

Western Change Framework

1.1 Lesson: What is Transformational Change?

Key Points

- Transformational change requires we collaborate across difference to remediate the fundamental conditions, or soil, from which systems grow.
- Complex problems are fundamentally different from other kinds of issues and require us to transform the fundamental conditions that hold them in place. To do this, we must remediate the level of deep culture, or, the soil, from which systems grow.

A holistic approach to transforming inequitable systems has gained momentum in recent years. From climate change to human rights, actors from various issue areas believe transformational change is essential to addressing complex problems and realizing a just society. And while there is increasing recognition that transformational change is needed to engage complex challenges, there needs to be more clarity on what this involves.

In May 2019, Alliance magazine published the piece, [Systems change—are we already doing it?](#)

In it, authors Sarah Brown-Compello and Lauren Bradford discuss the depth of current social transformation efforts and suggest,

Secondary and third levels are oftentimes ignored or gilded over, and not given the attention they deserve when analyzing the systems that we work in.

These structures refer to those defined by the Causal Layered Analysis framework.

These systems thinking tools demonstrate how reality emerges from human behaviors that reflect worldviews about who and what has value and the underlying paradigm from which entire systems grow. Ignoring these deeper levels fails to take advantage of what we know about how complex systems evolve from both western and non-western perspectives.

Digging Deeper

The Slide Deck embedded below provides deeper exploration of transformational change, why it is needed, and how it relates to leadership. Please review Slides 1-20 for this lesson. You'll notice that this slide deck includes all of our course deep dives. I've done this to hopefully make it easier for you to archive and maintain a copy of course materials once the course ends.

Link to [LEADING FOR TRANSFORMATION CHANGE SLIDES](#)

1.2 Lesson: The "How" of Transformational Change

Review the following resources. Pay attention to how the authors and speakers describe transformational change and complexity. Reflect on how these definitions are similar or different from those you use either implicitly or explicitly.

- Listen :: [The World is Our Field of Practice](#), On Being with Krista Tippett (2020)
- Read :: [Framing Deep Change: What is Transformational Change \(pp 12-15\)](#), Robert Gass (2010)
- Read :: [How to be a Soil Keeper: Reparative Justice and Whole Systems Care](#), Kiley Arroyo (2021)
- Optional :: [Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System](#), Donella Meadows (1997)

1.3: Engage

This week's PowerPoint slides introduce you to the Western change framework below. Consider the case project you've identified and confirm whether it represents an effort to advance transformational change by reflecting on the extent to which it engages the bottom-most levers of deep culture, including the paradigm and worldviews that give rise to your issue of concern. If it does, great! You've picked a robust example. If not, please select an alternative.

Document the following details about the example you've chosen:

- Name of the example
- Your current role within this example

- The overarching aim of this work, e.g., the emergent reality it aims to bring about.
- What makes this example complex and how does it differ from other types of change?
- Where in the change process are you? For example, you have not yet started, are midway, etc.

Next, please save the diagram embedded below, which you'll add details to throughout this course and share insights from during Week 6. You'll find a download link below the embedded image, or you can right-click and save the image to your computer.

To get you started using this as a diagnostic tool, please reflect on the following prompts and add any pertinent details to each side of the diagram:

Left Side — Key characteristics of the existing system or situation requiring transformational change:

1. What are some of the key characteristics of the example you've selected? Consider the levers to the left in the above diagram. How would you characterize each of these today? Which do you think are helping or hindering change?
2. More specifically, how would you describe the existing paradigm, or culture, from which this issue grows? What does this suggest about what the existing system values?
 - Remember, a paradigm reflects answers to the following fundamental questions:
 - Who and what has value?
 - What do we aspire to become?
 - How will we organize ourselves accordingly

Right Side — Key characteristics of the system to which you aspire:

1. What are some of the key characteristics of the future to which you are working? Once again, please consider the levers to the left in the above diagram. What will these look like in your aspired future? How will this shifts help to support and sustain transformations towards justice?

There are no right or wrong answers in this exercise. What's important is that you begin to play with this systems framework and critically analyze different dimensions of your

case project. Each week I'll invite you to dive deeper and continue refining your thinking and understanding.

Response

I too went the [slide deck route](#)

1.4 Ritual of Regard Sunday, Jan 29, 2023

The late bell hooks was a pathbreaking black feminist, poet, scholar, and activist. Her incisive writings on race, place, and gender expanded the parameters of change by offering a worldview that pushed beyond the white, middle-class perspective that dominated early feminism. In her book *Belonging: A Culture of Place*, Hooks suggests that, 'Communities of care are sustained through rituals of regard.' Hooks refers to regard as a means to watch or behold, not passively, but with care, wonder, intention, and attention.

Transformational change requires us to see (or regard) the world, each other, and ourselves in profoundly different ways. Over this course, you'll engage in weekly rituals of regard or exercises designed to enhance your ability to see from and with other perspectives. I encourage you to complete this exercise in a natural setting, if possible, particularly one in which life is thriving. This week, I invite you to reflect on the following prompts in your portfolio by whatever creative means inspire you:

- Who or what do you genuinely regard? Why? What are the rituals by which you do so?
- Who or what do you disregard? Why? What are the rituals by which you do so? If you were to regard this person or group more intentionally, how would it make you feel?

Response

I genuinely regard the Makerspace that I co-created and the students and faculty of the space. My daily rituals in the space involve morning cleaning and putting things away. I check over the tools to see how they're being used, what's getting damaged. As the day unfolds, I observe a lot. Watching how users interact with the tools and where they get things from. I look for signs that they may need help and I watch and listen to how students help others. I see at least one of our student workers daily and I always inquire about what they are up to, what challenges they are facing, what they want to make, and

what can i help them with? They are all interesting people and I like their stories of past, new discoveries and future plans.

I suppose I disregard my work neighbor, the electronics tech. Technically his area is a physical part of the MakerSpace but he does everything he can to keep people out. Grumpy, trumpy, and old he has privately confided his racist and sexist views to me in the past. So yeah, I avoid that dude and so do the students. I still stay cordial and on good terms and I also wouldn't mind if he retired soon. I will say that I also disregard most staff that I've dealt with in their attempts to use the MakerSpace. They universally come with an expectation that I'm going to make and or design their project for them. Nope. I will train anyone how to use the software and tools and they need to put in the time and effort to do their own project. Consequently I end up dissuading staff from using the space. By doing so, I am depriving our space of a valuable ecosystem resource. The experience and learnings of staff. It is something I am aware of and working on.