this role must understand that who we are and how we show up with our clients are primary success factors in supporting Organizational Transformation. All consultants strive to be competent, but the nature of Organizational Transformation places exceptional demands on change agents regarding our “being” as well as our “doing.”

The essence of the transformative approach is captured in the well-known phrase of Gandhi, “*Be the change.*” This becomes the mantra of the transformational consultant. How do I show up in client systems as the embodiment of transformation – present, clear, compassionate, authentic, courageous? How do I “be the change” in a way that activates transformation in all those with whom I come in contact?

The following seven qualities are aspirational. If we are to engage in doing transformational work with others, we need to commit to our own transformation. Our capacity to more consistently manifest these seven qualities can be cultivated through conscious practice, and should be seen as fundamental to our professional development. This commitment to self-awareness and personal mastery must be a core discipline for the transformational practitioner.

## Presence

Many years ago, one of my mentors said, “*Forget everything you’ve read. Let your client be the textbook.*”

If we are awake and attentive we can indeed learn in the moment much of what we need to know about responding to what life brings us. In a state of heightened alertness, our senses are keen. We pick up subtle cues from our environment. We become more attuned to people, their feelings and non-verbal communications. We are sensitive to dynamics in the room. We have access to our own deep well of intuitive wisdom that is the birthright of every human being. There is a natural, clear knowing of what to do.

The key is being here.

Perhaps this seems like a strange notion. Where else could we be than here? The truth is we often don’t know where we are. We humans are prone to getting lost in a never-ending stream of thoughts that pass for “reality”:

*“I’m not sure this is going well... not like that training last month. Now that was a training!... (sensation in stomach)... When’s lunch?... Bring your focus back to the meeting... Is that woman paying attention? I can’t believe she’s checking her phone again. That’s so disrespectful... That reminds me... I need to call John... This process is taking a long time... I wonder if it’s time to move on... Hmm. There may be a lot of traffic going to the airport tonight... I should leave extra time... I wonder how Debbie is feeling about the way the meeting’s going...”*

*Boy... she's really attractive... Oops, I shouldn't be thinking about that... Uh-oh... What did he just say? Did I just miss something?..."*

Supposedly we have some 60,000 thoughts per day.<sup>1</sup> (How did they ever count?) To a large degree, we live inside the boundary of our cranium amidst a pulsing and uncontrollable network of electrical impulses.

It is very human to confuse our thoughts with reality. But there is a real world out here, and we want to learn to be more consistently present for it. Imagine reality to be like a sporting event. There's the game on the field. Then there's also a slightly neurotic sportscaster who maintains a steady stream of commentary about the game. Our mind is like the sportscaster, offering endless opinions on what's going around us. (The same researcher estimates that of the 60,000 thoughts, more than 95% are repeats/reruns of thoughts you've had before and that more than 80% are in some way negative.) But the commentary, interesting as it might be, should not to be mistaken for the real game. We want to learn to increasingly step out of the commentator's booth and step into the game of life as it is, distinct from our reactions, opinions, and judgments.

Presence is also a gift we bring to those with whom we work. As a result of being less self-absorbed, we become more attentive to others. We are actually with *them* rather than absorbed with our reactions, assessments, and analyses of who they are and what they're saying. As our quality of listening deepens, people feel more heard and seen, which tends to fuel their personal transformation.

Like all of the key attributes of the transformational change agent, we can develop this capacity of presence. This does not mean to try to stop thinking. That would be impossible. But we can start cultivating the awareness that we are not our thoughts. We can dis-identify with the sportscaster and its running commentary. We continue to have 60,000 daily thoughts, but we don't get lost in them. There is a spaciousness of mind that allows thoughts to pass, like a train going by . . . but we don't get on the train. Meditation training is excellent for developing our muscles of presence. Again and again, we practice bringing our attention right . . . here. To this very moment . . . And now . . . this moment.

