Additional Patterns for Fearless Change III

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The patterns in this collection are an addition to those that appeared in Fearless Change: Patterns for Introducing New Ideas¹. Our passion for this topic didn’t end when the book was published. Rather, we continue to read, observe, take extensive notes and, most importantly, listen to comments and suggestions from our readers. We have not stopped learning about leading change!

As people exchange ideas about the environment, and exchange patterns, the overall inventory of patterns in the pattern pool keeps changing. ...Of course, this evolution will never end.²

A pattern language and the patterns in it are living things. The work is never finished. We are grateful for the opportunity to share as we are learning. This paper contains the following new patterns: Know Yourself, Hope Not Fear, Low Hanging Fruit.

References to existing patterns in the Fearless Change book or in this or other papers appear in a different font, e.g. Do Food. Abstracts for the Fearless Change patterns and others from PLoP publications can be found at: www.fearlesschangepatterns.com

The patterns are written in a variation of Alexander’s format. Each pattern includes:

Name in bold
Alias (if applicable)
Abstract in bold
Opening Story in italics that conveys the essence of the pattern
Context
Problem statement in bold
Description of the Problem and Forces
“Therefore” in italics
Essence of the Solution in bold
Elaboration of the Solution, followed by “= = = = = = = = = =”
Resulting Context
Three Known Uses in italics

Know Yourself

Before you begin the long journey required to lead a change initiative, evaluate whether you have a real and abiding passion, the talents and abilities, and sufficient resources to make it happen.

In his two best-selling books, “Three Cups of Tea” and “Stones into School,” Greg Mortensen describes his journey—how he started with one small promise to build a school that ultimately became his life’s work—educating children, especially girls. As he says, “Young women are the developing world’s greatest agents of progress. Just one year of schooling will dramatically raise a girl’s later economic prospects, and where girls get to fifth grade, birth rates and infant mortality plunge. Teaching girls to read and write reduces the ignorance and poverty that fuel religious extremism and lays the groundwork for prosperity and peace. In military parlance, educating girls is a ‘force multiplier.’ Thus, the flame that burns at the center of my work, the heat around which I cup my hands, are the stories of girls whose lives have been changed by education.” This guiding principle has helped Greg Mortensen build schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan for more than a decade.

You’re an Evangelist-wanna-be. You are enthusiastic about a great idea. You believe in it, but you don’t have an unlimited amount of time and resources to make it happen. You must make choices on what you can and cannot do.

You’re not always sure if you have what it takes to make your idea successful. There’s always the possibility that you might take on more than you can handle and your passion for the idea might not be long-lasting.

You know that you believe in your idea now, but do you have the skills and long-term interest to make it happen? Can your passion be sustained throughout the difficult change process? Opportunities and problems are all around us and we are pulled in many directions. It can seem that even the best intentions and the hardest work and the greatest abilities are no match for the challenges we face. We all have limited resources. Even when we recognize that change efforts take a great amount of time and energy, it will likely take even more than we realize.

We can get stuck implementing the details and lose the big picture when, despite our capabilities to reflect, we don’t take the time to do so. As a result, we really aren’t sure if we’re doing the right thing and if we truly have the capability to make it happen.

Your ability to observe yourself is uniquely human. We call it “self-awareness” or the ability to think about your very thought process. This is why we can evaluate and learn from others’ experiences as well as our own. This is also why we can make and break our habits. Self-awareness enables us to stand apart and examine even the way we see ourselves—our self-paradigm.

How we see ourselves also impacts how we see others. It’s not only important to know yourself so you can be true to your own values, goals, and needs, but it’s important for seeing others more
clearly too. Until we have reached a better understanding of our own motives, we will waste a lot of energy projecting our feelings on others.³

When we don’t take the time to form a realistic understanding of ourselves and the resources we have, we’re open to being pulled in different directions. We sign on for too much. We have trouble saying, “No.” We believe we can do it all.

