# CHAPTER ONE
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## *Doing Is the Crucible of Change*



To some, the notion that practice can be liberating while theory is confining may seem counterintuitive. Current practice does have a lot of built-in conservatism and inertia, but thinking and feeling practitioners are the only ones who can find ways to break through the inertia. To do so, they will need focus, coherence, and persistence—resources they will find far more readily in themselves (the feeling as well as the thinking parts) than in theory. Of course, research and theory can be useful, but only insofar as they help leaders move forward. Once you are free of the constraints of a new theory or past practice, you can explore multiple approaches, experiment, and above all *learn from your experience.* In this context, practice becomes a powerful tool for change.

Another fundamental reason that we need to ground our learning in practice is the growing research on how the brain works. Four findings stand out for our purposes. First, we are not always in control of our own thoughts because they come from the subconscious. Jacobs (2010) notes that "fMRI scans of our brains show that our perceptions

are a function of our feelings, desires, and memories" (p. ix)—and at the risk of being redundant, these phenomena occur *without our knowing that this is happening.* Let's call these "unpredictable inner drives." This means that learning about ourselves is a full-time job, and that we literally don't know ourselves unless we work at it. Chapter Five furnishes some ideas and self-learning exercises to help us learn and refine ourselves on an ongoing basis.

Second, if we are unpredictable and to a certain extent unaware of what motivates us, so is everyone else, by definition. Therefore as leaders we need to have what I call "impressive empathy," and manage others by creating environments that help them learn and grow. "Impressive empathy" includes understanding others who disagree with us—that is what makes it impressive!

Third, while being selfishly driven, so to speak, humans are also wired to connect. So-called "mirror neurons" cause us to be drawn to others (Goleman, 2006). While biologically (brain) driven to begin with, we consciously value the group once our relationships are cultivated. Beyond this most of us want to do good in this life and make a contribution, if we get that far—that is, if our self- and group learning gets that far.

Fourth, and most shockingly encouraging, is that our brain can be reshaped. Through *neuroplasticity*, we can engage in repeated new actions and thoughts that actually *forge and retain* new neural pathways. Thus, the brain can change its own structure and function through activity. We can learn, for example, to become more empathetic through repeated practice to the point that our empathy automatically kicks in because it becomes brain-wired (Doidge, 2007).

All of this is exciting and a bit daunting, but keeping with our simplexity principle, the good news is that we can become better leaders, and can help others become better by following a few powerful principles and strategies that are set out in this book. The bottom line is that your best source of learning is day-to-day practice because it is only experience that can engage and reshape the brain.

**Key Insight 1**

**The effective change leader actively participates as a learner in helping the organization improve.**



I argue in this book that most good ideas come from first examining good practices of others, especially practices that are getting results in difficult circumstances. The second step is to try out the new ideas yourself. The third entails drawing conclusions from what you have learned, and then expanding on those conclusions. Deliberative doing is the core learning method for effective leaders.

You will discover in this book seven key interrelated ideas and competencies that are essential for leading change through practice and experience: cultivating deliberative practice, being resolute, motivating others through linking to their realities, fostering collaboration, learning confidently, knowing your impact, and sustaining your learning from practice.

The result is that you will become a better change leader, and better at helping others and your organization change and become more effective. Most change initiatives fail. In the course of this book I will show that (1) you can't make people

change (force doesn't work); (2) rewards are ineffective (buying superficial short-lived change at best); and (3) inspiration is not the driver we think it is (fails to reach enough people).

What does work is looking inside yourself and your practice as a full-time endeavor—and at the same time learning to relate to other people's realities while fostering collective capacity and identity. This book will show you what is entailed in doing this.

## Caveat Emptor

Before getting into the nuts and bolts of the book, let's spend a moment looking at research and theory as they are currently presented to would-be change leaders. Management books by and large would have us start with expert advice—which, as it turns out, is abstract and inconsistent.

