The Big Idea

Robert E. Quinn’s first book, Deep Change: Discovering the Leader Within, expounded on the idea that changes in leadership styles and effectiveness required changes first and foremost within the leader’s self. In the years that followed, reader feedback provided Quinn with a new model of leadership, one that reflected leadership as a state of being rather than just a pattern of behavioral modifications.

Thus emerged Building the Bridge as You Walk on It: A Guide for Leading Change. Ensconced in these pages of literature are valuable insights that detail the fundamental state of leadership, how you can achieve it and how to lead others towards it. Enriched with anecdotes from personal experiences of people who have experienced deep change, this book illustrates how deep change and entering the fundamental state of leadership improves relationships not only at the workplace but also at home and with one’s self.

Chapter 1 - Building the Bridge As You Walk On It

A productive community starts with just one individual with the incredible talent of increasing performance beyond ordinary expectations. It isn’t so much about what the individual does as it is about what he is. This “state” is what separates and elevates a leader from the rest of the pack.

Especially in the workplace, we all operate within a comfort zone. This zone is primarily helpful, offering a means of action while providing leeway for error. It is a zone where we feel secure and where all our defenses are down. In this zone, we are kings of our own castles. What we don’t realize is that over time, this castle may also crumble.

It is normal to resist the need to change. Change means letting go of control, venturing into uncharted territory. It means embracing one’s own uniqueness instead of trying to conform to the majority. We deny change, not realizing that to undergo deep change is to enter the fundamental state of leadership.

The Objectives of Building the Bridge as You Walk on It:

1. Helping people who are assigned to lead change.
2. Providing a new language for people who are already engaged in transformation.
3. Helping individuals to transform themselves and others.

Chapter 2 - The Fundamental State of Leadership

The Normal State

Robert Yamamoto resigned his position as executive director of the Los Angeles Junior Chamber of Commerce when he was told by the new board president that his efforts were found wanting. Having served in this capacity for four years, Robert had always thought he was giving his best.

Jeremy Fish was tasked with managing a regional medical center in California. Instead of rising to the occasion, he found himself giving in to feelings of incompetence, fear, and dread.

Roman Walley wasn’t the type of person to create a stir. At work, he never asked questions from senior managers even though he felt his questions were perfectly valid. He found himself coasting through his life, unable to change its course in any way.
The normal state may take on a variety of forms. It may be a comfort zone we’ve gotten used to that offers neither challenge nor room for improvement. It may be complacency in a fast-paced, ever-changing environment. It may be the tendency to attack and eliminate minor problems while ignoring key issues or the failure to put the common good ahead of one’s own interests.

Over a period of time, these externally-directed, comfort-centered, externally closed and self-focused actions will lead to slow death. Energy is expended and yet, nothing useful is gained. Entropy, a measure of disorder, increases. What is rational and valid to the human behavior is the normal state.

The Fundamental State of Leadership

The opposite of slow death and the normal state is deep change and the fundamental state of leadership. In this state, we become other-focused, externally open, internally directed and purpose-centered.

In the fundamental state of leadership:

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<td>Using others’ perceptions to judge ourselves</td>
<td>Gain confidence as we move towards a</td>
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<td>purpose and align our values with our</td>
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<td>Self-preservation</td>
<td>Put others’ interests ahead of our own</td>
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<td>Staying within a comfort zone</td>
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By entering the fundamental state of leadership, we open ourselves to signals that convey a need for deep change. We are able to reduce our hypocrisy, hypocrisy in this discussion meaning incongruence between what we value and believe in and what behaviors we exhibit. Throughout all the personal stories recounted in this book, we will see over and over that a deep change within us always encourages other to deep change, too.

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<td>Practicing awareness, competence and vision</td>
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<td>Pursuing a meaningful task</td>
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<td>Remaining committed, engaged and energetic</td>
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<td>Internally Directed</td>
<td>Continuously bridging gaps between values and behavior</td>
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Chapter 3 - Entering the Fundamental State of Leadership

Gail’s Story

Gail Parker was a battered wife. Her husband from her first marriage verbally, physically and emotionally abused her. It had gotten so that she was constantly on guard, always careful not to rouse her husband’s temper or anger him in any way. The day came, however, when it could not be avoided. As expected, her husband began to abuse her.