Therefore:

**Spend Time for Reflection trying to understand your own abilities, limitations and resources. Identify your values, principles, likes, dislikes, strengths, weaknesses. Reflect on the beliefs and qualities that define who you are and what you can do.**

A good way to start is with a list of questions. For example, see those discussed in the book *What Color is Your Parachute?*⁴ The list allows you to evaluate your strengths, weaknesses, preferences, habits, and past experiences.

Have a dialogue around these, or similar questions, with trusted others. Cognitive psychologists tell us that it’s impossible to understand our own motivation.⁵ Scientists also say we are hardwired to be optimistic about our own abilities.⁶ While some of our colleagues often believe that we can “do anything,” someone who has known us for a long time and has seen our ups and downs can provide a more accurate view.

Include yourself in a dialogue—that is, talk out loud and even better, walk around while conversing with yourself! Start a virtual dialogue in which you take different roles and perspectives. Most of us use only one strategy to try to understand ourselves—thinking silently. But numerous studies have shown that this leads to a negative, self-defeating pattern of thought that makes matters worse, especially we are depressed or in a bad mood. Ruminators are worse at solving problems related to their distress, focus more on negative aspects of their past, explain their behavior in more self-defeating ways, and predict a more negative future for themselves.⁷

Try writing (with paper and pen)—it can produce surprising results. Psychologist James Pennebaker, author of *Opening Up*,⁸ has shown the powerful insights that can be uncovered by journaling. Create a mind map or concept map—you can use small cards to rearrange what is most important.

Uncover areas where you will need to Ask for Help. While it may be tempting to stretch beyond your limits, identify the roles you can expect to play well and target others in which help from others can improve your overall effectiveness.

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⁷Wilson
After some initial evaluation that allows you to know yourself better, you may also want to Test the Waters to see if you are accurate in your assumptions about what you might and might not be able to do.

Keep in mind that your effectiveness depends not only on your contributions, but on the environment, and both are continually changing. The result of this initial reflection must only be the start. You must continually learn about yourself, about your initiative, and about your organization, if you are to be successful.

As you continue along in your journey, periodically ask yourself if you still have the passion for your cause. Evangelist isn’t a job title; it’s a way of life. If you don’t love a cause, you can’t evangelize it.

Set priorities. Even when you have true and abiding passion and the ability to make your new idea happen, there are often deciding factors in the environment that can point in another direction. Consider the Low Hanging Fruit to maximize your limited resources.

This pattern will help you develop a better understanding of who you are—your talents, abilities, and preferences, as well as your tendencies to take on too much or your reluctance to sign up for things that interested you. You’ll have a clearer understand of your limits and know when to ask for help. You’ll be better equipped to make a decision about whether or not to take on the change initiative and whether your passion for the new idea will last through the long-term commitment that is necessary for real change.

However, if you identify essential skills you don’t have, this doesn’t mean you should give up. Everyone has a unique contribution to make in any setting. If you aren’t a perfect match for the requirements you identify, it may mean you may have to work harder and look for (or develop) other Evangelists to help you. When you are challenged to succeed despite some obstacles, you’ll have a valuable chance to learn and to show what you can do.

Zella and Fred were trying to start a day care center for the children of the employees in their organization. They begged Dan to help because they knew he was a hard-working individual. Dan agreed only because he was a friend of Zella and Fred and didn’t want to let them down. However, as the months went by, Dan became less and less interested in the project and often found an excuse for not pulling his weight. After a heart-to-heart talk with his friends, Dan finally admitted to them (and to himself) that he didn’t have the essential passion for the day care center like they did.

At the beginning of President Bill Clinton’s first term, he spent his time investigating anything and everything. His physical and intellectual energies were nearly limitless, and when you’re president, if you want to know everything there is to know about the wool and mohair subsidy, the Assistant Deputy Administrator for Wool and the Vice-Under-Secretary for Mohair will be in the Oval Office in five minutes. At the same time, Clinton was trying to work on a few big things:
his economic plan, his health care plan, and his crime plan. But the endless research was exhausting him. Finally, he realized that he needed to understand the limits on his time and energy. He stopped, reassessed, streamlined, and began setting priorities. That left him with time to think, read, and focus on the things he really cared about. We believe one of the keys to the Clinton comeback was his ability to maintain a strategic rather than a tactical focus.9

An extract from an interview between Jane Goodall and Harvard Business Review (HBR) shows how Goodall found her way by knowing herself:

**HBR:** You’ve often taken a pragmatic, incremental approach to changing the world.

**Goodall:** Part of me says gosh, I’d love to join the most violent and destructive groups out there who want to go and raid labs and release animals and do all sorts of dreadful things, but it wouldn’t help.