And by practicing many short moments of coming present . . . we find this state of heightened awareness becoming more natural. It is often experienced as a kind of awakening.

Being present is a meta-skill that allows us to more fully access all our other gifts and capacities in order to serve and respond to our clients more skillfully. Simply showing up centered, clear, and attentive in the client system is itself an intervention. Your presence and clarity becomes a welcome oasis for clients from the pressures and complexities of their work environment.

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Jones "The Odd Brain"

**PRACTICE:**

Stop and pause before initiating every significant client interaction.

(NOTE: every client interaction is significant.)

Before each telephone call. Before each meeting. Before writing an important client email.

Stop . . . Breathe . . . Feel your body . . . Your feet on the floor.

Now feel your belly as you breathe . . .

Then take a moment to check in with your heart . . .

Take several deeper breaths to center yourself . . .

Now, take a moment to connect to your personal purpose in doing the work that you do. Why do I do this work? What is meaningful about this client and the work we are doing together? And reflecting on the work you are about to do, what is the purpose of this interaction? Exactly what do I hope to accomplish?

**Love**

I was coaching a consultant named Jane who was having challenges with the Executive Director of one of her client organizations. As I listened to Jane talk about this leader, I noticed a somewhat tight, judgmental tone in her voice. Finishing her description, Jane looked up at me and asked, *“So what do I do about this woman?”*

I paused, and then asked, *“Are you loving her enough?”*

This was apparently not what Jane was expecting to hear, and after a momentary expression of surprise, she fell silent. Looking into her own heart, Jane saw that she was, in fact, feeling very frustrated at the leader’s “lack of progress” in their coaching. She had been building up a series of judgments about the ED. Their last several coaching sessions had fallen into a pattern of consultant “advice” and client “defensiveness.”

As Jane continued unpacking her inner experience, she realized she had been feeling inadequate. Her frustration with the client was covering her own anxieties about not being able to provide what was needed. With increasing clarity, Jane could see that her hard-heartedness and lack of compassion for her client’s situation was a direct cause of her feeling stuck that was the subject of our coaching session. As her heart softened, Jane’s view became wider and clearer. She became more appreciative of her client’s predicament and the many factors that were making it challenging for her client to simply follow her advice and counsel.

Months afterward, Jane told me her relationship with the client had dramatically shifted, and that one of the most important lessons she had ever learned was to remember to “love your client.”

Decades of research have shown that a fundamental condition in all successful helping relationships – psychotherapists, counselors, clergy, educators, and consultants – is

“unconditional positive regard”: the compassionate acceptance of the other.<sup>2</sup> Love is an intrinsically healing force. When people feel accepted for who they are, they open up, like plants turning towards the sun. And in this field of acceptance, deep, transformative interactions can occur without triggering defensiveness.

We tend to think of love as an emotion that comes and goes of its own accord. But the unconditional love of which we speak, called “agape” by Martin Luther King, should actually be taken on as a discipline by those who do transformational work. We want to actively cultivate compassion. It becomes part of our practice to notice when and with whom our heart closes. In transformational work, we strive to keep our heart open to all with whom we work.<sup>3</sup> (If, over time, we find ourselves unable to keep our heart open to a client, it is in everyone’s interest to consider referring them elsewhere.)

Once again, our commitment to our own transformation is key. As we come to know and have compassion for our own humanity, to face our fears, the hurts, and inner conflicts that are a part of all human experience, our compassion for others is nourished. This kind of unconditional love is a natural outgrowth of our willingness to explore the hidden depths of our own heart.

#### PRACTICE:

Breathe into your heart . . .

Imagine light of golden color coming in with your breath . . .

Feel warmth coming in with this golden light, each time as you inhale.

Let your heart begin to soften and open.

Direct thoughts of loving kindness and compassion to yourself.

*May I be happy.*

*May I be well and free from suffering.*

*May I be peaceful and at ease.*

Now see the face of one of your clients . . . as if they were sitting just a few feet in front of you.