In the midst of the last beating she received, a spark went off in Gail’s head. At that precise moment, she knew she wasn’t going to be beaten after that last incident and she was going to leave. Her husband must have sensed this - he stopped beating her, dropped the belt and walked away. He never beat her after that.

The Impact of Entering the Fundamental State of Leadership

What does Gail’s story of domestic violence have to do with the fundamental state of leadership?

When we take control of our lives, we enter the fundamental state of leadership. When we stop becoming helpless victims and become visionaries with a defined purpose, we enter the fundamental state of leadership. Possessing control does not mean being confined to a rigid structure of how-tos. True control is about maintaining a clear result in mind and having the discipline to work towards that result.

When we enter the fundamental state of leadership, our views change. We choose integrity over corruption, purpose over pattern. By choosing to be other-focused, externally open, purpose-centered and internally directed, we enter the fundamental state of leadership.

The Bonding Power of the Unique Self

By choosing to disclose her story to a group of discussion participants, Gail discovered a well of support. By sharing her experiences, she was transformed into a strong and able person, realizing the greatness of her terrible past.

Disclosure of such intimate information reveals a strength few of us possess. By accepting the past, no matter how tragic it might have been, we show an authenticity that is rarely evident when we disclose about our more favorable selves. It is normal to want to hide that which we think is unique to us. When we share our “terrible past,” we encourage others to face theirs too. We enter the fundamental state of leadership and bring others to transformational change via a bond of authenticity and trust.

Chapter 4 - Personal Revitalization

Mark’s Story

After years of exerting tremendous effort as the president of a company in Cleveland, Mark Silverberg was burned out. There was nothing he could look forward to, no real hope in any of his endeavors. On a 10-day sabbatical, Mark chanced upon the book, Deep Change. He began reading and indeed, deep change began to happen.

His relationship with his family grew better and stronger. His work seemed to take on new meaning and purpose. Even the way he regarded himself changed. As he entered the fundamental state of leadership, Mark gained a new awareness of himself and of the world around him.
The Myth of the Ruthless Hero

It would seem absurd to think of a busy manager as comfort-centered and self-focused. In reality, that is exactly what a lot of the leaders today have become.

Consider this scenario: The office is a mess. Various problems arise everyday. The manager in the normal state will work at excising all these problems. He will find solutions for each and every issue that needs addressing. Little by little, though, problem-solving becomes routine. It becomes “normal.” As time passes, it becomes more comfortable to fix the minor irritants instead of launching an investigation as to why these problems are arising in the first place. For every problem solved, the manager gains recognition. He begins to think, “This is what I am good at and this is what makes my superiors recognize my efforts. I should just keep doing this.” Soon, the manager, instead of becoming a leader, becomes just a problem-solver.

Putting in long hours at work doesn’t necessarily mean more productivity, a fact ignored by the majority of leaders who are in the normal state. Work is the easiest scapegoat – it provides a “good enough reason” for tuning everything else out that we wield less control over: family, hobbies, friends. We aim to lead full lives but refuse to give attention to the other aspects of our lives that signal a need for deep change. Entering the fundamental state of leadership makes us eliminate this hypocrisy. There is no one correct way of striking the balance in our lives. Some may report putting in more hours at work. Others may allot more time to a hobby. Both situations are perfectly valid actions from reflection and both situations allow us to enter the fundamental state of leadership.

The message is simple: when in the fundamental state of leadership, all relationships are revitalized, not just those that are directly related to leadership and work.

Chapter 5 - Becoming More Aware and Authentic

A common mistake new leaders make is to think that as a newcomer, they have no voice in the organization - no real way to reach others. The fundamental state of leadership makes this thought a fallacy.

Jennifer’s Story

At 30, Jennifer had become the change manager of her company. She honestly felt that she lacked expertise but gladly took on the challenging opportunity.

