

FOUR FRAMES FOR VIEWING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

By Geoff Bellman—Excerpts from *The Beauty of the Beast*, Berrett—Koehler, 2000

THE REACH FOR RENEWAL

1. Pursue life.

- What do people key to this organizations aspire to in their lives?
- How do they currently realize life aspirations through their work?
- What is the organization reaching for that has the promise of fulfilling people's lives?
- How do our aspirations fit with the current organization culture?
- What opportunities are there to engage people in these questions?

2. Commit to a compelling unknown.

- What is the very best outcome we hope to see from our work together?
- What could this organization attempt that would be potentially both good for the organization and exciting to the people in it?
- Individually, what do you find compelling in what you are now doing?
- Individually, describe some projects you have participated in that were especially exciting. What made them that way?
- What would a renewal effort have to contain for you to commit strongly to it?
- How can we support continued excitement about work and renewal here?

3. Take a grand leap.

- What would be truly a great and scary leap forward for this organization?
- What do people find most compelling about making this great leap?
- What frightens people about the leap?
- How could you decide together when and how to take this leap?

4. Face the future ready to learn.

- How does this organization uphold the importance of learning?
- Where have we seen leaders valuing humility?
- What do we need to learn? What are our key unanswered questions?
- How might we show a readiness to learn in the midst of renewal?

5. Create irrational positive expectations.

- Describe successful work experiences in which trust and hope were essential elements.
- What does trust mean to us? How do we demonstrate it?
- How do could we build trust among people who need it to work together?
- How does trust figure into our current projects?
- What is the hope or fulfillment that brings people to work each day?
- How do people hope their work here will support their lives beyond work?

THE ROOTS OF RENEWAL

6. Renewal takes root in the past.

- What are the essential values and purposes that made us what we are, without which we would cease to be?
- Which of these are most important to our future?
- How are we supporting the continuation of these from our past into our future?
- Who would be especially important to engage in this effort?

7. New effort relies on old resources.

- Tell stories from the old days that express what we want to have here today.
- What special experience and abilities, connections and culture, have we developed over the years?
- What from the past is important to our future?
- How could we retain and reinforce these abilities and qualities in the organization?
- What could we do to make sure our renewal efforts respect the individuals that represent the history of this place?

8. Change doesn't make sense.

- What makes ultimate sense to the people working here? How would they express that?
- How are changes being considered "nonsense" to the people whose work will be changed? How would they express that?
- How does the organization appreciate people's contribution, experience, service, and loyalty?
- How could we engage affected people in the early stages of renewal?
- What could we do to help people feel good about themselves while changes are taking place in their work?

9. We fall back on the familiar.

- What are some of the old and familiar ways of this organization?
- Describe experiences in which we relied on old ways past their usefulness.
- What are the organization's reactions when established ways are challenged?
- What are we doing to demonstrate our openness to new ways?
- How do we help people back from the familiar to consider effectiveness?

10. We spend years preparing not to change.

- What have we made into habits in the way we approach our work?
- How are our habits valuable to us?
- What is our reaction when people suggest we change what we've been doing for years?
- What are some examples of habits we used to have that we have replaced? What caused us to change?
- How could we reconsider work habits to make sure they serve us well?

THE RESPONSE TO RENEWAL

11. There is no right answer.

- How do we describe the situation that surrounds us? What common description do we agree upon?
- How does our way of working together keep us open to information we might need?
- What guides our every decision? What common purpose do we hold?
- How do we choose? What's the process? How does it work?
- Describe experiences in which we have created good alternatives and made good choices together.
- How do we go about creating answers together?

12. Find the creative tension.

- If creative tension is defined as an important gap between what we've got and what we want, what are important gaps we are now working with?
- How do this organization's aspirations, values, or goals figure in the gaps we've got around here? What's been done to clarify the gaps with people invested?
- Tell about an experience in which this organization did a fine job of helping everyone understand a gap that needed concerted action.
- Give examples of how the gaps of various groups within this organization are different.

13. Make the complex simple.

- Give examples of projects or programs that did a wonderful job of making the complex simple. How and why were they able to do this?
- How have people in the organization reacted to past change projects? What can you learn from this?
- Select a current project and ask: What is the big picture? What are the smaller slices? What are the right groups? What is the best timing?

14. Create informed choice.

- Discuss organization examples that best demonstrate the informed choice process.
- What does the organization do best in the understanding, alternatives, choice, and commitment sequence described above? And where does it most need to improve?
- Tell of work experiences where you had informed choice. How did you feel about it?
- How could we expand people's array of choices?

15. Engage everyone.

- What are the underlying assumptions about who ought to be engaged in change in your organization?
- Tell of a successful renewal experience—here or somewhere else—that engage everyone in the organization in making change.
- How would renewal efforts currently underway be affected if it was suddenly required that all affected people be involved and take action?

THE REALITIES OF RENEWAL

16. We will be asked for more than we offered.

- Describe in some detail what this organization will have to invest for this project to succeed.
- Consider large projects lasting over years: What made them more and less successful?
- Where are the points this project will most likely be seriously tested?
- What could we do to increase our acceptance of the fact that this project will be tested, will falter?
- How will we deal with others in the organization when this project is faltering?

17. Sustaining renewal is always the challenge.

- What are past examples of initiating and sustaining change efforts here?
- How do we help ourselves and others understand the differences between initiating and sustaining a change effort?
- How do our efforts in initiating a renewal effort need to differ from our efforts in sustaining it?
- What are systems, structures and norms of this organization that affect the renewal we wish to sustain? How might we learn more about them? How might we affect them?

18. Renewal requires loss.

- Tell stories of change in the organization that involved hard sacrifice--and was worth it.
- What are personal experiences you have had that involved loss and pain necessary to accomplishment or happiness?
- How could we learn more about the value of working through the painful parts of change?
- What could we do to make it more likely that people will embrace change, given that it will not be easy for them?

19. If it's worth doing, it's worth doing slowly.

- How do we assure ourselves that we are moving with pace and intensity appropriate to our work?
- How do we help all invested parties learn more about what creating organizational renewal requires?
- Describe experiences where projects were faced with time pressures and succeeded. What can we learn from them?
- What has been our response when the need for results is accelerated?
- How do we make it less likely we will be put in that situation?
- What will we do if this project begins to take more time than we anticipated?

20. We make renewal happen here and now.

- Tell stories of individuals taking responsibility for making renewal happen here and now.
- What have we done together recently that demonstrates our personal commitments to making things happen here and now?
- When we put our ear to the ground, what stirrings do we hear in this organization?
- What is already going on here that we could build upon?
- What are some ways that we could use the power of the formal structure without giving up our own power?