How to be a great change agent

Helen Bevan
Chief Transformation Officer
NHS Improving Quality, England

@HelenBevan
I amar prestar aen,
Han mathon ne nen,
Han mathon ne chae,
A han noston ned

The world is changed,
I feel it in the water,
I feel it in the Earth,
I smell it in the air

Galadriel’s prologue: The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring
@HelenBevan
SEISMIC SHIFTS
SEISMIC SHIFTS

DISRUPTIVE CHANGE

DIGITAL CONNECTION
SEISMIC SHIFTS

DISRUPTIVE CHANGE

DIGITAL CONNECTION

Work complexity
SEISMIC SHIFTS

DISRUPTIVE CHANGE

DIGITAL CONNECTION

Work complexity

Hierarchical power
SEISMIC SHIFTS

DISRUPTIVE CHANGE

DIGITAL CONNECTION

Work complexity

Change from THE EDGE

live on the edges or not at all.

Hierarchical power
# Leading change in a new era

## Dominant approach

- Power through hierarchy
- Mission and vision
- Making sense through rational argument
- Leadership-driven (top down) innovation
- Tried and tested, based on experience
- Transactions

## Emerging direction

- Power through connection
- Shared purpose
- Making sense through emotional connection
- Viral (grass-roots driven) creativity
- “Open” approaches, sharing ideas & data, co-creating change
- Relationships
## Leading change in a new era

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Most health and care transformation efforts are driven from this side.
INSTEAD OF RISKING ANYTHING NEW, LET'S PLAY IT SAFE BY CONTINUING OUR SLOW DECLINE INTO OBSOLESCENCE.
John Kotter, the most influential thought leader globally, recognises new approaches are needed.
John Kotter: “Accelerate!”

TO

• We won’t create big change through hierarchy on its own
• We need hierarchy AND network
• Many change agents, not just a few, with many acts of leadership
• At least 50% buy-in required
• Changing our mindset
  • From “have to” to “want to”
From “have to” to “want to”
The Network Secrets of Great Change Agents
Julie Battilana & Tiziana Casciaro

1. As a change agent, my **centrality in the informal network** is more important than my **position in the formal hierarchy**.

2. If you want to create **small scale change**, work through a **cohesive network**.
   
   If you want to create **big change**, create **bridge networks** between disconnected groups.
always

Starts on the fringe
(at the edge)
Starts with the activists
Gary Hamel
disRuptiOn is the new normal!

“By questioning existing ideas, by opening new fields for action, change agents actually help organisations survive and adapt to the 21st Century.”

Céline Schillinger
What happens to heretics/radicals/rebels/mavericks in organisations?
Ostracism is experienced in the brain as deeply as physical pain.
What is a rebel?

• The principal champion of a change initiative, cause or action
• Rebels don’t wait for permission to lead, innovate, strategise
• They are responsible; they do what is right
• They name things that others don’t see yet
• They point to new horizons
• Without rebels, the storyline never changes

Source: @PeterVan [http://t.co/6CQtA4wUv1](http://t.co/6CQtA4wUv1)
We need boatrockers!

- Rock the boat but manage to stay in it
- Walk the fine line between difference and fit, inside and outside
- Able to challenge the status quo when we see that there could be a better way
- Conform AND rebel
- Capable of working with others to create success NOT a destructive troublemaker

Source: Debra Meyerson
There’s a big difference between a rebel and a troublemaker

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Source: Lois Kelly [www.rebelsatwork.com](http://www.rebelsatwork.com)
Reflection

• What are your insights around “rebels” and “troublemakers”?

• What moves people from being “rebel” to “troublemaker”?

• How do we protect against this?
There’s a big difference between a rebel and a troublemaker

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"There’s only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that’s your own self."

Aldous Huxley

Source of image: timcoffeyart.wordpress.com
Four things we know about successful boat rockers

1. able to **join forces** with **others** to create **action**
2. able to achieve **small wins** which create a sense of hope, possibility and confidence
3. More likely to view **obstacles** as **challenges** to overcome
4. strong sense of **“self-efficacy”**
   - belief that I am personally able to create the change

Source: adapted from Debra E Meyerson
Self-efficacy

“If you think you can or think you can’t, you are right.”