Know that this person, just like yourself, has joys and sorrows.

They care about their loved ones.

Just like you, they have fears and struggles, burdens they carry.

Direct thoughts of loving kindness and compassion to this person:

*May you be happy.*

*May you be well and free from suffering.*

*May you be peaceful and at ease.*

Repeat as needed with this person and other clients with whom you work.

<sup>2</sup> The client-centered approach to helping relationships, advanced by Carl Rogers, is one of the most researched approaches in psychology. There is strong evidence that there are here qualities in the helper that account for the success of counseling, educations, etc., regardless of the disciple or techniques: unconditional positive regard, genuineness, and accurate empathy. <http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/pst/21/4/431/>

<sup>3</sup> It is natural that we are more attracted to some people than others. But we can feel compassion for all people.

*“Agape is understanding, creative, redemptive goodwill toward all men...When you rise to love men on this level, you love all men not because you like them, not because you their ways appeal to you?” – Martin Luther King*

## Authenticity

Another critical characteristic of successful helpers found in these same studies is “genuineness”: expressing in our words and deeds that which we authentically think and feel.

In order to be honest and transparent with others, we must first know ourselves. As transformational agents, we must continually invest in developing our own self-awareness and emotional intelligence. When we are being authentic, our words literally ring true with a certain clarity and power. When we are incongruent – when our words don’t match what we’re feeling inside – others can feel it. They instinctively don’t trust what’s being said. Our authenticity (along with our competence and reliability) is the basis for the trust that is absolutely critical to a consulting/coaching relationship.

But the importance of authenticity goes beyond trust. Our authenticity and our willingness to speak truth as we see it are potent forces for transformation. Lack of open and honest communication is endemic in most teams and organizations. Organizations are plagued with sacred cows, elephants in the room, and rhino heads.<sup>4</sup> Blocks to the free flow of information cripple organizational effectiveness. In transformational work, one of our most important tasks is to get the conversations that are happening around the water cooler out in the open, and to establish norms of dealing directly with critical interpersonal and organizational issues. We need to be the ones who are willing to speak the truths that others inside the system fear to name. It is one of the most powerful interventions we can make.

*"In a room where people unanimously maintain a conspiracy of silence, one word of truth sounds like a pistol shot."*

– Czeslaw Milosz

In my supervising and mentoring consultants, in response to their challenges with clients I find myself asking again and again, *“Have you said this to the client – as clearly and directly as you’re saying it to me?”*

The answer is usually, *“No.”* or *“Well, not exactly.”* To varying degrees, most of us carry concerns about being too direct. We’re afraid of upsetting people. People might get angry with us. They might not like us. What if we make things worse?

Making it all the more complex, we carry our personal history into our consulting engagements. Depending on this history, we may have particular challenges in being authentic with people of a particular gender, age, position, race, etc. We may fear conflict in general, or have difficulty with certain types of interpersonal dynamics.

As we enter a system, we may well begin to feel some of the same pressures, inhibitions, and mindsets as our clients. We can start to become a part of the culture, where dysfunctional behavior starts to seem “normal” and their un-discussables start to seem un-discussable to us as well. To the extent we begin hesitate to speak our truths, we become part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

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<sup>4</sup> *“It’s like there’s a rhinoceros head in the middle of the office. There’s blood and guts pouring out of the open wound, and it stinks to high hell. But we all just walk around it and pretend it’s not there. No one says a thing.”* – Executive of a major financial institution.

There are always real risks in speaking our truths.

But our willingness to do so is one of our greatest gifts to the client. Our authenticity can be like a beacon of light and sanity in organizational systems. By sharing stories of our own shortcomings, mistakes, and life's lessons, it makes it easier for our clients to open to their own vulnerabilities. And the power of our truth telling helps surface and resolve critical conversations, catalyzing potential breakthroughs within our client organizations.