A good place to begin is Matthew Stewart's *The Management Myth: Why the "Experts" Keep Getting It Wrong* (2009). Stewart was finishing his doctoral dissertation on nineteenth-century German philosophy when he decided he needed a job. By his account, he went on a self-directed crash course of reading business books and the *Financial Times,* landed a job in an international management consulting firm, and began a rapid rise to high-priced consultant.

We can assume that Stewart's autobiographical sketch is a bit tongue-in-cheek and perhaps hyperbolic, but it rings more true to life than the grand theories. Many consultancy situations, he says, feature the same plot and characters: "the hapless client, the fiercely intelligent consultant, the unexpected insight, and the mutually profitable ending" (p. 17). The gist one gets from reading Stewart's account is that successful

management consultants are people who make common sense complicated and then sell it well.

Stewart, of course, is not the first writer to attack the flimsy wisdom of management gurus. In *The Witch Doctors*, two staff editors from the *Economist*, Micklethwait and Wooldridge (1996), observed that "management theory" suffers from four defects:

> It is constitutionally incapable of self-criticism; its terminology usually confuses rather than educates; it rarely rises above common sense; and it is faddish and bedeviled by contradictions. (p. 13)

If anything, the situation has worsened in the past fifteen years. In 2004, Henry Mintzberg wrote a penetrating critique of MBAs in which he characterized the whole field as specializing in the "wrong people" engaged in promoting the "wrong ways" with the resulting "wrong consequences"—educationally, practically, organizationally, and societally (p. vii).

Mintzberg concludes that MBA graduates should have a skull and crossbones stamped firmly on their foreheads, over the words "Warning: NOT prepared to manage!" (p. 67), and characterizes what he calls "the impression left by MBA education" thusly:

1. Managers are important people who sit above others, disconnected from the work of making products and selling services.
2. Managing is decision making based on systematic analysis.

3. The data for such decision making comes from briefs, cases.
4. Under these managers sit their organizations, neatly separated . . . into the functions of finance, marketing, accounting, and so forth.
5. To bring these functions together, managers pronounce "strategies."
6. The best strategies are clear, simple, deliberate, and bold.
7. After these MBA managers have finished formulating their strategies, all the other people—known as "human resources"—must scurry around implementing them.
8. This implementation is, however, no easy matter, because although the managers who have been to business schools embrace change, many of those who haven't resist it.
9. To become such a manager, better still a "leader" who gets to sit on top of everyone else, you must first sit still for two years in business school. That enables you to manage anything. (2004, pp. 67–68)



Being irreverent, Mintzberg no doubt exaggerates, but the gist of his argument is sound—having theoretical analysts trained generically "to manage anything" or to advise others how to manage seems risky to say the least.

Then we have Pfeffer and Sutton's book (2006) *Hard Facts, Dangerous Half-Truths and Total Nonsense.* Their conclusion is essentially the same: "The advice managers get from the

vast and ever-expanding supply of business books, articles, gurus, and consultants is remarkably inconsistent" (p. 33). They offer chapter and verse examples to make this point stick, but I'll spare you.

What we see time and again is that theory and strategy (abstract concepts) dominate practice and implementation (grounded concepts). Pfeffer and Sutton note that Google generates at least twice as many entries for the word *strategy* than for the word *implementation,* concluding that

> Judging by mentions on book titles and search engines, *figuring out what to do* seems to be far more important . . . than *the ability to actually do something* — such as operate the business effectively. (2006, p. 135, italics in original)



Pfeffer and Sutton conclude that the least we can do is to slow the rate of adoption of bad practices (that is, taking bad advice). In studying four "good" versus four "bad" bank closings they found that "managers at each successful closing had largely ignored the procedures developed by the retail action team and developed their own practices instead" (p. 231). As they report, "One manager held up a thick book of procedures and policies put together by the retail action teams, and bragged that the key to his success was ignoring everything in the book!" By contrast, Pfeffer and Sutton found that "managers at each bad closing lamented that they had tried to follow the official procedures closely and doing so had hampered their ability to convince customers to transfer to other branches" (p. 231).

