

Staying the Course: Strategies for Sustaining Change

IAALS and BJI Advancing Innovation Webinar Series

February 11, 2026

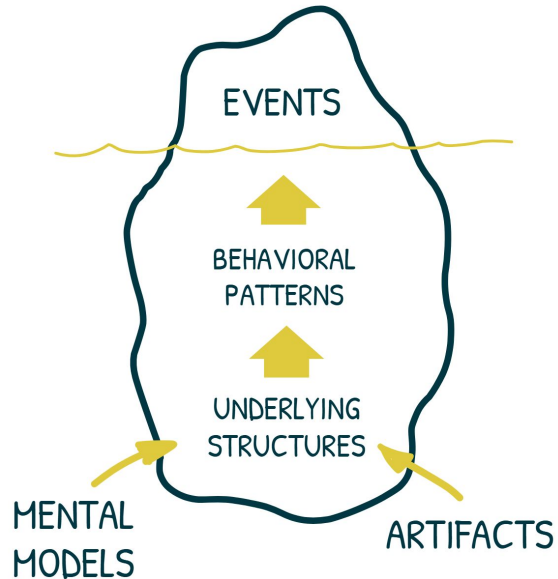
Dr. Lana Cook



**Systems
Awareness Lab**

Profound Change: Systems Change

ICEBERG MODEL



“Change that combines inner shifts in people’s values, aspiration and behaviors with ‘outer’ shifts in processes, strategies, practices and systems.

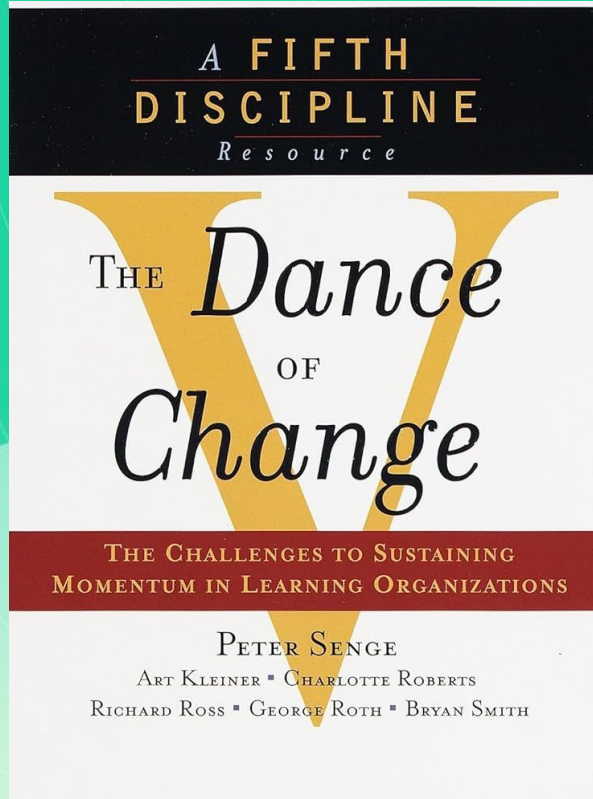
The word ‘profound’ stems from the Latin *fundus*, a base or foundation.”

Many change efforts fail because they focus on fixing problems rather than growing possibilities.

How do we shift our thinking from “What are we trying to change?” to “**What are we trying to grow?**”

So that we can foster sustainable, reinforcing growth rather than temporary solutions.