She began by conducting interviews with as many people within the organization as she could, obtaining a straightforward view of the existing culture. After attending a seminar on deep change, she realized that in as much as she may have been inexperienced with leading change in an organization, she was certainly not lacking in change experiences. All throughout her childhood, she had experienced transformational changes. Instead of questioning herself, she absorbed new experiences and opinions. Jennifer had become a catalyst for change. She developed authenticity and an awareness of purpose. As with all people in the fundamental state of leadership, she reported renewed relationships in all aspects of her life.

Seven Lessons in Expanded Awareness

1. **You need support.** Jennifer felt that she lacked the experience and knew she was going to need the support of everyone she was going to work with. By looking for support in the form of a coach, Jennifer experienced a smoother transition from the normal state to the fundamental state of leadership.

2. **You have more experience than you think.** Think back on past experiences of transitional change. The lessons you learned from those changes, whether or not related to work, may help you with today’s need for deep change. Draw confidence from past change.
3. You develop a higher degree of authenticity. Deeper learning takes place with open and trusting communication.

4. You learn you are not in control. In an organizational change process, you cannot change the organization fully. You can only cause the change to start happening and enjoin other people to keep the change moving - building the bridge as you walk on it.

5. You learn to move into uncertainty. When Jennifer and her coach parted ways, Jennifer felt lost. Instead of reacting with bitterness, the way people in the normal state do, she chose to look at it from the fundamental state of leadership, expressing a heightened awareness for purpose - “I really believed that there was something good that would come of it, as painful as the experience was.”

6. You create enriched connections. By engaging with the people she was supposed to lead to change, Jennifer attained a deeper understanding of the people and systems she had to work with. Instead of concentrating on building, she concentrated on supporting. Because she shared her authentic self, people supported her and the change she brought forward.

7. By entering the fundamental state of leadership, you change all areas of your life. In the previous chapter, we discussed how the fundamental state of leadership revitalizes all aspects of one’s life. Jennifer renewed ties with her family, treating her parents with understanding and empathy.

Chapter 6 - Transforming Others by Transforming Self

We’ve heard it before: the best way to begin changing the world is to start with changing one’s self. Building the Bridge as You Walk on It provides us with an in-depth discussion of why this is so.

Courage is infectious and one of the more important traits that accompany deep change. It takes courage to admit that you are not performing as well as you should. It takes courage to solicit feedback and step out of your comfort zone. It takes courage to trust in a vision that becomes clearer only while building the bridge as you walk on it.

When we begin the process of deep change in one aspect of our life, our energy levels increase and we become more positive people. Other people notice this and are encouraged to enter the fundamental state of leadership as well. With so many individuals simultaneously undergoing transformational change, emergent organizing occurs. This kind of change does not have a leader; rather, there are many leaders. In the fundamental state of leadership, being a leader means being a catalyst, the first one to effect change. It is not about individual control. The power of a group of people all in the fundamental state of leadership can move organizations to transformational change.

Strategies for Effecting Change in Human Systems

1. Telling - Telling utilizes logical arguments and facts for change. If it sounds rational and easy, a person who is set about accomplishing a task will do it. This strategy does not give consideration to values, feelings or attitudes.
2. Forcing - Forcing uses manipulation and threat to effect change. It may evoke anger, fear and damage to relationships.
3. Participating - This strategy for change stems from a collective effort from all people trying to solve the same problem. Input from others is valued and the target is always a win-win situation for all parties. Trust is placed heavily on the emergent group process.
4. Transcending - The transcending strategy is virtually impossible to use when in the normal state. It is vision-oriented and a step towards the fundamental state of leadership. It emphasizes potential and is aimed at encouraging people to build the bridge as you walk on it.

Chapter 7 - A New View of Leadership

Kevin’s Story
Kevin was tasked with extracting structure and efficiency from the IT department of a large healthcare organization that was in a constant state of disorder. He had entered the fundamental state of leadership and put together a vision for the department and a program for improvement. Although his methods were working, it was inevitable that some of the changes he was making were met with resistance from some of the organization’s top management. Much to his surprise, after three years, Kevin was terminated.