**PRACTICE:**

*(This is especially beneficial to do any time you are feeling at all frustrated with a client situation, but always potentially helpful.)*

Imagine one of your clients (an individual or a team) is sitting in front of you. Make sure you're in a private place.

Talk right out loud to this imaginary client.

Let's get it out on the table. All of it. Uncensored.

Any judgments you have about them or the way they're engaging or not engaging in the change process.

Any frustrations you're experiencing in working with them.

What you appreciate about them.

Any anxieties you have about the change process, it's success, or your own performance.

What you would say to them if you were being 100% authentic, uncensored, not concerned with the impact.

This is an exercise in emotion and energy as well as content.

Speak with the feeling that is authentic to the words.

When you feel complete, stop and take a few deep breaths.

This was an exercise in telling the truth to yourself – so you know what's there. All useful information.

Now, reflecting on the client, the situation, and what you have expressed:

Where are there gaps between how I think and feel and what I've communicated to the client?

What's this about?

What do I need to bring to the client?

And how can I communicate this in a skillful way that would provide benefit?

Any other take-aways for me?

## Healing

Often in organizational development we are called in to fix problems. Traditionally, O.D. consultants begin by undertaking an assessment, with most of the attention becoming focused on what's wrong. Critique is important and identifying and addressing the weaknesses in organizational systems is certainly key in change processes. But in Organizational Transformation, we pay at least as much attention to what's right about our clients and what they do well.

There is growing research that supports a strength-based approach to human and organizational development. For example, a survey of 20,000 employees in 29 countries showed:

- Reviews and informal feedback emphasizing performance strengths were linked to a 36% increase in performance.
- Reviews and informal feedback emphasizing performance weaknesses were linked to a 27% decrease in performance.<sup>5</sup>

Many organizational practitioners are placing increasing focus on recognizing and building upon the strengths of their client leaders and organizations. Sometimes called Appreciative Inquiry (AI), asset-based, or strength-based approaches, these popular methodologies focus more upon what's working, what the organization is like at its best, what's great about what it does, and how people can take the best from their past as they look toward the future.

The lens or frame through which we view our clients is important.

Remember this phrase: *"We become as we are beheld."*

There is a well-researched phenomenon called the "observer-expectancy effect" (sometimes called the Pygmalion Effect). In one famous study, teacher expectations of their students were found to have a significant impact not only on student performance, but even led to significant increases in IQ scores.<sup>6</sup> We want to bring out the best in our leaders and their organizations. If we look at them as being broken and needing to be fixed, we call out something very different than if we focus on their potential greatness. Strength-based approaches focus on identifying, supporting, and maximizing organic talents and passions, unleashing the energy and vitality when people do what they are good at and what they love to do.

The transformative approach invites us to think of ourselves as *organizational healers*. The dictionary defines "healing" as "to make sound or whole" and "to restore to integrity."<sup>7</sup> As organizational healers we expand our scope beyond fixing organizational problems. We see it as our job to treat the whole system, in the same way that a holistic physician looks at the whole person, not just one ailing body part.

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<sup>5</sup> Jean Kantambu Latting, "Giving corrective feedback: A decisional analysis," *Social Work*. 37 (5, September 1992): 424-427.

<sup>6</sup> Rosenthal, Robert; Jacobson, Lenore (1992). *Pygmalion in the classroom* (Expanded ed.). New York: Irvington.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/healing>

In healing, we assume that the wisdom and power to make things right lies within the organism, within the hearts and minds of its people. While part of our job will always be to help fix what's broken, in transformation our assignment is also to help unleash within our client their latent self-generative power.

#### PRACTICE:

Reflect on a particular client organization. Think of it as a living organism.

Have you seen an acupuncture chart of the energy meridians in the human body?  
Visualize this organization as a living system filled with currents of energy.

Identify the most powerful and positive centers of energy.

*What might be done to make even greater use of this power?*

Visualize this happening. See the positive impact.

