Additional Patterns for Fearless Change II

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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. (Alexander, C.A., The Timeless Way of Building)

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: What, Where, When; Everybody Wins; Myth Buster; Go To Person; Imagine That!

References to existing patterns in our book or in this paper appear in brackets, e.g. [Do Food].

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

Name in bold
Alias (if applicable)
Abstract in bold (missing from patterns in this draft)
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
Resulting Context
Known Uses in italics

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our shepherd, Klaus Marquardt, who is not only a patterns expert, but a long-time friend who understands the “heart” of this pattern language. His comments made a

tremendous difference in this version. We can only hope to continue growing these patterns to reach the high standards he has set for us. Thank you, Klaus!

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What, Where, and When

I support a lot of non-profit organizations. Usually you make a donation to a large entity and trust that it will go where the need is greatest. One of my favorite places to deposit my hard-earned cash is Heifer International (www.heifer.org) because I can “buy” a flock of geese for $20, a goat for $120, or a water buffalo for $250 for a village in need. I like to think of my gift of animals as a way of reaching out to others I will never see. The image is compelling and I think it is for others, too. I can think of a woman in a village receiving a goat with a tag that says it’s a gift from me.

You are an [Evangelist] who sees a need for change. You have a clear vision and are proceeding toward it [Step by Step]. You often find that you are overwhelmed by the large goal you have set for yourself. You know in your heart that celebrating [Small Successes] is a way forward, but it’s easy to get discouraged when the goal is so far away.

What’s the best way to proceed in a [Step by Step] fashion to make sure we make progress toward our ultimate goal?

Implementation intention, a term coined by Peter Gollwitzer, is a statement that clearly defines what, where, and when specific behaviors will be performed. Gollwitzer argues that forming an implementation intention causes the context specified in the intention to replace habits, making it the kind of plan that will overcome potential distractions. Since context is the cue for our behavior, there is less conscious intent needed to make change.

Scientists at Hofstra University have explored the potential of implementation intentions as a way to overcome procrastination\(^2\). Research shows that implementation intentions are effective in helping take the first step and then follow through, for example, on programs to take vitamins, participate in regular physical activity after surgery, or perform breast self-examination. An implementation intention is a powerful tool to move from a goal intention to action.

People don’t break bad habits; they replace old behaviors with new ones. Stating an implementation intention—what, where, and when you’ll act—makes it more likely that you’ll keep your promises with yourself to reach your goal.\(^3\)

Therefore:

Describe detailed steps toward your goal. Include what you will do, where you will do it, and when you will do it. Make the steps small and the plans as specific as possible.

For example, if you want to lose weight, avoid general statements such as, “I’m going to exercise more and eat less.” Be specific-- say exactly what exercise you will do, where you will do it, and when you will exercise. “I’m going to walk around the block after dinner on Tuesday and Thursday.” Schedule the exercise as you would anything else on your calendar for a specific time.

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\(^2\) *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 2008, 38, 366-384
and place. If you want to start exercising, for example, your implementation intention might include:

- **what** exactly you will do (running), and
- **where** you will do that (around the lake)
- **when** you will exercise (every day after work).

Decide **what, where and when** you will behave for the next step in your journey toward the large goal.

Share your intentions with others—this helps increase ownership and accountability. Tell a friend or a group of people about your intentions and [Stay in Touch]. Encourage them to ask you about your specific intention, for example, “Did you walk every day this week?”

This pattern builds new habits—it helps replaces old habits with new ones. Since most of what we do every day is done on “automatic pilot,” this helps set new “triggers” that will bring about the desired new behaviors instead of doing the same ol’, same ol’. By expanding your resolutions to reach large goals with a simple but determined plan of action for the next step, you are far more likely to carry out your resolutions. You will improve the chances you will reach for an apple instead of a chocolate bar, finish work on time, or increase the amount of exercise in a day.

However, it’s so easy to “fall off the wagon.” It’s not enough to set up new triggers and hope for the best. You will also have to have include in your implementation intention an allowance to help you deal with possible wayward slips. The tendency is to give up everything after even the smallest transgression. Be patient with your efforts and be willing to forgive mis-steps. We are all human. No one is perfect. Ask if there is anything you can do differently as an experiment in your implementation intention and then move forward.