**HBR:** How do you find the right balance between your ethics and what’s possible in the short term?

**Goodall:** With difficulty. If I’m perceived as a tree hugger, I won’t be able to talk to the people who can make the decisions. But then I get criticized from both sides. So I have to be tough enough. And "to thine own self be true."10

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9 *Buck Up, Suck Up...and come back when you foul up*, James Carville and Paul Begala, Simon & Schuster, 2003.
Hope Not Fear

To encourage people during the change initiative and inspire them to believe the change can happen, motivate them with a sense of hope rather than fear.

*Fear less, hope more;*
*Eat less, chew more;*
*Whine less, breathe more;*
*Talk less, say more;*
*Love more,*
*and all good things will be yours.*

~~Swedish Proverb~~

You have attempted to use Personal Touch to show people how your new idea could be of value to them, but some people aren’t seeing this value in the same way you are. You may have used Wake-Up Call to point out the problem you believe is creating a pressing need for change. This has persuaded people to pay attention to your idea. This leads you to believe that if a little fear worked, more will work even better. So, you continue to try to talk primarily about the frightening things that are happening in the organization or the things that could happen if your new idea is not adopted. You believe this will cause people to become more and more fearful of the current situation and, in turn, accept your idea for “saving” the organization. Yet, this backfires.

**Fear typically doesn’t motivate people to take sustainable action. Fear is good at rallying negative feelings against others, but does not lead individuals to take on responsibility and become proactive, especially in the long-term. The typical reaction to threats or fearful scenarios is denial or paralysis.**

Fear can work in the short term. A Wake-Up Call can jar people into immediate action for a short-term problem, especially if there is a clear way to eliminate the problem that is causing the fear. For example, a person is likely to buy new tires from a car repairman who points out the dreadful things that can happen if the customer continues to drive on severely bald treads.

But when problems are larger and solutions are more complex, the use of ongoing fear tactics is likely to cause people to avoid you. Most individuals aren’t attracted to something that creates negative tension. They are not usually looking for yet another thing to worry about in their already stressful lives. Therefore, your attempts to rouse people with fear can produce the opposite effect. Humans often shield themselves from threats by triggering defense mechanisms such as denial or rationalization. To avoid the anxiety, the people you are trying to reach can simply ignore or disconnect from the situation you are trying to explain.

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While these defense mechanisms are a common, helpful tool for getting us through our daily lives without the weight of the world on our shoulders, they are one of the biggest reasons it’s so difficult to motivate people to change. Change leaders want to avoid an environment in which people are denying or disconnecting from the problem or the solution.

For example, Allen Carr, a former chain smoker, advises people who wish to help their friends and relatives stop smoking to help the smoker believe he can stop; this will cause his mind to open. Carr explains, “If you try to force a smoker to stop, he will feel like a trapped animal and want his cigarette even more. Don’t try to scare him into stopping by telling him he is ruining his health or wasting his money.” Instead, Carr recommends that you give the smoker hope that he can quit by exposing him to ex-smokers who thought they were hooked for life but can attest to how much better their life is as a non-smoker. Continue to tell him how proud you are of him during the long quitting process of ups and downs. Point out his small successes along the way such as how much better he smells and how much clearer his breathing is.

Alan Deutschman, author of Change or Die, explains it in this way: “After we "rationally" inform and educate people, we resort to scare tactics. We like to think that change is motivated by fear and that the strongest force for change is crisis, which creates the greatest fear. There are few crises as threatening as heart disease, and no fear as intense as the fear of death, but even those don't motivate heart patients to change.”

