

Kansas State University Libraries

New Prairie Press

Academic Chairpersons Conference
Proceedings


35th Academic Chairpersons Conference,
Orlando, FL

Navigating the Trauma of Change

Kent Crookston

Brigham Young University, kent_crookston@byu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://newprairiepress.org/accp>

 Part of the [Educational Leadership Commons](#), and the [Higher Education Administration Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 License](#).

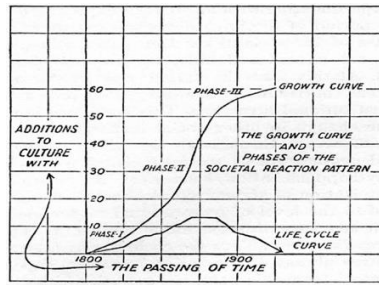
Recommended Citation

Crookston, Kent (2018). "Navigating the Trauma of Change," *Academic Chairpersons Conference Proceedings*. <https://newprairiepress.org/accp/2018/colleagues/6>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences at New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in Academic Chairpersons Conference Proceedings by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact cads@k-state.edu.

References & Quotes

1. Chapin, F. Stuart. (1928). *Cultural Change*. Century, New York, NY.



- A growth curve to illustrate how changes in a culture are initiated, accelerate, and decline with the passing of time [reproduced with permission].

2. Crighton, Michael. (1995). *The Lost World*. Originally published in hard cover by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. The following citation is from the 2012 Ballantine Books Mass Market Edition, Random House, Inc., New York, NY. (underlining added)

- Prologue: “LIFE AT THE EDGE OF CHAOS”
 He shifted at the podium, transferring his weight onto his cane, “But even more important,” he said, “is the way complex systems seem to strike a balance between the need for order and the imperative to change. Complex systems tend to locate themselves at a place we call ‘the edge of chaos.’ We imagine the edge of chaos as a place where there is enough innovation to keep a living system vibrant, and enough stability to keep it from collapsing into anarchy. It is a zone of conflict and upheaval, where the old and the new are constantly at war. Finding the balance point must be a delicate matter – if a living system drifts too close, it risks falling over into incoherence and dissolution; but if the system moves too far away from the edge, it becomes rigid, frozen, totalitarian. Both conditions lead to extinction. Too much change is as destructive as too little. Only at the edge of chaos can complex systems flourish.
 He paused, “And, by implication, extinction is the inevitable result of one or the other strategy – too much change, or too little.” (p. 2-3)

3. Crookston, R. Kent. (2012). *Working with Problem Faculty: a six-step guide for department chairs*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass (pp. 151-152).

- “I have imposed Schlechty’s descriptions [of change characters] onto a normal distribution with one and two standard deviations from the mean (following Roger’s example) to produce figure 10.1.”

4. Gardner, John W. (1981). *Self Renewal: The individual and the innovative society*. W. W. Norton, NY, NY.

- “Even the most potent innovators are unlikely to be effective unless their work coincides with a crisis or series of crises that put people in a mood to accept innovation.” (p. 29)
- Many a business firm has had to go through bankruptcy before initiating obviously necessary reforms. (p. 44)

5. Hartman, Taylor. (2017). *The People Code and The Character Code*. Omnibus Edition. New York, NY: Scribner

- WHITES are strongest in self-regulation. REDS find motivation most naturally. BLUES excel in intimacy, while YELLOWS thrive in social situations. (p. viii)
- MOTIVES, NEEDS, AND WANTS:
 - MOTIVE: Red, power; Blue, intimacy; White, Peace; Yellow, fun
 - NEEDS: Red, to be right; Blue, to be understood; White, to be allowed their own space; Yellow, to be noticed
 - WANTS: Red, productivity; Blue, quality; White, independence. Yellow, happiness (p. 29)

6. Heifetz, Ronald A. (1994). *Leadership without easy answers*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

- “People who lead frequently bear scars from their efforts to bring about adaptive change. Often they are silenced.” (p. 235)
- Even the most well-crafted efforts at inclusion can rarely prevent the experience of loss by some. As a result, one often cannot shield oneself from the outrage of those parties who must face loss and are unwilling to change. (239-40)
- The graphs in slides #6 and #7 are from a lecture given by Ronald A. Heifetz titled TECHNICAL PROBLEMS VS. ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwWYlUlvmo>