*My nutrition counselor said: It’s not good enough to just promise, “I’m going to eat less.” Set specific goals. One small step might be to stop buying certain foods. Decide to drink more water, eat an apple a day. Instead of saying, “No more junk food,” say that instead of walking into the kitchen as soon as you get home and starting to snack so that you’ve eaten 1,000 calories before supper, decide to change into exercise clothes as soon as you get home and walk around the block or have fresh fruit and veggies ready to eat. Have carrot sticks ready in the fridge instead of potato chips as you are cooking dinner.*

*A good friend who is also a professional facilitator gave me some valuable advice about the pattern [Just Say Thanks]. She suggested that instead of saying, “Thanks to everyone on the team for doing such a good job” it’s more effective to say, "I appreciate you for working over the weekend to get the database up and running for the customer demo on Monday." I didn’t get it at first but now I see it’s not about the words "thanks" and "appreciation;” it's about detail. Say what the other person did in as much detail as possible. The specific appreciation means so*
much more than the generic thanks. It seems we’re hardwired to respond to detail—it means much more to us.

I asked a friend for help in solving a problem in my consulting business. He said, “Go with your instinct. Never compromise your values and, above all, follow your heart.” “Thanks for the great advice,” I lied. I had no idea how to apply all that well-meaning advice. Another friend, who was sitting at the table with us said, “I would start by trying one of those new approaches you mentioned when you have a client who seems to be open to a little experiment. Then you can see how that works and decide whether to continue or toss it out.” “Thanks!” I replied. And this time I meant it. I remembered a section in Made to Stick (Chip Heath and Dan Heath, Random House, 2007), that said that concrete information is more effective—it’s true!

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Everybody Wins

Aliases: Throw Them a Bone; Share the Pie; Let Them Have Something to Hold Onto; Small Investment—Large Return; Small Concession

My husband and I are semi-serious bike riders and used to take long rides through the rural area outside Rolla, MO, where lots of local farmers kept pretty big, fast dogs to guard their property. It made for some exciting sprints when dogs would charge us as we rode by. After awhile we knew where the more aggressive dogs were and we got in the habit of carrying dog biscuits to toss at any of these dogs who got to close—as a last resort. It was a never fail scheme that had an interesting side effect. Over time the dogs knew we would throw them a treat and became more playful than aggressive. I began to be less fearful and we started calling them friendly names instead of cursing at them.

You are an [Evangelist] who sees a need for change. You are working hard to spread the word about your ideas, but not everyone is getting on board. Most are with you, but there are skeptics who have resisted your attempts at [Fear Less], [Champion Skeptic], or other patterns specifically targeted toward resistance. You’re setting up a [Trial Run] or other change initiative and need buy-in from a skeptic. You’ve done a good job at deciding when to [Pick Your Battles], so you know what things are important to you and what things are not so important or unimportant.

Someone in your organization is particularly resistant to your suggestions and is standing firm on one or two points. It’s hard for you to see a way around this person.

We may find ourselves face-to-face with someone who won’t budge. It’s often not that difficult to allow others to hang on to their pride instead of stripping them naked and taking them prisoner. It’s a better strategy to acknowledge that you might not have all the answers and that each move forward is an experiment where you learn about your new idea and how it will work for your team and your organization.
Change is difficult. It often puts people in a position of possibly losing prestige or status. Sometimes allowing people to have something to hang on to helps them become more comfortable with the new way of doing things.

It’s often the case that others are testing you (as much as your idea) to see what kind of person you are and what values are important to you. If it’s “all about you” and “your way or the highway,” others will be less supportive than if you evidence real leadership and a concern for how others feel.

This allows everyone to learn about the innovation and how it will work in the organization. There are few, if any, “rights” or “wrongs” – instead progress is a series of [Small Steps] where everyone is always learning. Everyone.

Therefore:

**Moving forward is about learning, so take this opportunity to appreciate the view of the resistor. Jointly work to set up an experiment to test the sticking points with the idea that no one has all the answers for anything and that testing as you go is the best approach.**

Set clear expectations about the length of the trial and the evaluation criteria for the concession. Introducing any innovation is always a slow, [Step by Step] process. Even when a revolution seems to have happened over night, closer examination will show a long preparation period where evolutionary progress was at work.