Unfortunately, if you think Pfeffer and Sutton might themselves have the answer, think again. Try reconciling their latest

books, which they wrote separately. Sutton (2010) says, "be nice"; Pfeffer (2010) wants us to grab power. Sutton confidently claims that "treating people with dignity is what good bosses do" (p. 5). He has learned this "from a huge pile of academic studies during my 30-year career as a researcher and from thousands of observations and conversations with their bosses (and their colleagues) from workplaces of all kinds" (p. 7). Pfeffer proffers that "systematic research confirms that . . . being politically savvy and seeking power are related to career success and even to managerial performance" (p. 4). Likability is overrated, says Pfeffer; the irony may be too much when Pfeffer warns "beware of the leadership literature" (p. 11). (Of course you can find areas of commonality if you dig, such as that grit [perseverance and resilience] is essential for success, which I have to agree with—see Chapter Two in this book.)

On the education front, take a look at the head-scratching advice on performance or merit pay. Hanushek and Lindseth (2009), an economist and lawyer respectively, advocate performance pay for teachers with this lead-in: "There is *growing research* to show that rewarding successful teachers is one of the most important steps a school district can take to improve achievement . . . . A bipartisan group found that our current compensation system fails our teachers and our children. There it is, *pure and simple:* pay teachers based on their performance, as do virtually all other professions" (pp. 237–238, italics added).

Contrast that advice with what Pfeffer and Sutton have to say on the subject: "It turns out that merit pay for teachers is an idea that is almost 100 years old and has been the subject of much *research*." [They conclude], "*Evidence* shows . . . that

merit pay consistently fails to improve student performance" (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006, pp. 22–23, italics added).

There you have it, pure and simple—or a hundred years of research? Both conclusions smack of dead certitude. Each draws the opposite conclusion. In truth, you would be better off not to try to determine who is right, but rather to figure out for yourself what is right.

Of course, we can't blame management consultants for everything. And my point is not to discard management theories wholesale—in fact I have learned a lot from them over the years—just don't go seeking answers in books alone. Your own *reflective* practice is a more important tool. Books can be useful to tweak your reflections, but evidence (and the form in which it comes) is not how good leaders think. "A large percentage of expert advice is flawed," says Freedman as he compiles page after page of research studies in medicine, science, and business that turn out to be wrong (Freedman, 2010, p. 11). My book provides protection against bad advice because it helps change leaders learn to rely on themselves, including questioning themselves as they learn.



In my experience, effective change leaders—or any people who are successful in any walk of life—don't start with imagining the future. They walk into the future through examining their own and others' best practices, looking for insights they had hitherto not noticed. We will see examples of this sequence in action time and again throughout this book.

Effective leaders do not think and act like management gurus, and less effective leaders make matters worse for themselves and their organizations because they heed abstract management advice. It is not that typical management books

contain *no* good ideas. It is just that these authors come at the solution the wrong way around. Practicing managers should first get in touch with and trust their own initial instincts. If you read a management book and find yourself agreeing with it but having no practical idea what to do, you should worry. If advice sounds too good to be true—or sounds like bunk—it probably is. If it comes from someone who has never actually managed a successful company, it is likely not sound advice about where and how to start.

## Why Practice Needs to Drive

My claim in this book is to do the opposite of what most theories of management suggest—don't try to figure out someone else's theory but rather use practice to get at theory, and more directly use practice to discover strategies that work. The source of creative breakthroughs, then, is learning about and from practice, not theory.

William Duggan makes this same argument in *Strategic Intuition: The Creative Spark in Human Achievement* (2007). Like Mintzberg, he finds the concept of strategy wanting because it doesn't tell you where ideas come from in the first place. Reigning models of business strategy "leave out how strategists actually come up with their ideas" (p. 8). What Duggan finds is that the scientific method "depends not on imagination but on discovery" (p. 9), by which he means that you do not imagine or "theorize" the next creative idea, but rather you discover it through reflective practice and insight, and then develop it further.