*Where are areas of energy that are weaker or less developed than they need to be?*

*What would each of these look like if they were stronger, more developed?*

Visualize this happening. See the positive impact.

*Where is energy well organized, aligned, and flowing well?*

Imagine how its impact can be expanded.

Visualize this happening. See the positive impact.

*Where is energy not aligned, disorganized, conflicted, or blocked?*

Imagine how this could be realigned, healed.

Visualize this happening. See this happening.

*Where is there latent, potentially available energy in this system – energy that's wholesome, healing, inspiring?*

*How could this be released and made more available?*

See it happening.

*As you look at this entire energy system, what's the one thing that could have the greatest impact on the health and vitality of this system?*

Imagine it shifting.

See what that looks like . . . how it might happen . . .

and see its positive impact on the whole system.

Reflect on these visualizations.

What actionable ideas do you have for how to bring greater healing to this organizational system?

## Service

The role of the transformational consultant is one of a dedicated servant. We commit ourselves completely to serving the mission and the people of our client organizations. We express this dedication through a relentless focus on the results that we have committed to deliver. (Perhaps this goes without saying, but it's easier to offer this when you actually feel aligned with the purpose and mission of your client.)



Like all of these seven attributes of the transformational consultant, Service deepens with practice. One of the disciplines of servant leadership is staying mindful of our own unconscious agendas and unmet needs that may compete with this dedication such as:

- Needing to take the credit
- Wanting the client to like us
- Needing to look good/in control/smart/etc.
- Over-concern with our billable hours
- Proving our worthiness by being successful
- Looking for validation for our anger, hurt, or experiences of disenfranchisement
- Needing to be right
- Trying to meet our unmet needs for belonging or community
- Needing to be needed

These feelings are very human, and need not be a problem so long as we stay aware of them and limit the degree to which they drive our actions. We simply notice these impulses, then pick up our attention and place it on serving the client... again and again.

While certain situations may call for us to act quite strongly and publicly, overall we want to support and lift up leadership from within the organization. Ideally, we take up as little space as possible to accomplish the needed results. When possible, work behind the scenes and put members of the client organization out front. Let them take credit rather than yourself.

*“The wicked leader, the people despise  
The good leader, the people revere.  
The great leader, the people say, ‘we did it ourselves.’ ”  
– The I-Ching*

At the end of your engagement, you leave the organization but your clients continue on. Your job is always to be thinking about teaching people to fish rather than providing tasty fish dinners. You have succeeded when you have made yourself redundant by building the client’s capabilities.

How do you not simply deal with the situation at hand, but simultaneously build organizational capacity as you go? Transformational initiatives typically include some kind of training, but much of this internal development happens through mentoring and coaching, often informally, in your interactions and the way we go about our consulting and facilitating. We want to role model constructive and generative mindsets and behaviors that the client can adapt and practice. What’s required is our commitment and ongoing attention to empowering all those with whom we come in contact.

**PRACTICE:**

Choose a client engagement to reflect on.

What are all the things you are currently doing to:

1. Support internal leadership in taking ownership of the change process?
2. Build client capacity for transformational leadership?
3. Minimize client dependency on you?

Going forward, what can you do to further these three objectives?

## Letting Go

Organizational Transformation is an emergent phenomenon. We don't know at the beginning exactly what it will look like. And although good planning is important, transformation always unfolds in ways we never could have predicted.

I used to run a chronic low level of anxiety in my consulting and training. In my mind I was constantly thinking a few minutes ahead of every process, scanning for what might go wrong. When things didn't seem to be going as planned, my instinct was to pull hard on the reins in an attempt to get things back "on track." When conflict or seeming potential for chaos would raise its head, I did whatever I could to reassert control.

