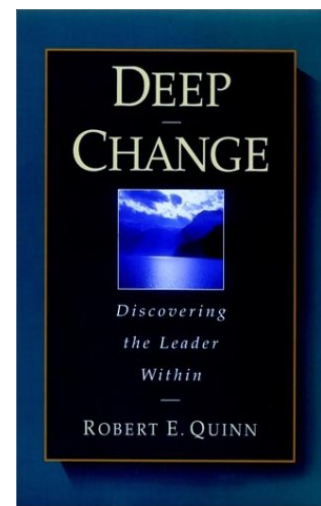


# DEEP CHANGE BY ROBERT E. QUINN

## A Brief Summary

An Executive  
Book Summary  
By  
Derek  
Zacharias

In his book *Deep Change-Discovering the Leader Within*, Robert E. Quinn proposes that constant change within our organizational lives is occurring. Quinn suggests that the pressures to respond to these changes are resulting in one of two behaviors: the choice towards slow death or the choice towards deep change. “In pursuing deep change, we redesign our maps or paradigms and re-align ourselves with our surrounding environment” (p. 66). The book is composed of four parts. Part I addresses confronting the deep change or slow death dilemma. Part 2 focuses on the personal change journey, while Part 3 examines changing the organization. In conclusion, Part 4 challenges the reader to have life filled with vision, risk, and the creation of excellence.



Quinn, Robert E.  
(1996). *Deep change*.  
San Francisco:  
Jossey-Bass  
Publishers

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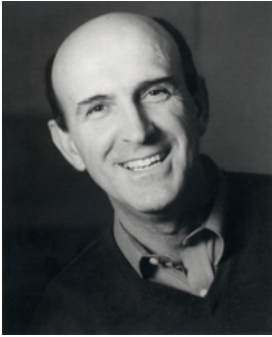
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You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

M.K. Ghandi

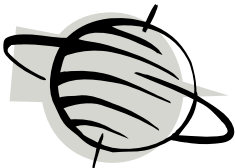
In reading *Deep Change*, you may discover insights that will assist you in answering questions that commonly arise when organizations and individuals face change:

- How do we redefine our own roles when we ask others around us to change in order to meet the demands of our environment?
- How do we develop the will and courage to initiate change?
- How do we find meaning and direction in our lives?
- How do we balance the risk of change with the reward of personal and organizational empowerment?



The author,  
Robert E. Quinn

“Deep change means surrendering control” (p. 3).



“Only organic individuals can create an organic organization” (p. 6).



## Deep Change or Slow Death

Deep change can be viewed from two perspectives: Deep organizational change and deep personal change. Organizations do not naturally engage in the change process. In fact, by definition, “To organize is to systematize, to make behavior predictable” (p. 5). Formalization within an organization leads to efficiencies. As these routines mature they will stagnate with time as the organizations external realities change. It is at this point where the organization finds itself at a crossroads. Either continue with the status quo and find itself on the road to slow death or adapt and find itself on the road to renewal through deep change. The latter road is only traveled when leaders are willing to take risks and “walk naked into the land of uncertainty”. Deep change at the personal level requires individuals to critically examine their own fundamental beliefs, assumptions, and rules. When this is done the result is the development of new paradigms of ourselves and the environment in which we operate. “To bring deep change, people have to “suffer” the risks. And to bring about deep change in others, people have to reinvent themselves” (p. 11).



“Deep change at the collective level requires deep change at the personal level. Organizational change cannot occur unless we accept the pain of personal change” (p. 193).

Slow death occurs when the choice for deep change is rejected. The four prominent characteristics of slow death within an organization are:

1. Pervasiveness.
2. Violation of trust.
3. Thirst for vision.
4. Burnout.

Three strategies for confronting slow death are:

1. Peace and pay.
2. Active exit.
3. Deep change.

Deep change necessitates courage, motivation, and discipline. Quinn would suggest that engaging these towards deep change will result in the “capacity to live more fully and manage more effectively” (p. 25).

# Personal Change

“One key to successful leadership is continuous personal change” (p. 34).



In an important way, [a] man changes the world by changing himself” (p. 62).



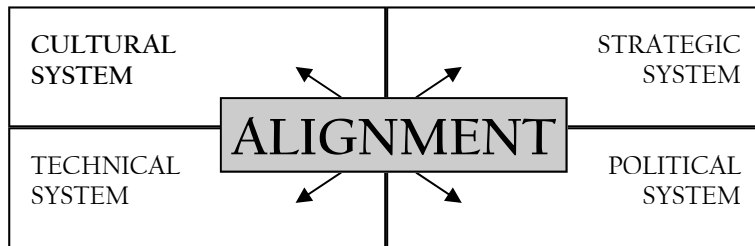
“A change in perspective can greatly alter how we see and relate to the world” (p. 65).