Citing individuals from Copernicus to Gates and other creative breakthrough practitioners, Duggan illustrates how the paradigm for discovery is precisely the opposite of what we assume. For instance, in offering the breakthrough idea that the earth revolves around the sun, Copernicus

> did not come up with a new theory of physics. The new theory followed, with Newton, at the end of the scientific revolution. This sequence for a paradigm shift—from achievement then theory—is exactly backward from common ideas on how progress happens. (p. 17)

Our everyday manager is no Copernicus but the sequence holds. If you want to improve practice, don't go to the business theorists. A better approach (adapting Duggan) is

> Step 1. Examine your own practice and results and identify what might be lacking.
>
> Step 2. Look in the laboratories of other practitioners in similar circumstances who seem to be achieving success.
>
> Step 3. Building on Steps 1 and 2, try out something new in your own practice.
>
> Step 4. If it works, draw a conclusion—your new theory—and do more of it, learning as you go.

In short, the new theory is the product of considered practice. It is not just that the change leaders immerse themselves in action, but rather they use it as the best source of evidence

and insights. They do analyze, but their analysis is based on substance.

The good news, according to Duggan, is that "intelligent memory," as he calls it, is cumulative. Strategic intuition is "where past elements stored in memory combine in a flash of insight to give you an idea for action.... Strategic intuition projects intelligent memory into the future, as a course of action to follow, based solidly on the past" (p. 35). The brain, as I said earlier, rewires and retains subconsciously. The more experiential the source (that is, practice based), the greater the retention.

This stance of learning from practice—your own and that of others—is further reinforced by Johnson's fascinating historical sweep, *Where Good Ideas Come From* (2010). He shows time and again that new ideas come from loosely connected networks whereby "change leaders," let's call them, derive new ideas. We will return to Johnson's findings in Chapter Four, "Collaborate to Compete."



The creative premise for the change leader is not to "think outside the box" but to get outside the box, taking your intelligent memory to other practical boxes to see what you can discover. And if it makes sense and actually works in your situation, you have a new theory of action. This stance is enormously liberating for practitioners: you don't have to frustrate yourself and those around you with abstract theorizing.

Specific examples of effective change leadership along these lines are furnished in Chip and Dan Heath's book, *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard* (2010). The Heath brothers begin by drawing on Jon Haidt's "happiness hypothesis" (2006). Haidt suggests that we are governed by two

forces that he dubs the Elephant (our emotional side) and the Rider (our rational side). The Elephant overpowers the Rider on most things. In other words, practice is more powerful than theory.

The trouble is that most practice is not very effective. The Elephant, if you like, takes the easy way out, favoring what is least taxing in the short term. When it comes to contemplating change "the Elephant is the one that gets things done" while "the Rider tends to overanalyze and overthink" (Heath & Heath, p. 8). The trouble is that if left alone the Elephant does the wrong things or nothing new, and the Rider thinks of some of the right things but only in theory. So the question I am addressing in the book you are holding is how to mobilize the energy of the Elephant and how to make the Rider's ideas more relevant to the task—or, to put it another way, how to achieve more effective practice through practitioners sharing ideas and influencing each other. We don't want to sideline the rational Rider, but rather enable her or him to think and act more effectively.



The Heaths cite several examples in their book. One case in point is the challenge that Jerry Sternin of the Save the Children fund faced when he was invited by the Vietnamese government to fight malnutrition in the country. Sternin did not start with theory—such as how to build sanitation systems and purify water, theories that he called TBU (true but useless).

Instead he started with practice, what he called "find the bright spots." He got together with groups of local mothers and organized teams to weigh and measure every child in their village. When they examined the results, Sternin asked, "Did you find any very, very poor kids who are bigger and

healthier than the typical child?" By following up on the children who were healthier they discovered three things: "bright spot" moms were feeding their kids four meals a day instead of two (but the same amount of food); they fed the kids more actively (hand-fed); and most revealing, they were collecting tiny crabs and shrimp from the rice paddies and mixing them with the rice (Heath & Heath, pp. 28–30).