The Dance of Change

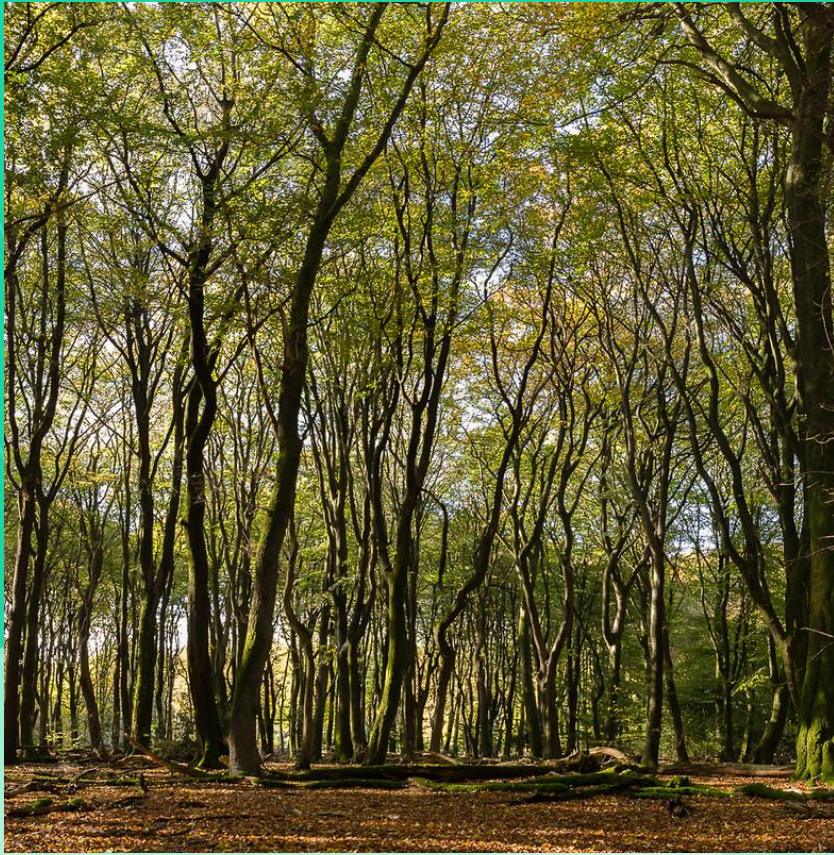


Model by **Dr. Peter Senge** (MIT Sloan School of Management, MIT Systems Awareness Lab)

Developed from research and practice implementing learning and change initiatives at such organizations as:

- British Petroleum, Chrysler, Dupont, Ford, General Electric, Harley-Davidson, Hewlett-Packard, Mitsubishi Electric, Royal DutchShell, Shell Oil Company, Toyota, the United States Army, and Xerox.

Designed to support for leaders struggling to put change initiatives into practice.

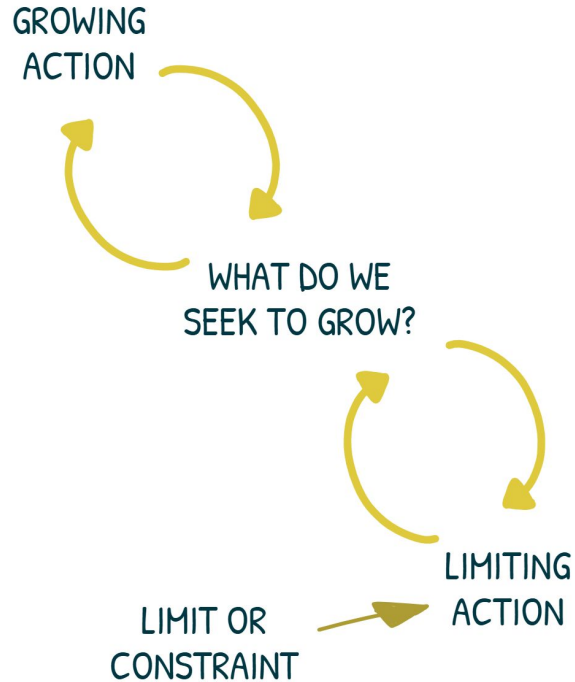


“All growth in nature arises out of an interplay between reinforcing growth processes and limiting processes”

– Peter Senge

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DANCE OF CHANGE

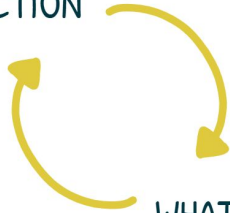




**What are you (we) trying to
grow?**

DANCE OF CHANGE

GROWING
ACTION



WHAT DO WE
SEEK TO GROW?

What are your growing actions?

What practices, behaviors, or activities are nurturing the growth in your initiative?