This pattern encourages respect for individual differences in adoption of your new idea. Since you have compromised for the resistor, it’s likely that he will become more open, not only to your idea, but to a more respectful relationship with you. Sometimes allowing resistors a small “win” will bring them to your side. Since you are proceeding in a [Step by Step] fashion and learning about the change initiative and the organization as you go, this will provide a learning opportunity for everyone concerned.

However, you should be prepared to see that your new idea might not meet the needs of your team or organization as well as some of the current processes. Be open to learning what you can from every experiment and be flexible about adjusting your ideas. In other words, be an [Evangelist], not a fanatic. An all-or-nothing approach will only turn off others.

It’s also a real possibility that some skeptics will retain their position. It might be worthwhile considering this person as an effective [Champion Skeptic].

Paul was a department manager in our organization when we were introducing patterns. He wasn’t resistant exactly, just not supportive. A proposal I had made for a prestigious publication was accepted—an experience report about our use of patterns. I stopped by Paul’s office and said that I would like to mention his department’s efforts in the patterns adoption and if he
wanted to let me interview him I would be happy to include his name in the list of authors. I made this offer without realizing how influential the strategy was. Paul suddenly became very interested and very supportive and very involved with patterns and very concerned about their success across the organization. The whole experience taught me how a small concession can mean a lot to others and I resolved to use even small things as gifts to bring others in.

I was coaching a team that was moving to agile software development. The plan for the team was to move to an open environment with individual offices available to anyone on as as-needed basis, but one of the team members was insistent on keeping his old cubicle. It seemed like it would hold everything up until I suggested that for the next few months, we could try an experiment. Let Fred have his cubicle. The rest would adopt the new plan. We would evaluate at the end of the trial period and see what we had learned. It’s amazing how well that worked. Fred was suddenly OK and it only took a short time before he realized that having the individual office available whenever he needed it was going to work just fine for him. He wanted to be part of the team, so he began to spend more time in the open environment. The rest of the team didn’t make a big deal out of it, but just welcomed him whenever he decided to join them.

Dear Abby:

Because of a medical condition, my husband of 30 years can no longer drive a car--so now he is driving me nuts. Not only does he tell me how to drive, but he feels it’s his responsibility to remotely lock/unlock the car doors, remotely start the car--anything having to do with the car but drive it. Please tell me how to solve the dilemma about who should control the functions of the car.

Exasperated in Ohio

Dear Exasperated:

You should be the driver, however, when a man can no longer drive and his wife must take over, some males regard it as a blow to their masculinity. What your husband is doing is an attempt to reassert himself in his former role, and while it may annoy you, please try harder to understand why he’s doing what he’s doing and be more tolerant.

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Myth Buster

The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie - deliberate, contrived and dishonest - but the myth - persistent, persuasive and unrealistic. (John F. Kennedy, 1962)

You are an [Evangelist] or [Dedicated Champion] who has focused on the facts about the innovation, its benefits, and the particulars about its transition into the organization but, despite your best efforts, there are misconceptions flying around the organization.
If we hear someone bring up a misunderstanding about our ideas, we usually address it head on with the person who is expressing the concern. However, a false impression in one’s persons mind is usually a sign that misconceptions are shared by others.

People who hold misconceptions are not aware that their ideas are incorrect. But, because we build new knowledge on current understandings, these misconceptions can have serious impacts on learning about a new idea.¹⁴

Inaccurate information is often repeated until it achieves a certain myth status. These myths need to be debunked before they take a strong hold and create even more concern and anxieties.

Therefore:

To get the word out about what the innovation isn’t as well as what won’t happen as a result of its introduction into the organization, create a simple list.

“…life is complicated. Lists aren't.”⁵ Address the explicit misconceptions you know as well as any others that may be looming. Each bullet point may begin with a phrase such as:

The <innovation> is not…
The change initiative will not…

Give [Just Enough] explanation for each one. Keep it brief, and include the name of a contact person or other resources the reader can consult for additional information.

