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**LEARNING**



**Learning and change** go hand in hand. When we learn we change. Learning can in itself be a process for the organisation that generates resources. To manage both the demands of the business as well as those of the individuals in the change process, we need to "learn to learn": to experiment, try various alternatives and expand our curiosity and ability to reflect in all contexts.

**However, it is not always easy** to see and switch perspectives, or find new angles of insight in terms of one's self and one's job in times of change when we may feel our own identity is threatened. Being able to develop an approach in which you as leader can combine an outside perspective with a parallel inside perspective means being able to live with both distance and closeness. If you can do this you can give yourself the opportunity for reflection that contributes to new insights, perspectives and behaviour patterns.

**The various stages of change** place new choices in our paths. We also need to learn new ways of being and learn from old ways of being. These choices often involve a conflict between the need for security and the need to examine what the new involves.

**The new uncertainty** generally implies risk, which stirs our insecurities and our fear but also our curiosity. As a leader your task during the various phases of change is to make the apprehensions and confusion that always arises as a psychological phenomenon in conjunction with major organisational changes comprehensible, meaningful and manageable.

**If you manage to create** a trusting dialogue where you make things comprehensible, meaningful and manageable for your employees, then you have also created the foundation for the new learning that the organisation needs. Learning can be one option for manoeuvring through apprehension and confusion. The graphical sequence of the change curve may indicate a position of energy over balance/imbalance, but also of identity in transformation. It also indicates the curve for learning that often occurs in conjunction with changes.

### **TIME FOR CONTEMPLATION**

**If you continuously use tools** such as contemplation, assessments and reflection, you can avoid desperate situations and a loss of self-esteem in conjunction with changes.

**This knowledge is acquired** by consistently working with the challenges that are to be found in the impending changes, but also by learning from previous changes you have experienced. Most managers also view changes that the organisation has lived with for a long time as a lifestyle, and enjoy the challenges presented by the changes and for the most part also see the opportunities.

**Guiding a ship to port** in calm seas is something every manager can do. It is when the waters get choppy that our leadership abilities are tested and it is then the quality of the leadership is reflected in how effectively your group manages.

**As manager you need to live** with a feeling for the situation where you through your actions assess what

*Create a dialogue built on trust.*

*Learn to learn from what you and your employees go through.*

*We grow when we learn*

*Dialogue is when we can speak  
with out fear and listen without  
resistance.*

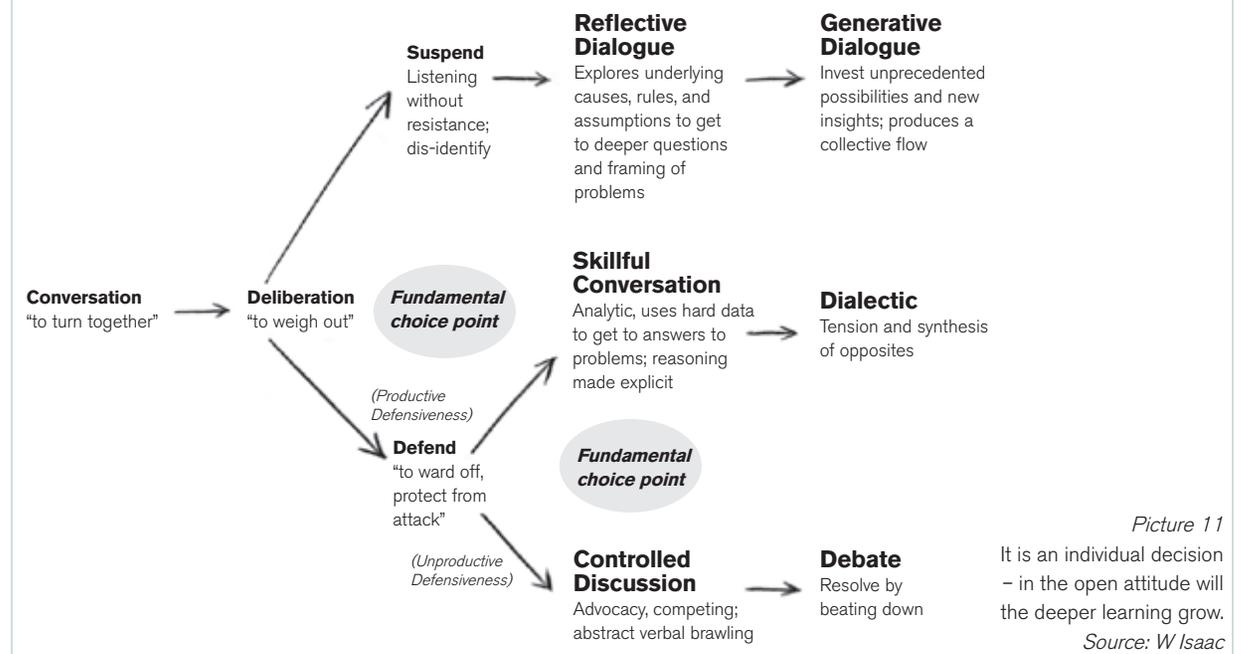
is the right course of action and the right timing. But you also have to try to learn from what is happening and what has happened with your employees. See **EXERCISE** *Team reflection*.

