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When Reality hits, use its Force - discussion paper [041] Part A

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"The difficulty we have in accepting responsibility for our behavior lies in the desire to avoid the pain of the consequences of that behavior"
M. Scott Peck

Working with Resistance - a praxis paper.

Follow the intensity of your resistance down to its source and sure enough you will find a treasure.

Quadrants Levels Lines States Types



With transformation work, encountering and overcoming resistances is an intrinsic part of the game. In coaching and facilitating transformative change, people naturally face stages of resistance, fear and confusion. This will inevitably trigger escape and protection mechanisms of the self/Self system that come in a multitude of shapes, sizes and flavours.

Many of these take the form of well-rehearsed identities (e.g. spiritual identities, cynical attitudes, attack of coach or method, sudden shift of priorities) that are designed to 'protect' the coachee from the suspected pain of re-owning deeper lying disassociated parts (shadows). These defence mechanisms can easily sabotage the transformative process. In many cases, the coachee is not aware of these phenomena, but rather strongly identified with them. Kegan and Lahey (2009) define this as "Immunity to Change", a "hidden commitment", with an underlying root cause, that competes and conflicts with a stated commitment to change. It is these hidden commitments that cause people to not change and to fail to realise their best intentions. It takes experience to spot such phenomena and to defuse or utilize any deviating construct arising in the space appropriately, in real time.

In the previous paper I listed the various stages of a typical transformative process. Now I add to that the typical resistance patterns that often correlate to the stations on the track. Fortunately, these patterns tend to have a recognizable sequence.

An experienced coach can identify them and knows how far or deep a group or an individual is on their way through the process and what is still ahead of them relative to their goal. The good news is that there are plenty of extremely good tools available.

Tool boxes

Based on more than a decade of practical experience with coaching transformational change processes in adult development, combined with the application of integral theory on facilitating change in personal to global strategic projects, I have started to map out recognizable patterns that show up consistently as indicators of specific stages of the transformation process in individuals and groups. Resistance patterns or pathologies can of course vary in flavour and form depending on the cosmic address or altitude of the group or person in the process. If level-specific mechanisms show up, they are best addressed with tools and approaches that correspond well with that specific developmental level. Escape patterns and pathologies in different states of consciousness are harder to recognize and require, as always the full experience and presence of the coach.

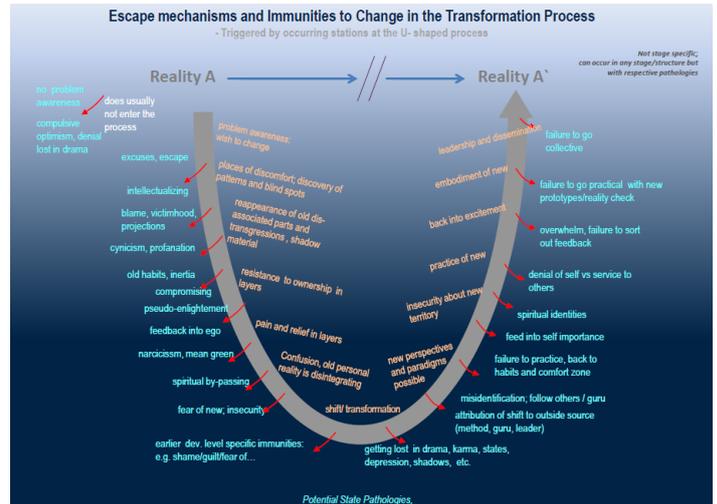
These diagrams are intended to provide hands-on practical information that is hopefully useful to practitioners dealing with transformational change. I have listed a number of tools and methods that have proven appropriate and extremely useful in coaching people back on track in their movement through transformational processes.

Resistances are treasure indicators

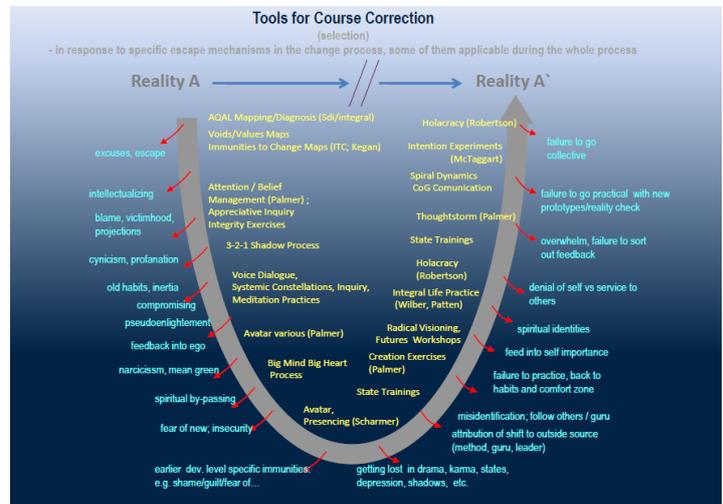
In transformation work we encounter a lot of fear and collective shadow around resistance and blocks, not just in the coachees, but also with some coaches and trainers. These tensions can and should be harvested. It requires some cleaning up and practice, like mental aikido training, to recognize obstructing, attacking or resisting forces as forces to work with and as pointers and key indicators to the most important acupuncture points for change, much like a treasure map. Furthermore, if the transformational process is designed to prototype new ideas, listening to the information sitting on resistances and fears can actually provide the breakthrough that is called for. Then, working with resistances can even be like a fun ride in a roller coaster or like a ride on a sail boat using the resistance to propel you in the direction of your conscious choice. Welcome to the world of trim tabs.

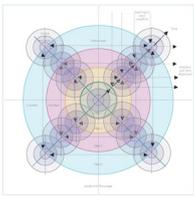
"The gap between vision and current reality is also a source of energy. If there were no gap, there would be no need for any action to move towards the vision. We call this gap creative tension." Peter Senge

For a larger version of diagrams see separate posting Paper 041 Part B For PDF version see <http://integralwithoutborders.org/resource/what-do-you-think-integralmentors-series-updated>



Sources: Anne Caspari, Mindshift www.integral-planning.org





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These diagrams are to be read in conjunction with Paper 041 Part A