A change approach that makes use of too much fear can also cause people to become overwhelmed and, in turn, get weighed down with a negative state of mind and a sense of helplessness. Instead of inspiring action among the people you are trying to convince, you may, instead, cause them to believe they are powerless to deal with the situation.

Dan Pink, in his book Drive, points out that this can apply to the commonly-used approach of providing negative consequences (or “sticks”) to motivate employees to improve. He explains that this causes individuals to be “near sighted,” with a desire to accomplish the task that will avoid the threatened punishment, but nothing else. The fear, Pink argues, does not foster creativity and out-of-the-box thinking because greatness and near-sightedness cannot exist together.

A fear tactic is an external force that does not usually create an internal change. When the fear disappears, so can the desire to sustain the change.

One reason people don’t change is they do not feel sufficient internal pressure. Wake-Up Call can help to create this. But it is not enough. Research on the effects of faith and hope in

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14 Deutschman, A (2007).
15 http://www.fastcompany.com/articles/2007/01/change-or-die.html?page=0%2C3
16 Change or Die, 39
17 Global warming is a good example. From science we know for sure that we are destroying the world – we know it! Yet we don’t change. The problem is just too overwhelming and we feel helpless.
18 Riverhead Hardcover (2009).
facilitating change has found that a belief in the ability to change is a strong predictor of success.\textsuperscript{19}

\textit{Therefore:}

\textbf{Inspire people throughout the change initiative with a sense of hope rather than fear.}

Use Wake-Up Call sparingly, to create the pressure for change, but don’t stop there. Stress the positive rather than the negative so that people feel they have control over the problem. When people feel it is The Right Time to attempt the change, provide a clear, obtainable solution.\textsuperscript{20}

Use Personal Touch and Tailor Made to help individuals believe that they, and the organization, can obtain this solution. Point out their assets, strengths, and skills that will allow the change to become a reality.

Identify typical scenarios in which people are likely to react in a negative way. Plan ahead for these so you know what to do and can react with confidence.

To keep the hope from wavering throughout the long process of change, build a Group Identity and strong relationships so that people feel safe to express their concerns before they give up hope. Provide continuing support and a Shoulder to Cry On when needed. If the morale is getting low, bring people together in a Town Meeting for an update and Time for Reflection.

If possible, provide External Validation. People are likely to draw strength from comforting and reassuring testimonials of others who have been through a similar change.\textsuperscript{21}

Keep people informed on the progress and future plans. Stay in Touch and stress Small Successes so that people concentrate on what has been accomplished rather than worry about all the work that is still ahead of them. Low Hanging Fruit can enable early wins. Nothing is as encouraging as the Smell of Success.

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This pattern helps to create a belief and continuing sense of hope that your new idea can be realized. Forward movement can result when people are optimistic rather than resistant.

However, you must be careful not to offer false hope. You sacrifice a great deal of credibility when you promise more than you can deliver. Know Yourself to ensure that you never mislead. If something does goes wrong, be sure to take responsibility and offer a clear plan for addressing the issue.

\textit{Dr. Edward Miller, dean of the medical school and CEO of the hospital at Johns Hopkins University points out that ”If you look at people after coronary-artery bypass grafting two years

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\textsuperscript{19} Bandura (1986) ( in Doppelt, 70) \textsuperscript{20} Goldstein, 43-44. \textsuperscript{21} http://www.ourjourneyofhope.com/spiritual-support/testimonials.cfm
\end{flushright}
later, only about 10% of them have changed their lifestyle," Dr. Dean Ornish, founder of the Preventative Medicine Research Institute, raised that number to 77% by realizing the importance of going beyond the facts and using hope instead of fear. He observed that providing health information is not always enough and motivating patients mainly with the fear of death wasn’t working either. For a few weeks after a heart attack, patients were scared enough to do whatever their doctors said. But death was just too frightening to think about, so their denial would return, and they’d go back to their old ways. Instead of trying to motivate them with the "fear of dying," Ornish reframes the issue. He inspires a new vision, convincing them they can feel better, not just live longer. That means enjoying the things that make daily life pleasurable, like making love or even taking long walks without the pain caused by their disease. Weekly support groups with other patients, as well as attention from dieticians, psychologists, nurses, and yoga and meditation instructors help to point out the “short term wins” that reassure their faith in their ability to lead a healthier lifestyle.22