At this point, Kevin was disappointed. He felt that positive changes were taking place at that crucial moment and the CEO’s actions signified non-commitment to a higher purpose. Six weeks after Kevin’s termination, the CEO resigned and a new CEO, one with a deep commitment to transformational change, took his place. Soon after, Kevin spoke to one of his former colleagues and she assured him that every single program for change that he had initiated had been installed and was moving. “You’d be proud!” she happily said.

3 Points Derived From Kevin’s Experience

1. The transformational leader must frequently accept his or her results through the work of others who embraced the vision and brought it forward.
2. “Walking naked” and “building the bridge while we walk on it” are core considerations for any leader who is serious about change at any level.
3. If you truly believe in your vision, you must be willing to accept the fact that some may not want to follow and will even resist your efforts.

Succeeding Without Being There

A person changes in the fundamental state of leadership. The change causes disruptions in the system and the individuals in this system change, too. Emergent organization occurs and change is lead by everyone. Success is achieved when a vision is realized from and by the emergent process, even if the catalyst is not present within the organization any longer.

Four Ways to See Leadership

1. Static View - The static view looks at leadership as a list of desirable traits. A leader is engaged, factual, independent, etc.
2. Polar View - The polar view of leadership takes these traits evident in the static view and arranges them into polar groups, seemingly opposite in nature but related as well. This view allows a more complex and dynamic view of deciphering leadership traits. For example, a leader is both visionary and factual.
3. Competing Values View - The competing values view of leadership seeks to align polarities similar to each other and explains how over- emphasis of a positive trait turns it into a negative one. It is a more dynamic view of leadership compared to the first two views because of the need to analyze the positive-negative aspect of leadership traits.
4. Integrated View - Integrating traits that have been identified, grouped together and analyzed in the first three views of leadership results in the formation of eight creative states critical for the success of any leader. In the fundamental state of leadership, a leader in any one of these states more than likely also exhibits the leadership traits essential to be in that creative state.
Quinn defined the eight creative states as:

1. Reflective action
2. Authentic engagement
3. Responsible freedom
4. Tough love
5. Appreciative inquiry
6. Detached interdependence
7. Grounded vision
8. Adaptive confidence

These eight creative states all work towards ever-increasing integrity, a trait that determines any leader’s legitimacy.

Chapter 8 - Reflective Action

In this go-getter world and at a time when non-action means complacency, it has become a leader’s nature to think of action imperatives. Mark Silverberg displayed this behavior. If he wasn’t always trying to solve problems, Mark felt like he wasn’t doing anything to better his organization.

While working to solve problems is certainly expected from leaders, it is always wise to take the time to reflect on these actions before execution. Through deep reflection, a leader is able to get in touch with his true self. He is able to see obstacles and barriers to improvement. He is able to create a purpose and then craft the steps he needs to take to achieve that purpose. Having contemplated his vision, he is able to be purpose-centered, internally directed, other-focused and externally open.

The leader who engages in reflective action is both energetic and mindful of his surroundings. He is able to reflect on how his actions affect others, the organization and himself. Because reflection and action are done at the same time and as a continuous process, he is better equipped to build the bridge as he walks on it.

The Discipline of Writing

Especially for a leader leading transformational change, journal writing is advisable. Allotting time each day to write out a journal of the day’s activities and how they deviate from or align with the chief purpose allows a leader to contemplate on his next step. In a busy world, journal entries tend to simply become lists of things to do, problems to solve. They are neither helpful nor accurate because minor problems often mask real issues and throw a leader off his track. By writing reflective journal entries, a leader attains focus and is able to work more purposefully.

Chapter 9 - Authentic Engagement

A creative state closely associated with reflective action is authentic engagement.