## DISCUSSION AND DIALOGUE

As leader you must create mutual understanding in the ongoing change process. You do so through dialogue. It is important to note the difference between dialogue and discussion if we are to be able to actively choose which type of conversation we want. To maximise our level of learning, you must encourage dialogue instead of discussion when the team reflects together. During a dialogue we are open and neutral to what is being said and we listen and express ourselves without fear.

The more knowledge we can produce together in the team, the quicker we can change our situation. Creating learning processes and a learning team is both now and in the future one of your most important duties as leader. In addition to giving purpose to the future, you as leader have a responsibility to create learning and growth processes for yourself and your employees.

Changes are often associated with crisis and anxiety, but they can also be something exciting and which offer new opportunities to learn and develop. In times of great uncertainty we need a different type of planning and approach to people. It is about you as leader being able to maintain a culture of pride, as well as a climate in which you deal with



both difficulties and challenges while continuing to work with enormous self confidence.

## **PARTICIPATION**

**Every change in an organisation** or work routine in which the individual employees are not actively involved is a wasted opportunity for learning and competence development and normally generates frustration and stress in your unit.

**It is important to see** what has happened and what is imminent. Analyse business requirements from the outside in; in other words, from external demands to the company's functions. Let analysis of human demands stem from social and psychological positions. In other words, work from the individual level over the group level and upward in the organisation. As we have pointed out previously, the change process is as essential a part of the final result as the organisational solutions.

## **DIALOGUE AND FEEDBACK**

**Feedback and strategic dialogues** are what create long-term success in change processes by laying the foundation for organisational learning. As leader you must understand that changes take time. But you must also be aware that development and the change process must be put in a longer time perspective. We see time and again that people make the mistake in their change process of underestimating the demands of the individual, reserving too little time for the change process and have a lack of understanding for the process itself. The key today is to adopt a holistic perspective and be able to live with the complexity. A manager cannot address just one issue at a time.

**Complexity and turbulence** can only be handled when the employees in the organisation are entrusted and authorised to take more overall responsibility. For this, we as leaders need to communicate more and delegate more, and not just empower staff and experts to become actively involved in the change initiatives. It is important that people with different backgrounds, economists, engineers and HR people acquire a common terminology and understanding of the process in order to drive the changes.

**An organisation is ultimately** a series of agreements, which is why there must be room to work through and create an understanding of what the organisation is today and what it should be in the future. As leader, you need skills and methods to change your own organisation. The aspects of change events that you need to master and have the tools for include analysis, action, experience and reflection.

**Analysis** includes the questions: What does our organisation look like today? Where are our greatest energy leaks? But also: What are our visions and goals?

**Action** includes the questions: What do we need to realise the visions and goals? How do we repair the energy leaks?

**Experience** includes the questions: How do we execute our action plan? Will the plan give us the organisation we want? Do the methods work as we intended?

**Reflection** includes the questions: Is our understanding correct? What can we learn from the change process? Are our visions and goals the right ones? Are our methods the right ones?

*Living in complexity calls for a holistic perspective.*

*Work from the individual level and upward in the organisation*

*TIP: Use these questions for a dialogue in my team.*

*Employees expect and demand to be involved.*

*Learning and development go hand in hand.*

### LEARNING TAKES TIME

**Structural changes require** genuine learning by both the leaders and the employees. The time for simple "quick fix" solutions is gone. Today's employees both expect and demand to be more involved in changes, which allows for broader participation in the learning process.

**What we as leaders look for** through follow-up and learning is to discover and address impediments in order to free up energy. If you as leader forget to address these needs, you are also building a feeling of inability and incompetence in your employees.

**We have unfortunately witnessed** how much too strong and manipulative managers make their organisations and teams dependent and work too manipulatively. The result is that criticism is silenced and conflicts are pushed beneath the surface. Fear becomes the primary motivator. This normally breeds defensive and reactive behaviour that causes changes to proceed much too slowly. The changes do not have the intended effect. The leaders have omitted acceptance and understanding.

**If you as leader want to create** loyalty you must contribute to a corporate culture with values that your employees can identify with. See your employees as subjects and not objects. Work to create participation and learning, and conditions that breed professional pride. Your best consultants in your change process are your employees. There is no one right way to run a change process. You must find your way.

### NO DEVELOPMENT, NO LIFE

**Learning, development and change** go hand in hand. When we learn new things we grow. Freedom, trust and changes are conducive to learning, development and change. Isolation, fear, anxiety and indifference however stifle a creative organisational climate and prevent learning and change.

**Because we emphasise observation** and reflection, with employees creating the foundation for the conditions required and the results, it is essential to support the new ideas that emerge and release the new collective ambition.

### ISSUES FOR REFLECTION

- 1.** How do you and your team work today to make the most of learning? (See **EXERCISE** Learning Levels)
- 2.** How will you and your organisation work during in the change to maximise your learning?
- 3.** What will you do personally to increase the level of learning in your organisation?