Six months after Sternin had arrived in Vietnam, 65% of the kids in the villages were better nourished and stayed that way. The program reached 2.2 million people in 265 villages. Note that it was not theory that changed the mothers' behavior. Nor, for that matter, would knowledge of nutrition, such as being told to add protein. For change to occur the mothers would "have to practice it" (Heath & Heath, p. 30) and thereby see the benefits. Time and again we find that effective change leaders cause people to act their way into new ways of thinking. The effective sequence involves mobilizing new practices that in turn lead to greater clarity and commitment.

A further validation of this way of approaching change (that is, action leads to better thinking) is found in Alan Deutschman's *Walk the Walk: The #1 Rule for Real Leaders* (2009). "Walking the walk" doesn't just mean actions speaking louder than words, but that you actually learn a lot more by doing. Deutschman shows throughout his book that when you walk the walk, you demonstrate what comes first, share in the struggle and the risk, and gain firsthand experience, thereby learning more about the issues. Every moment offers up-close opportunity to teach, train, and lead, and then others can see the steps you take.

Conversely, talking the talk will not inspire most people, and when it does the appropriate action still will not be clear. Leaders must be there as learners to generate the exceptional energy and persistence required for substantial change to occur. Talk is not convincing because ideas are not meaningful and memorable unless they stem from learning-based action.

The core qualities that Deutschman ends up with are exactly the qualities found in the practitioner change leaders that we will examine in subsequent chapters: resolve, motivation, collaboration, learning as you go, impact, and confidence. All of these factors involve learning through reflective action.

This emphasis on deliberately learning in action is captured beautifully in Pascale, Sternin, and Sternin's book *The Power of Positive Deviance* (2010). "Positive deviance" is about learning from successful exceptions. But it is more than that for our purposes; it is about learning with your boots on the ground. Pascale et al. strike at the essence of this approach when they state, "It's easier to act your way into a new way of thinking, than to think your way into a new way of acting" (p. 38). It is about "action" (behaving differently), and "consistency" (relentless focus). Moreover, it is about finding and learning from practice that works to solve extremely difficult problems. Sternin's experiment in reducing childhood malnutrition in Vietnam—without an influx of foreign aid money—is an example of one such solution.

Because their approach is based on hands-on examples of real-world problems, Pascale et al. are able to bring clarity to what may otherwise be mysterious management concepts. Take, for example, the attractive but elusive concept from

Heifetz and Linsky (2002) of "adaptive challenges" as distinct from "technical problems." The latter are problems for which we know the answers and the solution entails applying what we know. Adaptive challenges, by contrast, "require experiments, new discoveries and adjustments from numerous places in the organization and community. Without learning new ways—changing attitudes, values and behaviors—people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in the new environment" (p. 13). I don't know about you, but I find this observation true but unhelpful.

In the hands of Pascale et al., because they are working on grounded problems, the concept of adaptive challenge becomes completely clear: The single thing that makes a problem adaptive is "*social complexity* and the need for *behavioral change*" (p. 49, italics in original). This I can understand. It is not that the problem is mysterious; it is more that helping people discover and embrace change is socially complex. Adaptive challenges and social complexity are one and the same.



Successful change is both simple and complex, what Kluger (2008) calls "simplexity." The simple part is that for most problems there are only a half-dozen or so key things you need to focus on. (We have seen this in our work in bringing about whole-system reform in education in changing 5,000 or more schools in Ontario [Fullan, 2010a].) Choose a small number of core priorities (in our case it was literacy, numeracy, and high school graduation), pursue them by building people's capacities in a nonjudgmental climate, and make sure you establish a two-way transparent learning relationship between practice and results. Simple to describe; difficult to execute.

The concept of simplexity is further evident in the study of how 20 of the most improved school systems in the world keep getting better conducted by Mourshed, Chinezi, and Barber (2010) of McKinsey & Co. They found that a fine balance between capacity building and accountability interventions was required, along with knowing your starting point and adapting strategies according to context; for example, whether the situation was one of going from "awful to good," or from "good to great." Accountability-driven reforms use assessment of performance, punishment, and rewards, whereas capacity building invests in individual and group learning. You need both, but the change leader uses more of the latter than the former. We will see this social learning dynamic in Chapter Four whereby once capacity reaches a certain level, it is peers who become the main source of innovation. The change leader knows this and uses it for more growth in the organization.