Over the years, I began to notice a few things. First, there are a *lot* of ways for groups to get from point A to point B. I tend to get attached to my way, but there are other ways that usually work just as well. Second, in Organizational Transformation things usually don't go as planned. And that's not only O.K., it's intrinsic to the transformational process. Third, I don't really know what's going on a lot of the time. Things that appear to be disruptions or setbacks often prove to be critical learnings or essential steps in getting where we need to go. And lastly, things usually work out, despite my anxieties.

*"I've experienced many terrible things in this lifetime,  
most of which never happened."*

– Mark Twain

Learning to let go of control has been a long journey. It's been helpful to realize that we never had it in the first place. It's only the illusion of control that we cling to.

There's an analogy that my wife, Judith Ansara, likes to use about learning to drive on icy roads in New England. When your car starts to skid, one feels an almost irresistible urge to turn the wheel in the direction you want to go. But what's actually needed is to turn *into* the skid. The same holds true in our work as agents of transformational change. When things seem to be going awry – unexpected issues arise, conflict starts to surface, our carefully prepared agendas seem in danger of being derailed – we may get anxious, start to feel out of control. Our instinct is usually to avoid, to turn away from the unplanned event. But more often we need to turn into the skid, to recognize and appreciate the possibilities in what's been raised, to relax and see where things want to go. Those of us who want to facilitate transformative change need to understand and appreciate that there is often chaos<sup>8</sup> as old structures break down to allow something radically new to emerge. Increasingly over the years I have learned to trust the group, and to trust the transformational process.

It's a subtle dance. As the facilitator, you are in fact responsible for guiding the process, so it's not about dropping the reins and abdicating your role. Breakthroughs are often preceded by breakdowns. Except when they're not. Breakdowns don't always lead to good outcomes. Sometimes they lead to messes with no silver lining. Sorry, but there's no formula to follow. If we are relaxed and attentive in the midst of uncertainty, the right action will usually present itself. We will likely discover when to let go, and when to take charge. It's a stance of radical trust.

Increasingly organizations themselves are coming to this understanding. There is a need for top leaders who are good innovators, able to facilitate solutions in unpredictable and emergent contexts – those who are “adaptive leaders,” able to remain calm in the face of chaos and meet the escalating rate of change.

Tolerance for ambiguity, the willingness to open to the unknown, and the choice to embrace uncertainty in service of a breakthrough is part of what distinguishes a practitioner of Organizational Transformation.

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<sup>8</sup> The word chaos derives from a primordial Egyptian deity that personified the empty space or void that existed before the formation of the cosmos. <http://www.eoht.info/page/Chaos>

**PRACTICE:**

Our minds are filled with facts, opinions, judgments, likes and dislikes, and theories. While we know some things, what we know is infinitely small compared to what we don't know.

Here is a simple, yet powerful practice to help us open to the magic and wonder that lies in the unknown:

Notice each and every time you have a thought or make a statement with any degree of certainty.

Each time you catch yourself doing this, silently say to yourself, *"Unless it's not!"* (or the equivalent)

"I think we should \_\_\_\_." (unless we shouldn't)

"It's like this \_\_\_\_." (unless it isn't)

"The best option is \_\_\_\_." (unless it isn't)

"I don't want to \_\_\_\_." (unless I do)

" \_\_\_\_ is a bad policy." (unless it isn't)

"John is \_\_\_\_." (unless he isn't)

Keep it light. Have fun.

See how many times you can catch yourself speaking with certainty.

**Partnership**

All this may sound like a lot to manage. The good news you don't have to do it by yourself. In fact, you can't. At every step of the way, the complexities of Organizational Transformation demand collaboration.

Your success as a transformational consultant depends first of all on a profound partnership between you and your primary client(s). This relationship must be a true meeting of minds and hearts – aligned on where you're going and how to get there. You will both need to invest time and commitment to create a foundation of high trust, mutual respect, and exceptionally open and honest communication.

One of the most important warning signs in a consultant-client relationship is when you feel like you're putting in more commitment and energy than the client. Be mindful of taking on too much. Keep reminding yourself that this is not your organization – that your energy cannot not be a substitute for people in the system, stepping up to take ownership and leadership of the change process.