Reflection gives us a better view of ourselves. Through contemplation, we are able to decipher our values and principles and understand what is important to us. We attain a more realistic view of who we really are, without the external trappings of our environment. Authentic engagement is a state that closely links who we are and how we deal with others. It is a state that doesn’t necessarily have to be practiced within an organization. Even among family members, authentic engagement helps us relate effectively with other people.
We all perform activities with or that affect other people. When others don’t work well with us, we immediately blame the other person, claiming that he or she is too rude, difficult or tiring to work with. Is this really true? Quinn asserts that in many of these cases, when conflict arises between co-workers, one of the aspects that should be studied closely is authentic engagement. We claim that respect is important to us but do we exert effort to respect others? As leaders, we claim that we understand our subordinates’ problems but do we act to ease these concerns? Whether we realize it or not, people often read signals off our actions and oftentimes correctly interpret hypocrisies we exhibit. These signals display a leader’s lack of integrity. It is no wonder then that change cannot be effected smoothly.

A true leader in the fundamental state of leadership practices authentic engagement. He works with a core set of values, values he feels passionate about. This passion exhibits itself as positive energy, especially when the leader engages with individuals in an organization he must change. People who feel this energy are often encouraged to join the leader in authentic engagement and the fundamental state of leadership as well. Emergent organization occurs and transformational change takes place.

Chapter 10 - Appreciative Inquiry

A leader’s goal is always to achieve a purpose. In the normal state, a leader is apt to think, “If my purpose is to create a truly effective customer-care system in six months, then I must find ways to increase customer participation and awareness among my people.” While this may be a legitimate purpose and process, the steps taken to achieve the purpose are often shortsighted and difficult to manage.

Appreciative inquiry works by literally building the bridge as we walk on it. Instead of looking for ways to solve problems (“How should this problem be solved?”), it changes the fundamental question into something else that inspires creative thinking (“What does it take to do this step in a week?”), and encourages people to enter the fundamental state of leadership as well. It integrates an outlook of optimism with careful inquiry. Small step by small step, the purpose is achieved. An optimistic view of the future is necessary, as well as a keen mind that asks the correct questions. Appreciative inquiry also requires a deeper appreciation of one’s self. When a leader sees clearly who he is and what he is capable of, he gains an idea of what he can do to reach a purpose.

Few leaders are able to change the fundamental question. They are more prone to the action imperative: something must be done right now to solve an issue. In this state, it is easy to lose sight of purpose. While the outset shows an optimistic view, the problems that soon loom are daunting and may make the process of progression fail. Instead of moving forward, the leader is forced to stop in the middle, concentrating on solving the current problem. By looking at the achievement of purpose in terms of milestones, a leader is more likely to succeed in both his purpose and deep change, building the bridge as he walks on it.

Chapter 11 - Grounded Vision

Mohandas Gandhi once said that any government ruling India will fail in its purpose if it does not address the issues that its people are concerned with: bread and salt. This same idea works within an organization.

One of a leader’s tasks is to provide a vision. A vision must be inspiring enough to compel action from the organization. It must breathe life and creativity, positive change and productivity. Many leaders created great visions but very few succeeded at attaining them. What went wrong?

The vision failed to tackle root issues. It did not incorporate the present situation within the organization into its creation. It failed to consider the concerns that people within the organization had. While being truly visionary, the leaders failed to be realistic.

Such is the result of all visions that are not based on reality. A vision does not have to be set so low that even the most passive resisters can achieve it. Rather, a vision must be one that can be achieved within the present reality if all the individuals in that reality are in the fundamental state of leadership. The vision must inspire deep change while at the same time target a higher purpose.
The power of emergent organization builds and sustains a vision. Throughout all the personal narrations of various leaders in this book, many of them described the leaders being in situations where their visions were hazy and unclear. In these cases, open and trusting communications with employees helped clear visions materialize. When all avenues of communication between leader and followers are opened, a leader is able to truly engage with his people. He gains an appreciation for their concerns and hopes. From this, he is able to craft a vision that is sustained by the collective efforts of everyone in transformational change.

Chapter 12 - Adaptive Confidence

Transformational change is not easy. Many leaders who attempt deep change in an organization report feelings of inadequacy and incompetence. They feel inexperienced. They question what good they can possibly do, especially when the organization they are required to lead had been on a downward spiral for some time before they came in.

All of us have experienced transformational change at one time or another. In these changes, whether we realize it or not, we are actually practicing the application of the fundamental state of leadership. We integrate what we have learned and are learning into formulating new steps of action.