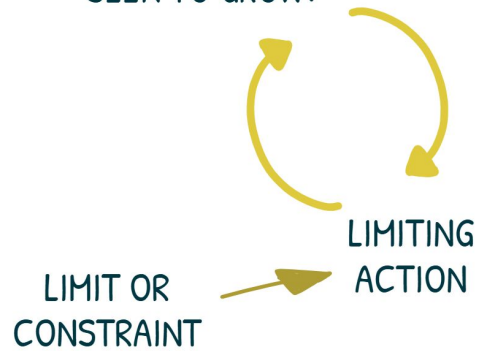
Is the growth I see self-reinforcing?

How could I support this kind of growth to build more momentum and sustainability?

Every change effort encounters limits or constraints.

By anticipating potential challenges and continuously learning, we can refine our approach, keeping the initiative alive without losing momentum.

WHAT DO WE
SEEK TO GROW?



What are the limiting actions or constraints?



Instead of seeing these limits as roadblocks, we recognize them as **balancing actions** that help refine and adapt the process.



Ten Common Change Challenges or Limits

Challenge of **Initiating**

- 1. “We don’t have time!”** – Not enough time, lack of pilot group’s flexibility and control over its own time.
- 2. “We don’t have help!”** – The need for coherent, consistent knowledgeable coaching, guidance and support.
- 3. “This stuff isn’t relevant!”** – Not relevant. The absence of a clear, compelling business or organizational case.
- 4. “They aren’t walking their talk!”** – The vulnerability and lack of reflection engendered by a gap between espoused values and actions, especially for those championing change. Clarity and credibility.

Challenge of **Sustaining Momentum**

5. “This stuff is _____!” – Fear and anxiety, often about openness to the new. Psychological safety and trust. Individual and collective capacity for openness.

6. “It’s not working!” – Assessment and measurement. The gap between your change initiative and the organization’s ways of measuring results.

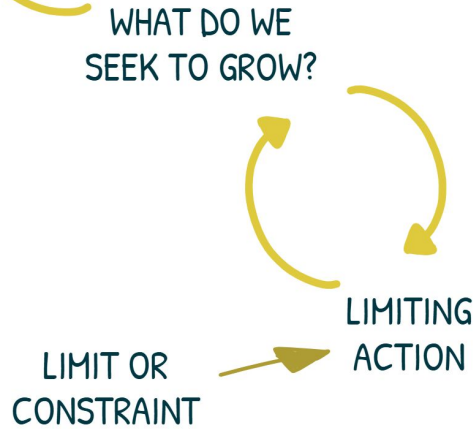
7. “We’ve got the answer! or “Those ‘change agents’ are acting like a cult!”
– True believers and non-believers. The tendency for proud change to fail into a escalating dynamic of perceived threat and siege. Cultural flexibility, reflective openness, capacity for engagement.

Challenges of **Redesigning and rethinking organizational infrastructures and practice**

8. “Whose in charge?” , “They won’t let us” or “They won’t give up power” – Governance. As pilot group expands their reach, how can they develop legitimate autonomy they need to act in tune with existing power and accountability structures. Tolerance for local management of interdependence. Tolerance for independent self-governance.

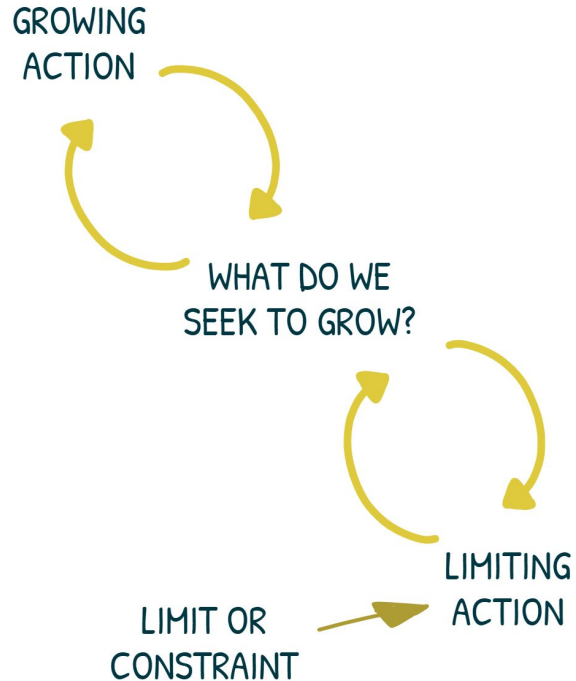
9. “We keep reinventing the wheel!” – Diffusion. How can the entire organization (and its external partners) learn from the experience of the change initiative? Infrastructure of community building. Capacity to diffuse new organizational practices. Capacity to appreciate different world views.