Sally was going through a divorce. The stress caused her to lose her appetite and her energy. She was staying in bed more than usual and her weight was dropping at an alarming rate. Many concerned friends pointed out the effect this was having on her health and her ability to do her job, but Sally didn’t seem to care. Her friend, Alice, took a different approach. When she could encourage Sally to get up and do something small or eat a few bites of food, she applauded the small success and encouraged Sally to try a little more the next day. Alice also got Sally in touch with other people who had been through a difficult divorce and came out better at the other end. The understanding from her friend Alice and the support given by others who had been through similar circumstances provided the hope Sally needed to eventually return to her old self.

Marcy, a college professor, gets irritated when her students perform poorly on exams or assignments because they don’t take the required effort or make their schoolwork a priority. She is often tempted to create panic by threatening them with a potentially low final grade or a possible failure. However, she has learned that fear lasts only until the next distraction appears in their lives. More importantly, a repetitive fear tactic makes her sound frightening rather than approachable. Mary has learned that a brief Wake-Up Call in which she explains the reality of a bad grade is sometimes necessary, but she follows this with a commitment to help the students change their study habits and attitudes. She doesn’t do the work for them but makes herself available to help students who have the desire to improve. She encourages them with stories of other students who struggled but succeeded with a good grade in the class and cheers them on by pointing out their Small Successes along the way.

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22 http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/94/open_change-or-die.html?page=0%2C0
Low Hanging Fruit

When you need an “easy win” to show progress in your change initiative, complete a low risk task quickly and then publicize the results.

In 2004, a London-based community organization called “We Are What We Do” launched with the publication of a little book with a big idea—50 simple actions to make the world a better place. Since then, Change the World for Ten Bucks has spawned a movement, multiple editions, and sales of over one million copies internationally. Now there’s a U.S. edition. Change the World for Ten Bucks delights and engages at every turn. It includes a postcard to send to someone who inspires you, two pages stuck together (don’t throw your gum in the street!), tear-out tabs to make introductions to the neighbors, and dozens of other creative prompts for positive change with just a small investment.

You’re an Evangelist or Dedicated Champion actively using the patterns: Test the Waters, Time for Reflection, Small Successes, and Step by Step. At each iteration of this “Learning Cycle,” you are faced with moving forward based on what you have learned from your past experience. You understand the importance of incremental change and realize that it is your best hope for the ultimate large goal you have for your organization.

Given all the tasks you have to accomplish in your change initiative, how do you decide which one to tackle next when you are getting pressure to make progress and take on more than you can handle?

Even if you’re a Dedicated Champion, your time and energy are limited. You can never take on all the tasks you’d like to in your change initiative. But you need to show progress toward your goal.

You may have managers or executives invested in the change effort who are monitoring your effort and expect results. You may need to choose between a couple of tasks that are “almost” done. Or, you may need to show progress in a report for an ongoing large project.

John Kotter has been studying organizational change for two decades and stresses that change leaders must provide enough visible, unambiguous short-term wins in mission-critical areas to persuade skeptics and marginalize cynics. “These are concrete successes,” Kotter says, “ones that an objective group of people would agree are clear evidence of progress.” Short-term wins allow a better chance of actually completing a change effort if they are visible to many, the terms are unambiguous, and the victory is closely related to the change effort. A victory generated to meet these requirements creates excitement, certainty, momentum, and serves also to quiet critics. Kotter explains that planning for results instead of “praying” for results is the key. There is also a difference between “gimmick wins” and actual short-term victories. Gimmicks can be effective at least initially, but might involve a sacrifice for the future. Planning short term wins

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24 Psychologists call this The Kolb Cycle, The Learning Cycle or The Experiential Learning Cycle.
helps boost morale, since employees can see the successes of the change in small doses, which allows them to envision the overall success of the change in the future.26

Therefore:

As you prepare to move forward Step by Step, look for an easy win.