The complex part in both the Ontario and McKinsey examples lies in the chemistry of making the half-dozen or so factors fuse in action—in getting people to change both individually and in concert. Simple list; complex combination.



## The Change Leader

The themes in this book are not brand new; rather, they have become dormant over the past half-century as abstract theorizing has gained ascendancy. During that period the value of hands-on practical leadership has steadily declined in favor of distant CEOs and other professional managers. In a rather interesting take on the problem, Hopper and Hopper (2009) trace this to the loss of what they call

"the Puritan Gift"—"a rare ability to create organizations that serve a useful purpose, and to manage them well" (p. xxiii). They argue that we underplay domain-specific knowledge and fail to appreciate not only the practical but also the *intellectual* quality of hands-on work. Being an effective manager involves clever work, learned through reflective doing.

I would mount a similar critique with respect to what has happened over the past fifty years in my own field, education. We have lost the capacity to build effective practice through the teaching profession and its leaders. Instead we have politicians running around introducing ad hoc policies far removed from practice that have no chance of improving practice on the ground.

Ever since formal policy and research (that is, theories distant from practice) became a prominent part of finding a solution—from 1965 onward—the United States has declined from being number one in the world in educational attainment to its current status of about 24th despite having tripled its per-pupil expenditures in real dollars over the same time period (Goldin & Katz, 2008; Cohen & Moffitt, 2009).

The decline, I believe, is a function of superficial, silver-bullet solutions that actively disregard and disrespect practice. The point is not that practice is always good, but rather how to *improve it.* Matthew Crawford (2009)—a PhD in political philosophy who also likes to work on motorcycles—describes how hands-on practice can be both more interesting and more productive. He finds "manual work more engaging *intellectually*" (p. 5, italics in original).

"The truth does not reveal itself to idle spectators," says Crawford (p. 98). In other words, hands-on work has more

*meaning*. With a direct connection, you care more, and you must be simultaneously technical and deliberative: "You come up with an imagined train of causes for manifest systems and judge their likelihood before tearing anything down" (p. 25). When you do this work in conjunction with other practitioners, it also becomes more socially engaging. Such work is cognitively and socially more intrinsically rewarding, and more effective for addressing the problems at hand.

The advice for change leaders that we have established thus far is to dwell on your own situation and practice—as well as that of other practitioners—as a basis for action. Draw continuously on outside ideas but always in relation to how they relate to your situation, and how it could be improved. Mintzberg (2009) takes the same stance when he urges that "after years of seeking those Holy Grails, it is time to recognize that managing is neither a science nor a profession; it is a practice, learned primarily through experience, and rooted in context" (p. 9).



More and more it appears that you don't have to be a superstar to be effective; rather you need to work on being a clear-headed, persistent learner in the setting in which you work, with an eye to the bigger picture. For example, you don't have to read a hundred books to know that effective management is about people. Stewart (2009) captures this as well as anyone:

> A good manager is someone ... with a wide knowledge of the world and an even better knowledge of the way people work; someone who knows how to treat people with respect; someone with honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, and other things that make up character; someone in short

> who understands oneself and the world around us well enough to make it better. (p. 303)

But the question for us is how to achieve those characteristics. The answer can be found in what Colvin (2008) calls "deliberate practice." The vast majority of us are not born with talent; it must be developed. And it is not theory that develops talent, nor is it mere experience (twenty years doing the same thing is just one year's experience times 20). Colvin, claiming that "talent is overrated," documents that the best people in any business or sport are those who put in the effort to train and learn from their experience. And it's not easy. The ten-year rule really is true: it takes years of continuous application and learning to become an expert.