Be clear. People are open to suggestion. Calling attention to negative things can validate them. Make sure your list is designed in a way that clearly points out these things are *not* true. Use positive language and don’t repeat the myth beyond its initial mention in the list.

[Ask for Help] from the [Champion Skeptic] and others to create the list—they are likely to know about the fears and other negative talk surrounding the innovation.

Post the list on a web site about the change initiative, include it your presentations or [Town Meeting] about the new idea, or send it in an email to everyone in the organization. You may also want to prepare a one page clear handout to share at [The Right Time] with anyone who approaches you with incorrect impressions and suspicions about the new idea.

This pattern creates a clearer understanding of what the new idea isn’t. It allows people to build their knowledge on the truth rather than on their misunderstandings.

¹⁴ Misconceptions in Science: http://www.indiana.edu/~w505a/studwork/deborah/
However, some people do not like to be proven wrong, and will continue clinging to a misconception despite any evidence to the contrary. Use [Fear Less] to deal with these strong opinions.

Simon, a scientist at the National Climatic Data Center, was concerned with the compelling, yet inaccurate, climate change information distributed by less than credible people and organizations. He asked about “effective strategies to pursue to counter this” and a consultant recommended the following: “Your question is a common one. I have recommended to other people that they create some sort of "breaking the myths" web site. For example, the site could summarize, point by point, what people like "plucky captain Jean Luc Picard" claim and then provide the true wisdom for each point. Then, there's an important step 2: You must do all you can to get that site out there-- to encourage people to read it. For example, NCDC could include the URL in all their presentations, links on their sites.”

A web site with five of the most common math misconceptions helps elementary students eliminate these tightly held mistaken beliefs. It states that “elimination of mistaken beliefs about math concepts is critical.”

Danielle has observed that individuals grieving the loss of a romantic relationship do not usually get the kind of help they need from friends and family. They are often presented with logical arguments to this emotional issue. Or, they are often encouraged to “move on” too quickly. Therefore, Danielle’s presentations on this topic are centered on “break-up myths” she has observed, such as: (1) after a certain amount of time, you should forget and just move on, (2) a new love is the answer, and (3) if you concentrate on what you have, you can forget about what you lost. Her web site is: http://www.breakupmythbuster.com/

Go To Person

Aliases: Crucial Conversation; Radar O'Reilly

"You know", said the newly appointed CEO of a large company, "I have more than 1000 people in my head office organization; 900 can tell me something’s gone wrong, 90 can tell me what’s gone wrong, 9 can tell me why it went wrong, and 1 can actually fix it!"

You are an [Evangelist] or [Dedicated Champion] who is willing to [Ask for Help]. There are helpful people in your organization but they are busy people, often with little time to invest in supporting your idea.

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Your “to do” list is growing. You don’t have the time, resources, or talent to tackle all of them alone. Some of these items may be tied up in red tape.

Therefore:

Make a list of things you need to do in the next milestone of your [Step by Step] initiative. Next to each item, write the name of the person (or persons) who has the specific resources or ability to help you get that item done.

These are the people who can provide what you need or can facilitate these resources. They have the necessary skill and knowledge, the authority, influence, and/or ability to cut through red tape, or have access to the connections that can open doors and make things happen. They understand the task you are bringing to them and will make the solution happen.

A go-to person must also have the time and motivation to help. Take the effort to cultivate their interest in the project and the task you are asking of them. Have your general [Elevator Speech] ready, but use [Personal Touch] to address their questions and concerns—then you are in a better position to [Ask for Help]. If you don’t know them well, solicit the assistance of a [Bridge-Builders]. Be mindful of any established processes, so that you don’t ruffle any feathers.

Respect the time of the go-to person by giving them as much lead as you can. Even if you don’t need their help immediately, discuss your plans and the timeline—then [Stay in Touch] and give them progress reports. Try to fit your schedule into [The Right Time] for this person. This will make it more likely that they will be available when you need them.

Even when you check “get go-to people in place” off your list, keep a back-up plan in mind. Think about what you will do if these key people disappear. Be careful about cultivating too much dependence on a limited amount of people. You don’t want to burn them out and risk that they could disappear.

This pattern creates a way to expedite whatever it is you must get done. You’ve reached out and located the key people you need to move forward.