Adaptive confidence is gained by practicing both reflective action and authentic engagement. Through reflection, we are able to plot our course. We look back on the things we have done and find ways to improve by the day. Every interaction with another person is fertile ground for learning. Because we learn about others, and ourselves, we are able to easily adapt to changes. As we learn, we gain the confidence to enter the unknown, building the bridge as we walk on it.

There is a difference between learning and knowing. Knowing gives us confidence. Learning makes us realize that there is still so much for us to find out about, lessons we have to accept and adapt to. Adaptive confidence integrates these two aspects: we become more confident that we can learn and adapt to situations in real time - and we can let others learn with us, too. We stay focused on a purpose, confident that we will reach it. At the same time, we understand and accept the fact that the bridge is built with the accumulation of learning and both positive and negative feedback.

Chapter 13 - Detached Interdependence

Perhaps one of the more complex states is that of detached interdependence. In theory, it is a state that comes about by focusing one one’s abilities and strengths while at the same time accepting one’s need for others. In practice, most people end up seeming too arrogant or too weak.

Phil Jackson, a National Basketball Association coach, has seen detached interdependence work among his wards. He had seen time and again how team relationships become more harmonious when players are allowed full access to all their resources. This harmony is evident in many ways - the individual players play at their best and the team keeps winning.

It is normal for a leader in the normal state to get caught up in his successes. It is not just normal, it is expected. However, over-emphasis of one’s success results in the mentality that he needs no one, he is all-knowing and powerful. The fundamental state of leadership suggests that while a leader must possess a certain confidence in himself, it is also wise to be open and humble. Talents and strengths become immaterial when relationships are damaged by too much pride in one’s self.

When problems arise, it is often difficult to define a purpose. We are engrossed with solving the issue right away. Worse, we tend to wallow in the problem, letting it take control of our lives. By remaining purpose-centered and internally directed, we gain focus. We can work around the problem and be open to it, not directed or determined by it in any way.
Human beings are unique. We are able to relate with each other through a common language. We are able to rationalize and we learn. An interesting aspect of detached interdependence is that sometimes, this practice actually leads to separation. This may not seem like a welcome idea at all. However, the fundamental state of leadership and commitment to a higher purpose also requires the ability to let go when needed, much like Jennifer from Chapter Five. When she and her coach parted ways, it was a difficult time for her. By looking at the situation in a positive light and being purpose-centered and externally open, Jennifer still achieved transformational change.

Chapter 14 - Responsible Freedom

One of man’s greatest gifts is the gift of freedom. In an organization that is undergoing transformational change, a leader is privileged with as much freedom as is necessary to effect that change. Thus, how the leader chooses to use this freedom determines which direction change is going to take.

Whenever we hear of individuals who freely choose to live “on the edge,” we wonder why they do when they are just as capable of choosing to live comfortably. In many of these instances, these individuals will profess that being able to embrace their fears makes life more interesting for them and allows them to constantly be in a state of development.

Responsible freedom integrates independence with responsibility. It is a state that acknowledges a person’s gift of freedom but encourages that person to use it responsibly. An individual practicing this state is both spontaneous and disciplined. He is able to move freely within his organization but also subscribes to a set of values and principles. The leader who practices responsible freedom gains integrity. He becomes empowered by the people who trust in him and in the emergent organization.

Chapter 15 - Tough Love

When we think of tough love, an image that probably comes to mind is our gym class teachers pushing us to do our best while supporting us in every way they can. This image of tough love changes very little when analyzed in the fundamental state of leadership.

A true leader is compassionate towards his people. He understands their needs and offers support in the areas where he feels his people needs it. At the same time, the leader demands the best work his people can possibly give him. He invites them to do away with mediocrity and set high standards for themselves.

How does tough love work? Tough love works by encouraging others to look at themselves in a deeper, more contemplative manner. By striking a balance between caring and high standards, the leader compels people to think of their potential and take action to reach them. Tough love is not limited to top-management. It can be practiced by middle-managers, coaches, trainers, anyone at all who wishes to be in the fundamental state of leadership and undergo deep change.