The characteristics of deliberate practice include the following:

- It can be repeated, a lot.
- Feedback on performance and results is continuously available.
- It is highly demanding mentally.
- It isn't much fun when you are learning it. (Colvin, 2008)

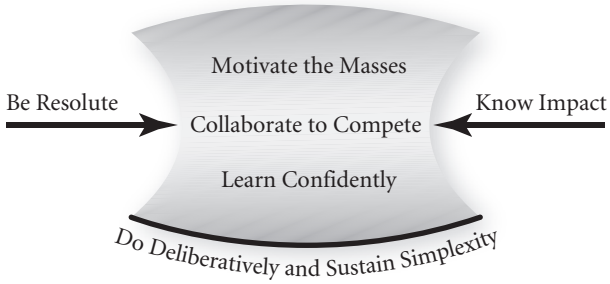
Through deliberate practice, your task is to deepen your knowledge about what works and about how to support and develop others, including the particular others with whom you are working. The most attractive and the best organizations are those that have a reputation for developing people. By definition they have leaders who are good at their own development and establishing the environment whereby they help others learn

and grow. But how to get this good is tricky. Strange as it sounds, *accomplishment* can generate greater moral purpose than trying to increase moral purpose directly.

Passion and vision are long-standing pillars in the house of management, at least since Tom Peters went searching for them over thirty years ago. But it turns out they are not the "drivers" we thought they were. When passion comes alive—when it turns out to be a powerful driver—it is in situations where we actually accomplish something of high moral value, which in turn energizes us to do even more. I have called this "realization" (Fullan, 2011a). It is the being in the moment of a successful endeavor that fuels passion, not the dreaming of it. Thus, exhorting people to have greater moral commitment is often less effective than helping them get new experiences that activate their moral purpose. The establishment of new practices and experiences galvanizes passion. This is the essence of *the change leader:* the capacity to generate energy and passion in others through action.

This book helps the change leader become more effective by providing a framework and examples wherein practice is the driver. It would be inconsistent for me to claim that all you need to do is to master the seven factors that I highlight. But I will argue that we have a good case of simplexity here. The simple part is that the seven themes are easy to grasp one by one. The complex part is getting good at applying them in combination. Your job, then, is to use deliberate practice as a way to learn the craft of change while fostering it in members of your organization. Do that, and you can solve today's problems while simultaneously shaping the next generation of

Figure 1.1: The Change Leader




leaders. The richest source of learning is through the alchemy of application.

Figure 1.1 shows the relationship of the seven elements of change leadership. Start with building up and cultivating your commitment to stay the course, what I called **being resolute**. The outer foundation for the work of the change leader is **deliberate practice** and **sustained simplexity** (not too simple, not too complex). As you incorporate these elements into your daily practice, you begin to **motivate** those you are leading and encourage **collaboration** and constructive **competition** to build capacity. Because you are immersed in the action, where ideas are being generated, you **learn** a great deal. And because what you and others learn is concrete, you and they gain **confidence**. Nonetheless, you double-check this all the time by establishing mechanisms that allow you to **know your impact.** These mechanisms serve to demonstrate accountability to the outside and to provide feedback for improvement.

Of course, this is all an oversimplification, but ideally it provides an overview of how these seven elements interact in concert and how you as leader can both guide the process

and learn from the dynamics. Subsequent chapters will furnish plenty of examples of how these elements work in practice.

The change leader framework is not a guide to action, but rather a tool to foster deliberate practice: apply, learn, get feedback on results, do more, and so on. Being resolute (Chapter Two) is the driving force that flows throughout several of the other elements: empathetic relationship building (Chapter Three); collaborative focus (Chapter Four); becoming a confident (but humble) learner (Chapter Five); and continually measuring and learning from the impact you and others are having (Chapter Six). The qualities that hold all this together are deliberate practice and sustained simplexity (simple to understand, complex to make jell).

My advice from the beginning of this chapter applies to my ideas as well as those of others: be a critical consumer. Examine received wisdom in light of your own practice and that of your peers, and only after thorough consideration of that practice. This framework does put the onus on you as change leader. If practice is going to drive improvement, the leader's job is to liberate practice. Machiavelli said it best 500 years ago, "A prince who is not himself wise cannot be well advised" (1515, 1961). The goal is to be both wise and well advised by your own and others' practice. It will take time.