Henry Ford

“There is a positive, significant relationship between the self-efficacy beliefs of a change agent and her/his ability to facilitate change and get good outcomes.”

Albert Bandura

Source of image: www.h3daily.com
Honestly......
go ahead

Do we really have permission?
What is the issue here?

“permission” ?
(externally generated)

or

Self efficacy ?
(internally generated)
What’s the difference between self efficacy and self esteem, self belief, self-confidence?
Building self-efficacy: some tactics

1. Create change one small step at a time
2. Reframe your thinking:
   • failed attempts are learning opportunities
   • uncertainty becomes curiosity
3. Make change routine rather than an exceptional activity
4. Get social support
5. Learn from the best
“Mr. Gorbachev, Tear Down This Wall!”

President Reagan, Brandenburg Gate June 12, 1987
What was your tear down this wall or open this gate moment?
When everything came together, when your improvement efforts surged with energy, when you were part of an unstoppable force for positive change
My Gorbachev moment

How can a small team of people use new ways of thinking about change and new ways of connecting to ignite massive energy for change?
Change Programmes

• systematic “change management”
• too often, leaders prescribe outcome and method of change in a top-down way
• change is experienced by people at the front line as “have to” (imposed) rather than “want to” (embraced)

Change Platforms

• everyone (including service users and families) can help tackle the most challenging issues
• value diversity of thought
• connect people, ideas and learning
• Role of formal leaders is to create the conditions & get out of the way

“Tear down the walls”
The extent of our reach

More than 5,000 enrolees in 2014 & 2015

#SHCR: 35.3m Twitter impressions
(since April 2014)

Nearly 50,000 downloads of school materials

Enrolments from 41 countries

Nearly 100 local learning groups across the globe

Nearly 10,000 subscribers

Activists from 97 countries

@theedgenhs: 194.1k Twitter impressions
(since 1 January 2015)

800,000 pledges in 2014
4 X the local activity/connectivity in 2015 compared to 2014

#nhschANGEDay: 130m impressions

Facebook impressions 253,999

Biggest-ever digital campaign for EMAP (Health Service Journal and Nursing Times):

14,000 contributors to the joint campaign to “challenge top down change”

Ground-breaking: the first-ever crowd-sourced theory of change in the NHS
The extent of our reach

We won the Harvard Business Review/McKinsey global challenge for creating “leaders everywhere”

Identified as one of the most significant “stealth revolutionaries” in healthcare (source: Social Media in the NHS)

“Probably the most widely read, impactful NHS paper globally, challenging the “Five Year Forward View””
People who are highly connected have twice as much power to influence change as people with hierarchical power

Leandro Herrero

http://t.co/Du6zCbrDBC
26% of respondents say their transformation efforts have delivered their goals (“very” or “completely”)
What happens to large scale change efforts in reality?

In order of frequency:

1. the effort effectively “runs out of energy” and simply fades away
2. the change hits a plateau at some level and no longer attracts new supporters
3. the change becomes reasonably well established; several levels across the system have changed to accommodate or support it in a sustainable way

As leaders, we are “signal generators”

“As a leader, think of yourself as a “signal generator” whose words and actions are constantly being scrutinised and interpreted, especially by those below you” [in the hierarchy]

“Signal generators reduce uncertainty and ambiguity about what is important and how to act”

Charles O’Reilly,

Leaders in Difficult Times

Source of image: vintage-radio.com
“Typically, around any change effort, there is an initial spike of tangible energy, and change, but when leadership loses interest, the momentum of change slows down drastically.”

Tara Paluck
Front line teams get inundated with high priority messages from leaders each day, making it difficult for them to know what to focus on.

Increasing number of messages as information cascade through the organisation.

Source: adapted from http://businessjournal.gallup.com/content/162707/change-initiatives-fail-don.aspx
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Buy in from front line staff is critical for improvements in quality and safety. Don’t overload them.

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Buy in from front line staff is critical for improvements in quality and safety. Don’t overload them.