With the growing pressure exerted by an organization going through transformational change, a leader may find it hard to strike the balance between all of these polarities. All these creative states discussed in the previous chapters are nearly impossible to maintain in the normal state. Even in the fundamental state of leadership, a leader is apt to ask, “Where do I draw the line?” It must be remembered that these polarities are not the only ones that exist. The essence of building the bridge as you walk on it is learning in real time. By being purpose-centered, externally open, internally directed and other-focused, a leader should be able to adapt to the necessities that arise during transformational change. The eight creative states discussed so far are inter-twined - it is highly unlikely that a leader in the fundamental state of leadership will practice one without the others.
Chapter 16 - The Stages of Self Change

It is easy to think that change can happen over-night. The truth is that the change process begins even before any action is made, even before the first time we notice a signal to change. The process begins when others see the problem that we don’t recognize yet. In studying these stages of change, it is important to note that in going through change, leaders and their people don’t necessarily go through change in the same patterns. Some may move ahead faster then others, others may go through the first three stages only to go back to the first stage. The book Changing for Good by Prochaska, Norcross and DiClemente offers the Spiral Model of Change. Change is effected in a spiral and a leader may move along this spiral as he needs to.

Stage 1: Precontemplation

In this stage, we don’t see the problem yet even if our behaviors indicate the presence of one. As we are oblivious to the problem, the burden falls on the shoulders of others to call our attention to it. An individual in the normal state may take years before ever realizing that a need for deep change is called for.

Stage 2: Contemplation

A leader in the contemplation stage sees the problem and thinks about changing. In the normal state, many people may contemplate for weeks or months before finally deciding to change. Tarrying only leads to the worsening of problems. In this stage, we may gather information that is used to confirm the presence and extent of a problem.

Stage 3: Preparation

We decide, “I’m going to begin effecting change tomorrow” and make preparations. Change is a difficult, complex process. Without definite plans of action, leaders are apt to fail in their endeavors. While being excited about change, a feeling of ambivalence may also be experienced.

Stage 4: Action

For the alcoholic, an appropriate action may be draining all liquor bottles down the sink. For the smoker, it may be throwing all her cigarettes away. These actions are the actual steps taken to achieve change.

At this stage, people trying to quit a bad habit know how important encouragement and support are to keep their morale and determination up. Support may come in the form of rewards, countering a bad habit with a good one, environmental control and helping relationships.

Stage 5: Maintenance

True change necessitates maintenance to guard against falling back into old habits. In this stage, we may reflect on the first four steps to change we took and use the insights we gain to improve on our future actions.

Stage 6: Termination

We terminate change when we feel it is no longer necessary, when a bad habit we are trying to be rid of loses its appeal or when the purpose has been achieved. In some individuals, termination never occurs. For example, the alcoholic who is still tempted to drink years after starting on a program may feel that life-long maintenance is necessary to prevent the resurfacing of his habit.
The fundamental state of leadership is not a set of behaviors to learn. A true leader cannot hope to teach his people how to be in that state. Rather, he can be that state and encourage others to follow him on his journey. If it must be taught, then the best way to teach how to be in the fundamental state of leadership is probably to be in that state yourself, and encourage others to deep change as well.

We must consider the fact that the fundamental state of leadership is episodic. Once a purpose is reached, a leader steps out of the fundamental state of leadership because order has been restored. It is only when a new need arises that the leader enters this state again. Far from being detrimental, this “break” is actually helpful. It allows us to reflect on the whole episode and think of what we could have done better or more effectively. When there is new need, this reflection allows us to re-enter transformational change smoothly.

At this point, it is obvious that the creative states play a major role in keeping us within reach of the fundamental state of leadership. We learn to reflect on our actions. We gain confidence from achieving transformational change and know that any future application will be easier. We establish richer relationships with our families, co-workers and ourselves. We are more productive in our jobs, more attuned to our needs and values. We learn to bridge hypocrisies in our lives. Perhaps, when we look back on it, these are the true goals of building the bridge as we walk on it. We are still learning.