The other major opportunity (and often, need) for partnership is with other practitioners. Except when working with smaller organizations, the scale of work in Organizational Transformation often requires more than one consultant. Those who work for consulting firms are used to a team approach to client service. Individual practitioners need to develop a network of colleagues to call upon. In addition to the limits of your personal bandwidth, other skills may be needed to best serve particular clients' needs. Few of us are equally masterful in all three domains of the Wheel of Change. Given the range of work often needed in Organizational Transformation, it may be helpful to bring in specialists in areas like strategic communications, fundraising, performance management, information systems, etc. This also gives us a chance to model the kind of collaboration that is likely needed throughout our client systems.

Those doing solo contracts need to remember that it is challenging to maintain a clear perspective doing transformational work over time in a client system. Unless we are working with co-consultants, we need colleagues with whom we can discuss and get feedback and support on our transformational change projects. Many professionals rely on peer or led supervision groups to help work through challenging client cases and continue their professional development.

Many of us carry beliefs and attitudes that inhibit our ability to partner easily and well: *"I don't need anything."* *"Things go better if I do it myself."* *"It's unsafe to depend on others."* *"Relationships are complicated."* *"I don't trust easily."*

We need each other. Our work in Organizational Transformation is a perfect opportunity to deepen our own capacity for partnering.

*"The time of the lone wolf is over. Gather yourselves!"*

– Elders of the Hopi Nation, Oraibi, Arizona

#### PRACTICE:

1. Take the self-survey called **Consultant-Client Assessment**. This tool will help you assess the current health of your working partnership with key clients.
2. Do a partnership audit.
  - Where in your life do you have support from other practitioners?
  - Who can you go to for reality checks and professional input?
  - Is this sufficient to meet your needs for support and development?
  - If not, what action steps can you take to better meet these needs?

## Is This All We Need?

No. Mastering these seven qualities may already seem like a lifetime's work. (It is!) But this is not sufficient.

In order to facilitate transformational change, in addition to these personal qualities, we practitioners must also bring to this work well-honed skills in organizational development and the experience to know-how to use them. We need to be skilled at conducting assessments, facilitating high-quality breakthrough processes and meetings, coaching leaders, negotiating conflicts, and planning and implementing systemic interventions that integrate all three domains of the Wheel of Change: Hearts & Minds, Behavior, and Structure. We need to be grounded in an understanding of the challenges our clients face, and to master our craft so that we are worthy of the trust that clients need to place in our guidance.

It is a time where our own social change institutions and movements need to undergo transformation. There is an openness and readiness for change. Our social change sector is crying for skilled organizational healers, midwives, and guides. We need to step up to meet the moment.

## Conclusion

Organizational Transformation asks a lot of its practitioners. This work will continually test our courage, our commitment, and the bounds of our love. Those of us who feel called to this work must therefore engage deeply in our own transformation. Our process of professional development is also a process of self-mastery. We are invited to examine closely our life, our passions and our fears, our gifts and our limiting beliefs and habits, our motivations, the way we enter and hold back from relationships, the way we exercise power.

This journey of self-mastery can look very different, as there are many paths to self-realization. What's required from each of us is commitment to ongoing practice and life-long learning.

*"The only difference between a master musician and a beginner is that the master practices a lot more."*

– Yasha Heifetz, world-famous violinist

We are instruments in the music of transformation, and we want to practice diligently so that we can bring our best to our clients and to our service.

Our professional development requires us to cultivate those same qualities that will help us lead meaningful, wholesome, and happy lives. To fulfill our mission and serve our clients, we are asked every day to be centered, to be clear in our purpose, to be more self-aware, more skillful in the way we touch the lives of others, to be more compassionate and loving, and more open to the mystery that is life.

To be asked to take this journey on as part of putting bread on our table?  
We are indeed very blessed!