7. Leaming, D. R. (2007). *Academic leadership: A practical guide to chairing the department* (2nd ed.). Bolton, MA: Anker. (p. 337)
 - “Above all else, you [the chair] must be a change agent.” (p. 117)
8. Lynch, D., & Kordis, P. L. (1988). *Strategy of the Dolphin: Scoring a Win in a Chaotic World*. William Morrow and Company, Inc. New York, NY

Slide # 8

- **Dolphins**...: “I am a dolphin, and I believe in potential scarcity and potential abundance. Since I believe that we can have either - that it is our choice and that we can learn to leverage what we have and utilize our resources elegantly, I make flexibility and doing more with less the cornerstones of how I create my world.” (p. 37)
- **Carps** sing, “I can’t win,” and repeat this message in all of its change-and-possibility-negating variations, even to the point of denying the true consequences of failure:
 - “Ignorance is bliss.”
 - “I was helpless before, and I will always be helpless.”
 - “Losing comes with life.” (p. 62)
- **Sharks** croon, “I have to win.” And their propaganda includes these variations:
 - “After all, it’s a shark-eats-shark world out there.”
 - “I really meant to cut off your hand at the wrist, and before you reached for your chips you should have remembered my warning.”
 - “Competition is inevitable.” (p. 63)

Slide #10

- We are confronted with] great, looming, incredibly energized waves of *change!* And whereas those waves once took shape almost glacially, over thousands and thousands of years, today they are taking shape and crashing against us with ever-accelerating rapidity. (p. 70)
- Dolphins understand that the single most important organizing principle of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is “the wave.” The wave of change. And the managers and leaders who don’t learn to ride—and enjoy learning to ride—the wave run the risk of being marooned in an ever-receding pool overpopulated by frantic, confused, dispirited (and sometimes mean-spirited) sharks and carps. (p. 71)

Slides #11 & 12

- Dolphins leverage the wave. When the old patterns and performance gains begin to flag, when people’s needs aren’t getting met and the faintest hint of changing times and circumstances is transmitted by the future, dolphins begin to raise questions and to play “What if...?” (p. 84)
- But even if you “get it” before nearing disintegration, you must still contend with two sobering factors: the “long road back and the “recovery trough.” ...Long Road Back. Because you have ridden the original wave so far past its peak, you are now confronted by a truly immense amount of lag. To get from where you are now to where you need to be may simply be unthinkable. (p. 183)
- Recovery Trough. Over time, most individuals can work through the Recovery Trough: through the shock of failure, the denial, anger, bargaining, sadness, returning finally to a sense of emotional stability. However, every minute, every dollar, every ounce of energy consumed by the Recovery Trough is a minute, a dollar, an irrecoverable dollop of life force forfeited, fording further delay in our return to performing equilibrium. (p. 183-84)
- In rapid-change times, dolphins know it is often wise to begin changing *before* the times rather than run the risk of waiting to change with or after the times. Changing before the times means changing without strong signals, changing on the basis of intuitions and suspicions and perhaps merely dissatisfaction with the current shape of things. (p. 186)

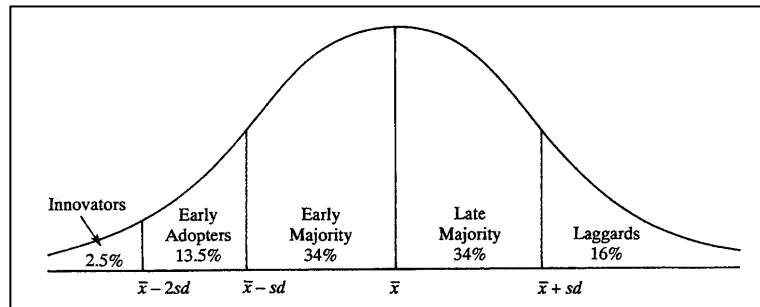
Slide #13

- Behind every butterfly there’s a caterpillar that succeeded in letting go. (p. 201)