Quinn argues that deep personal change is at the heart of deep organizational change. What often hampers personal change is fear. When leaders find the courage to change themselves, through modeling, the message they transmit to others is incredibly powerful. It is a message based in integrity that “builds trust and credibility” (p.35). Quinn discusses the “hero’s journey” which leads to personal transformation. The journey is all about leaving behind the certainty which we know, and moving into strange places that require us to think in different ways than we are accustomed too. The journey causes us to reinvent who we are; it is our search for meaning and direction.

“To continue our journey is to reinvent the self” (p.45).

Change is difficult to initiate due to the fact that we become so enmeshed in our tasks that we do not take the time to step back and evaluate or perform regular maintenance on the systems in which we operate. The systems in which we operate can be seen in the figure below:



When alignment is lost between the systems, deep change is needed. Quinn might say that to realign is stop doing what we have always been doing so that we don’t get what we have always gotten.

“In a world of constant change and uncertainty, unconditional confidence is a very desirable trait” (p. 77).

A fresh perspective often assists in determining the changes we need to make. The change is often filled with the risk of the unknown. Integrity gives us the capacity to eliminate poor assumptions and strategies.

## Changing the Organization

“Deep change throughout a system means sacrifice and suffering for everyone. It also means engaging in real conflict. It is not very pleasant” (p. 95).



“A transformational leader will develop a plan of action, mobilize the workforce, and unleash power by vocalizing the core values of the system. Their source of credibility is their behavioral integrity” (p. 125).



Quinn states that organizations will most times recognize the need for deep change within their systems. It is much more difficult to get that deep change to occur. The natural tendency is to look for solutions that are nearly painless to implement. These are often band-aid solutions that simply mask the core issues that need to be addressed as opposed to considering real change to the system.



“When a system faces the challenge to make deep change, individuals will usually create an alternative scenario. It is usually the scenario of the painless fix. It is an early stop on the road to slow death” (p. 94).

One of the major issues that arises when considering deep change is: Where to begin? The source of the need for change is the most logical place to start; but according to Quinn, that source is usually difficult to locate. This is a result of us expending our time and energy dealing with the problems created by the source as opposed to deal with the source itself.



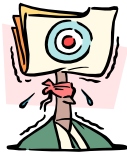
“The real problem is frequently located where we would least expect to find it, inside ourselves. Deep change requires an evaluation of the ideologies behind the organizational culture” (p. 103).

Deep change most effectively takes place when leaders operate within the transformational paradigm as opposed to the transactional paradigm. A contrast of the two paradigms is outlined in the table below.

	Transactional Paradigm	Transformational Paradigm
First objective	Personal survival	Vision Realization
Nature of organization	Political system	Moral system
Source of power	Effective transactions	Core values
Source of credibility	Organizational position	Behavioral integrity
Orientation to authority	Responsive	Self-authorizing
Orientation to planning	Rational-strategic	Action learning
Communication patterns	Conceptual	Symbolic
Behavior patterns	Conventional	Unconventional
Source of paradigm	Administrative socialization	Personal rebirth

# Vision, Risk, & the Creation of Excellence

“Change means taking risks and facing the possibility of failure” (p. 138).



“They (leaders) are willing to accept the necessary risk because it is the right thing to do” (p. 158).



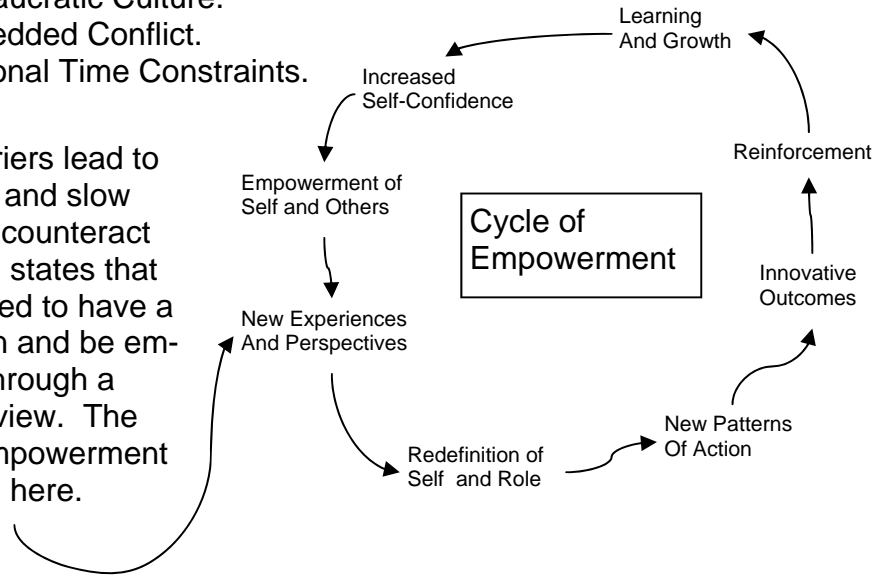
“Excellence is a dynamic state, not part of a routine process” (p. 164).