Find something small and Just Do It. This low-hanging fruit should be low risk, but visible, likely to succeed, with relatively large impact.

Ask for Help from Innovators who may be able to give you some suggestions about where to look for the easy wins and may be enthusiastic enough to help you carry it out.

Take Time for Reflection in order to Know Yourself and determine what to do after this easy win. Kolb’s “Learning Cycle” suggests that it is not enough to just have an experience in order to learn. Reflection is required to make generalizations and formulate concepts that can then be applied to new situations. This learning must then be tested in new situations. The learner must make the link between the theory and action by planning, acting out, reflecting and relating it back to the theory. Your change effort is a series of small steps where each step is an experiment.27

After you have achieved a Small Success advertise your progress. Keep the good news In Your Space. Schedule a Hometown Story. Stay in Touch with your supporters; never assume that news of your progress is known across the organization.

If the next easy win is not obvious, this might mean you have an opportunity to start a Study Group, or it could be that it’s time to take a break because it’s not The Right Time to take another step forward.

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The early wins created by this pattern can be convincing for members of the Early Majority and others who need to see success before they are willing to experiment with the new idea. When you see what works well, you and other Evangelists will learn more about the new idea and about your organization. This will give you valuable information for building a change initiative that is Tailor Made for the organization.

However, sometimes you have to tackle the big, complicated issues and be willing to trudge along with no easy wins. Make sure you have a healthy balance of low hanging fruit efforts and more significant progress on larger projects. After taking several small steps and completing small projects, it might be time to consider a larger step with wider impact. As you spawn more Evangelists across the organization who are successfully completing small projects, you might have to consider together if it’s The Right Time for bigger steps.

When Rachel was introducing Scrum into her organization, she created a short presentation that she gave at a Brown Bag. Other teams heard about it and asked her to give the presentation at their weekly meetings. She was encouraged by all the interest, but she realized that as a volunteer Evangelist, she didn’t have much time to work with every interested teams. So, she started with just one presentation and, over time, added another every few weeks. Usually someone in each team signed on to join the change effort and play the role of Evangelist. It wasn’t long before most teams were doing some Scrum experiments.

The broken windows theory was first introduced by social scientists James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, in an article titled "Broken Windows" that appeared in the March 1982 edition of The Atlantic Monthly. The title comes from the following example: Consider a building with a few broken windows. If the windows are not repaired, the tendency is for vandals to break a few more windows. Eventually, they may even break into the building, and if it's unoccupied, perhaps become squatters or light fires inside. Or consider a sidewalk. Some litter accumulates. Soon, more litter accumulates. Eventually, people even start leaving bags of trash from take-out restaurants or breaking into cars. The article received a great deal of attention and was widely cited. The book by George L. Kelling and Catharine Cole is based on the article but develops the argument in greater detail. The book is called Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in Our Communities and was published in 1996. It discusses the theory in relation to crime and strategies to contain or eliminate crime from urban neighborhoods. A successful strategy for preventing vandalism, according to the authors, is to fix problems immediately when they are small. Repair the broken windows within a short time and vandals are less likely to break more windows or do further damage. Clean up the sidewalk every day, and the tendency is for litter not to accumulate or for the rate of littering to be much less. Fixing the obvious, small problems keeps them from escalating.

Sally worked at a large government agency. Her department had a newly appointed director, and Sally and her colleagues were distressed. “This director is a cold fish,” they said. “She refuses to say hello. She won’t even make eye contact in the hallway.” One day at lunch Sally asked her co-workers, “I was just thinking that we haven’t done anything to break the ice have we? Instead of waiting for her to go first, have any of you tried saying hello to her?” Well, no, they said. A short time later, Sally was chatting with a friend in another department, “You’ll never believe this! Our new director, she asked us to call her ‘Linda,’ is such a nice person. We didn’t like her much at first but then we started saying hello to her in the hallway. She started saying hello back. Then we had a few of those quick hallway conversations. Others in the office saw all this, and they started saying hello to her too. It grew from there. It was just a small thing, but it really changed how we all got along with her.”