9. Lucas, Ann F. & Associates. (2000). *Leading Academic Change: Essential Roles for Department Chairs*. San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass.
 - “The department is the place from which change needs to be launched, and... the chair is the right person to lead such change.” (p. 2)
10. Machiavelli, Nicolo. (2015, first published in 1513). *The Prince*. Wisehouse Classics, Wisehouse, Sweden. www.wisehouse-publishing.com
 - “And it ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things,

because the innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and lukewarm defenders in those who may do well under the new.” (p. 27)

9. Oxenford, Carolyn and Sally Kuhlenschmidt. *What about the psychologically challenged?* Chapter 7, In: Crookston, R. Kent (2012) *Dealing with problem faculty: the #1 concern of America’s academic chairs*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass (p. 165-189)
 - “Recognizing when mental health issues may be part of the problem and how to best work with colleagues whose work-related issues are rooted in mental health concerns is unfortunately a skill that few chairs possess.... Examples of specific faculty behavior that may suggest a mental health problem are provided in Appendix C.” (p. 166)
10. Rogers, Everett M. (2003). *Diffusions of Innovations*. 5th ed. New York, NY: Free Press



Divisions of a group into adopter categories and the approximate percentage of each group [reproduced with permission from Rogers (2003) p. 281].

11. Schlechty, Phillip C. (1997). *Inventing better schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
 - Schlechty uses colloquial labels to describe what he calls the five types of actors who participate in any change process:
 1. **Trailblazers** are rare and valuable. They take risks for the good of the group and are willing to go places and try things that others do not dare. Their most important requirement is a clear guiding vision; they need to be constantly reminded that they are part of a community, and their leaders need to help them link their private vision to that of the unit.” (p. 212-13)
 2. **Pioneers** are like trailblazers – “an adventurous and hardy lot who are willing to take considerable risks... and also have a considerable need for assurance that the trip upon which they will embark is worthwhile.” (p. 213)
 3. **Settlers** need to know what they are expected to do and where they are going to go. They need much more detail and more carefully drawn maps than do those who have gone before them.... it is critical that leaders understand the terrain well enough to point out progress, especially when those who are unfamiliar with the terrain become discouraged. Benchmarks of progress are, therefore, essential, and feedback regarding progress toward these benchmarks is critical.” (p. 214-15)
 4. **Stay-at-homes** “People who do not respond enthusiastically, or at least compliantly, to the desires of change leaders are often viewed as problems, and unfortunately, for the change process, such problems get attention.... Such people are not likely to be encouraged to move by direct assaults on what they currently value or threats to what little security they now enjoy. Instead, they will join with those who for other reasons do not want to change: the saboteurs.” (p. 217-18)
 5. **Saboteurs** “are actively committed to stopping change. Not only do they refuse to take the trip; they do not want others to go either... “It is certain that saboteurs can cause trouble no matter where they are, but I have found that the best place to have them is on the inside where they can be watched rather than on the outside where they can cause trouble without its being detected until the effects have been felt.” Some saboteurs were once trailblazers and pioneers [who did not receive the support they needed]. (p. 218-19)

David

David had been dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for four years. The College was in the midst of a reinvention. Whole departments had been dismantled and new ones formed, some out of pieces of three previous units. The college curriculum had been reduced by one third. Satellite units had been closed. One of David's fellow deans from a different college shared his impression that "this is the sort of thing that results in earthquakes and suicides."

When David had come to the college from another university his friend back home, who had himself been a dean, said "Now remember David, the last thing you ever want to do is reorganize. Just go down there and preside. Show up at events. Promote the goodness in people. Help them celebrate. Enjoy yourself." David had intended to follow that advice but university demographics and budget cuts had led him to "preside" over the very thing that he had been both warned against and determined to avoid. Chaos and trauma resulting from the reinvention were high when David was presented with a collection of 16 letters of protest from college faculty; all but two were unsigned, the majority asked for his resignation.

"David my boy," the academic vice president said, "you've really done it haven't you. You've got them all riled up; they're polarized in a manner we've never seen at this university before. I've a mind to honor the request made by this stack of ugly letters and ask you to resign."