Quinn would assert that vision and risk play vital roles in unleashing power and creating excellence within organizations. He has identified three barriers to initiating change:

1. Bureaucratic Culture.
2. Embedded Conflict.
3. Personal Time Constraints.

These barriers lead to conformity and slow death. To counteract this, Quinn states that leaders need to have a clear vision and be empowered through a new worldview. The cycle of empowerment is depicted here.



Only when people are prepared to take risks will an organization be able to adapt to the changing external demands. Organizations will not change prior to the individuals within them having vision, taking risks, and striving for excellence.

“When we do decide to initiate action, there are no written guarantees, no insurance policies that will save us if we fail. The possibility of failure is a constant companion who walks beside every real leader” (p. 158).

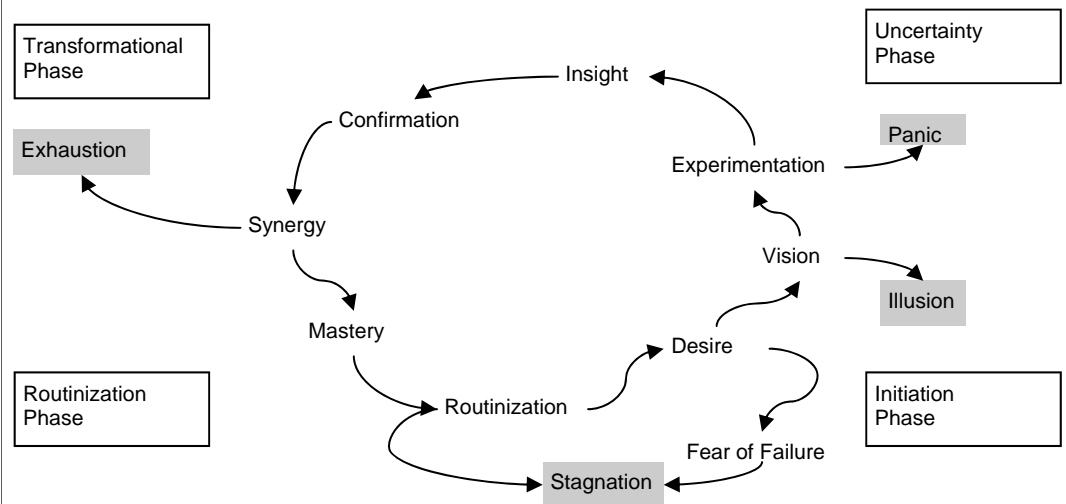
Excellence is not static. Although, personally or organizationally, we may achieve excellence for a period of time, we cannot stay there. As external influences change we must also change, and change correctly in order to maintain, or rather, recreate excellence. Choosing the correct actions and making the right decisions will permit us to achieve peak performance, but this state is constantly changing. Leaders who desire to sustain excellence will begin planning the next course of action even as they may be currently performing at a peak level. To do this, leaders must be constantly moving through the Transformational Cycle, which can be seen on the following page.

“This transformational cycle is the essence of deep change” (p. 169).



About the Author:  
Robert E. Quinn holds the Margaret Elliot Tracy Collegiate Professorship of organizational behavior and human resource management at the Graduate School of Business, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He has authored several books and articles as well as consulted for business and government.

## The Transformational Cycle



## Tying it All Together

*Deep Change-Discovering the Leader Within* is a valuable resource for leaders of organizations who desire to sustain excellence. It focuses on the constant choice we face towards slow death or deep change. To gain control, leaders must be willing to give it up, “to get lost with confidence” and “to walk naked into the land of uncertainty”. Essentially any change in our organizations rests on the “Power of One” - the external world can be changed through a change in the individual. How the individual engages in and works through the change process is a result of the individual’s core values and measure of integrity. The point to remember is that **one person can make a difference**. Risk, growth, teamwork, and trust are critical to the empowerment of the individual and the organization.

As professional educators, we are continually faced with external demands that are constantly engaging some type of change. Quinn suggests that before the educational organization will change, I, the individual must be the first to change. A continuous search for meaning and direction will provide a basis from which change can occur with integrity. To sustain excellence, educators must be willing to transform and redefine themselves and their roles within the school organization. Transformation of self is at the heart of deep change.