10. “What are we here for, and where are we going?” – Strategy and purpose. What does it take for an organization to continually reinvent itself as its world changes/ how can new ideas about purpose and strategy emerge? Collective capacity for re-thinking and re-designing, which affects reinvention.



**What
challenges
or limits are
you facing?**

DANCE OF CHANGE

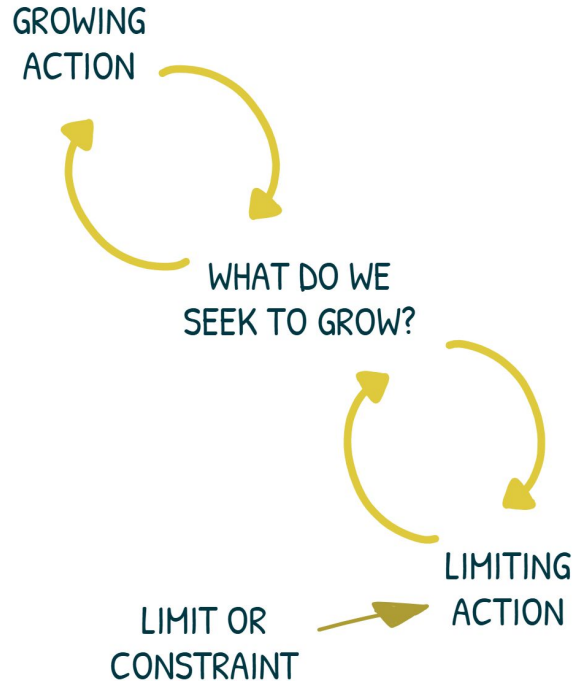


What are the challenges or constraints I am facing and how does it show up?

When I encounter this problem, what do I usually do?

What might be some alternatives?

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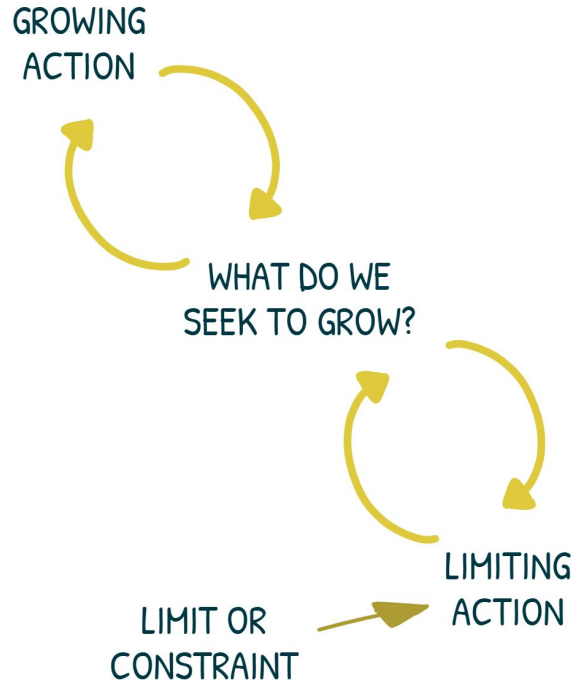
How might you iterate, adapt,
or refine your innovation
effort?

Who do you need to talk to?

What resources do you need?

What's one right next step?

DANCE OF CHANGE



Growth is a dynamic process.

The “Dance of Change” is an ongoing balance of action, reflection, and adaptation.

How do we embrace the inevitable interplay between growth processes and limiting processes?

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