However, you could potentially become known as the person who bugs people too much. Individuals may run when they see you coming because they think you will ask a favor. Use [Just Say Thanks] to help go-to people feel good about themselves; allow them to be an example to others by publicizing the [Small Successes] that are made possible through their assistance.

*Sally was planning a [Big Jolt] event. Finding an appropriate location and a budget for food would be a bit of a challenge, but if anyone could figure it out, the admin, Jennifer, could. She would ask Adam to make sure the technical support was in place and ask William and Lisa to spread the word among the key people on their teams. She listed Harry, and his interesting*
artwork, as a possibility for a gift for the speaker. Then, she set off to talk with each of these go-to people.

A “go to player” on a team is the person on a sports team who always gets the ball or puck and is counted on to score, especially in a close game.

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Imagine That!

*You may say that I’m a dreamer
But I’m not the only one
I hope someday you’ll join us
And the world will live as one*

John Lennon, the Beatles

You are an [Evangelist] or [Dedicated Champion] who is talking about the new idea that is likely to happen in the future, but people are focusing on the visible challenges surrounding the idea rather than the potential future outcomes.

It is hard for people to understand how a new idea will fit into the work they will be doing in the future. They usually find it easier to remember the problems of the past and concentrate on the challenges facing them in the present. This inhibits their ability to understand how the new idea can impact the future.

Yet, you want people to believe that a new beginning, a new better world is possible and could be just around the corner. You want people to understand the past, but focus on the future.

You rarely, if ever, have the ability to perfectly simulate what the new idea will provide, but visualization, a mental rehearsal, is always possible. Heath & Heath explain in *Made to Stick*, “Mental simulation is not as good as actually doing something, but it’s the next best thing.”

*Therefore:*

Ask people to imagine the future. Begin with “What if…”

Encourage them to fill their mental imagery with many different kinds of sensory detail. How will things look when the new idea is a reality? What kinds of things will we hear? What will it allow us to do? How will it make you feel?

Tell the story. Replay the steps that got us to the problem [Wake-up Call]. How did the events unfold? Then, continue the story with how the new idea could address the problem.

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10 Heath & Heath, 211-212
If you want to take it a step further, ask them to consider how they would feel… relief?… satisfaction?… confidence?¹¹

Imagine the negative side too—what can happen if we don’t do this new idea.

This pattern helps people think out loud, imagine their future with the new idea and make it relevant to their daily existence. It may even allow them to improve future performance by thinking of things that they might otherwise have neglected.¹² It allows them to focus on the future in order to let go of the past.

But don’t get carried away. Imagining can be fun and, as a result, you may tell a story about an unrealistic future. This will only create problems for you later if the imagined does not match the future reality. Be sure that the story is [Tailor Made] to what the organization and/or the person can and cannot do.

The ABC News Special titled “Earth 2100” (airing in June 2009), depicted an imaginary, but possible, scenario in the year 2100. ABC introduced it as follows: “To change the future, first you have to imagine it.”

In order to get employees interested in using new project management and social networking software, the CIO’s presentation included a variety of specific scenarios describing when, where and how this software could be used in existing and future projects. The attendees nodded and responded with potential scenarios of their own: “Oh, and I can also see how this software can be used in <here>”

A church was facing a new, uncertain future after the unexpected loss of the head minister. The deacon held a [Town Meeting] in which he asked all attendees to divide into one of three groups that represented their personal feelings: anger, confusion, hope. The “hope” group was asked to spend time imagining a new, better and exciting future for the church. When this group reported the outcome of their exercise, smiles and nods appeared among the people in the other two groups.

Gary often does an imagery technique with his clients who are depressed. He asks the person to close her eyes and describe herself—what color is she wearing, how does her facial expression (eyes, mouth, etc) look, how does her stature appear, how are her friends reacting to her, what does she do every day, etc. Then, he asks this person to imagine herself in a year, prompting her with the same questions about facial expression, stature, lifestyle, etc. Afterwards, they have a discussion about which of the two images are preferable and what [Implementation Intention] the person can make in order to begin moving towards the more desirable image.

¹¹ Heath & Heath, 211
¹² Heath & Heath, 213
<<get a story or two from Bill Treasurer>>