Two kinds of people at work

The contributors

• Feel connected to a higher purpose
• Controlled & coordinated through shared goals & values
• Collaborate
• Embrace change
• Work to who they are

The compliant

• Feel disconnected from purpose
• Controlled & coordinated through performance management & standardised procedures
• Hold back
• Resist change
• Work to a role specification

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Gallup global research:

- Only 13% of the workforce are engaged (contributors)
- Contributors create six times the value to an organisation compared to the compliant

Persistent application of power and authority drains energy from those in its wake

Dan Rockwell
Intrinsic motivation: 
People engage in the activity for the pleasure and satisfaction of doing it.
Invokes many positive behaviours.

Extrinsic motivation: 
People engage in the activity for the rewards or avoiding punishment.
Any external influence is referred to as extrinsic motivation.
Intrinsic motivators
• connecting to shared purpose
• engaging, mobilising and calling to action
• motivational leadership

*build energy and creativity*

Drivers of extrinsic motivation
• System drivers & incentives
• Payment by results
• Performance management
• Measurement for accountability

*create focus & momentum for delivery*
Internal motivators

- connecting to shared purpose
- engaging, mobilising and calling to action
- motivational leadership builds energy and creativity

Drivers of extrinsic motivation

- System drivers & incentives
- Performance management
- Measurement for accountability

create & focus momentum for delivery
Three types of levers for large scale change

**Type one:**
‘Prod mechanisms’
(targets / performance management / price and payment incentives / regulation /competition),
Also known as the compliance or deficit-based method of change which relies on ‘extrinsic motivation’ for improvement.

**Type two:**
‘Proactive support’
enabling organisations to make change directly through ‘constructive comfort’ rather than the constructive discomfort of the prod approach. This is known as an asset-based method of change which relies on building ‘intrinsic motivation’ in staff to make the right changes to improve.

**Type three:**
‘People focused’
this includes both of the other types but focuses on individual staff rather than organisations. This include policy mechanisms such as education and training, national contracts, professional regulation and clinical quality standards.

Source: Health Foundation report *Constructive comfort: accelerating change in the NHS,*

@HelenBevan
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Source: Health Foundation report *Constructive comfort: accelerating change in the NHS.*
Framing

... is the process by which leaders construct, articulate and put across their message in a powerful and compelling way in order to win people to their cause and call them to action.

Snow D A and Benford R D (1992)
What’s the financial incentive?

Who is performance managing?

What’s the project plan?

Source: @RobertVarnam
Leaders ask their staff to be ready for change, but do not engage enough in sensemaking.......

Sensemaking is not done via marketing... or slogans but by emotional connection with employees

Ron Weil
The reality

“What the leader cares about (and typically bases at least 80% of his or her message to others on) does not tap into roughly 80% of the workforce’s primary motivators for putting extra energy into the change programme”

Scott Keller and Carolyn Aiken (2009)
The Inconvenient Truth about Change Management
Four gaps between how we communicate and how people engage with that communication

1. People speak intellectually but engage emotionally
2. Facts are hard to remember and easy to challenge
3. If we only talk about our success people won’t believe us
4. People don’t want more communication; they want meaningful communication

Source: Peter Fuda
http://www.peterfuda.com/2014/10/30/traditional-comms-fail-engage/
“I have some Key Performance Indicators for you”

or

“I have a dream”

Source: @RobertVarnam
If we want people to take action, we have to connect with their emotions through values.

Source: Marshall Ganz
Sympathy and callousness: The impact of deliberative thought on donations to identifiable and statistical victims

Deborah A. Small\textsuperscript{a}, George Loewenstein\textsuperscript{b}, Paul Slovic\textsuperscript{c}

\textsuperscript{a} University of Pennsylvania, 700 Jon M. Huntsman Hall, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6340, USA
\textsuperscript{b} Department of Social & Decision Sciences, Carnegie Mellon University, 208 Porter Hall, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, USA
\textsuperscript{c} Decision Research, 1201 Oak Street, Suite 200, Eugene, OR 97401, USA
“Resistant behaviour is a good indicator of missing relevance”

Harald Schirmer

“Cultural change is a million subversive acts of resistance”

Brene Brown

Source of image: zazzle.com
How do we create a sense of “us” to build momentum for change?
Moving beyond *us and them* to *us and us*
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strong ties (cohesive)

v.

weak ties (disconnected)

When we spread change through strong ties:

• we interact with “people like us”, with the same life experiences, beliefs and values

• Change is “peer to peer”; GP to GP, social worker to social worker, nurse to nurse, community leader to community leader

• Influence is spread through people who are strongly connected to each other, like and trust each other
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**IT WORKS BECAUSE:** people are far more likely to be influenced to adopt new behaviours or ways of working from those with whom they are most strongly tied
The pros and cons of strong ties

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When we seek to spread change through weak ties

• we **build bridges** between groups and individuals who were previously different and separate

• we create **relationships** based not on pre-existing similarities but **on common purpose and commitments** that people make to each other to take action

• We can **mobilise all the resources** in our organisation, system or community to help achieve our goals
Why we need to build weak ties AS WELL AS strong ties

• Weak ties are more likely to lead to change at scale because they enable us to access more people with fewer barriers

More on weak ties: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7AzRVxhEXA#t=45
Why we need to build weak ties AS WELL AS strong ties

• Weak ties are more likely to lead to change at scale because they enable us to access more people with fewer barriers

• In situations of uncertainty, we have a tendency to revert to our strong tie relationships
  ▪ yet the evidence tells us that weak ties are much more important than strong ties when it comes to searching out resources in times of scarcity
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• The most breakthrough innovations and most radical change will come when we tap into our weak ties
Sources of weak ties
Three components of a great narrative

• **Diagnostic** – what is the problem that we are addressing? What is the extent of the problem? What is the specific source or sources?

• **Prognostic** – what could the future look like? What is our “plan of attack” and our strategy for carrying out the plan?

• **Motivational** – why is this urgent? What is our call for action that connects with the motivational and emotional drivers of our audience?

Source: Benford and Snow

Source of image: [www.ecommercedefense.com](http://www.ecommercedefense.com)
Four keys to collaboration

• Lean into your discomfort
• Listen as an ally
• State your intent
• Share your “street corner”

Source: Judith Katz and Fred Miller
Where the magic happens

your comfort zone
We may have come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now.

http://weneedsocial.com/blog/2013/8/25/disrupted-disruptors-unite
“You don’t need an engine when you have wind in your sails”
....the last era of management was about how much performance we could extract from people

.....the next is all about how much humanity we can inspire

Dov Seidman
“Tomorrow’s management systems will need to value diversity, dissent and divergence as highly as conformance, consensus and cohesion.”

Gary Hamel

Source of image: www.fastcompany.com
“Ultimately, the secret of quality is love.

...... If you have love, you can then work backward to monitor and improve the system”.

Avedis Donabedian
Key tactic:
Out-love everyone else
Who am I?
Who am I?

This man could be my chance!

Why should I save his hide?
Why should I right this wrong
When I have come so far
And struggled for so long?
If I speak, I am condemned.
If I stay silent, I am damned!
I am the master of hundreds of workers.
They all look to me.
How can I abandon them?
How would they live
If I am not free?
If I speak, they are condemned.
If I stay silent, I am damned!

Who am I?
Can I condemn this man to slavery
Pretend I do not feel his agony
This innocent who bears my face
Who goes to judgement in my place
Who am I?
Can I conceal myself for evermore?
Pretend I'm not the man I was before?
And must my name until I die
Be no more than an alibi?
Must I lie?
How can I ever face my fellow men?
How can I ever face myself again?
My soul belongs to God, I know
I made that bargain long ago
He gave me hope when hope was gone
He gave me strength to journey on

[He unbuttons his shirt to reveal the number tattooed to his chest]

And so Javert, you see it's true
That man bears no more guilt than you!
Who am I?
Who am I?

Talk to the person next to you:
What are your motivations and values that drive you to do what you do?
How will you ignite energy for change and achieve your higher purpose?
A hub for change activists in health and care to learn, connect and mobilise for transformational change

TheEdge.nhsiq.nhs.uk

@TheEdgeNHS
A new and innovative online course for those involved in health and care

- Delivered entirely online to study at your own time and pace
- Features live knowledge exchange events with experts and other participants
- Gives you the tools to put improvement ideas into practice
- Connect with a global improvement community
- Free to ANYONE interested in improving health and care

www.nhsiq.nhs.uk/ImprovementFundamentals
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