

Time to Die and Born

In the last 15 years, I have been working in organizational change with national, regional and multinational organizations. I have dedicated an important part of my life to study the science and art of change. Although this has always been a central topic in organizations for some years from now, there has been a sense of urgency for change, triggered by technological disruption, which I had not noticed until this recently.

Given that there are good books that approach this topic from the point of view of the steps to follow for the implementation of the change, I will not focus on those aspects but I will talk about principles to be aware of so that the changes add real value to the organization.

It is often said that change is inevitable and that we have to be constantly adapting. This is correct, but it depends on the type of change. Chronological change (Cronos) is different from seasonal change (Kairos). A season is a period of time that has a specific purpose; therefore, a season change is a time of deep change. I will focus on deep changes as it relates to organizational change.

To reach personal and organizational change, in a world that revolutionizes, we must break all that is not letting us move forward; remember, connecting with our roots, with the purpose that derives from our talents. Finally, we must build from what we are; mobilized by a vision that affects our present and gives us the reasons we need to do our part, here and now.

Break

Although it seems paradoxical, the first thing we have to do to reach a personal or organizational change that point to growth and development is to break. Briefly, to break implies eliminating the possibility of continuing to do things in the same way; it involves assuming the pain of closing doors to open new doors. Surely, you can recognize something in your organization or your life that does not help to move along with meaningful purpose. That which is not allowing moving along is stopping you, because neutral things does not exist, therefore, it is necessary and convenient to break it. Do not confuse what you do with what you are. We must not fall in love with our actions but with our purpose. We cannot treat the temporary as permanent and the permanent as temporary. This tends to be serious because it leads us to take permanent decisions from temporary events. When your vision does not match what you can see in reality, what you see is temporary.

Let's use a tree as an example to discuss making changes. There is the branch and there is the trunk that connects with the root. The actions are the branches; its purpose and its identity are the roots and the trunk is the character that reflects the nature of a person or organization. If we want the tree to grow and bear fruit, which is through which the tree is known, we must prune it. This is way, it is not possible to change without breaking or letting go.

Many speak of the importance of letting go, or, as I call it, breaking, however, you must be careful. In the first place, letting go or release is not the goal. The purpose of a change is not reached once we are able to release. Releasing is a draw. In the last twenty years I have seen organizations and people "to release" without building, this leads to lack of meaning, making out past bigger than our future. It is like a person who retired and does not develop new activities. Never break without a purpose and a vision. Purpose is the end; vision is seeing the end from the beginning.

Remember

There is a way to break. There are people and organizations, which in search for a change, break their identity, do not learn and grow without a meaningful purpose. Remember means going back through the "Core", our central part. It is not the trunk what we prune, it is the branch. Never disconnect from your roots. To be able to do this, it is primordial to be clear regarding what is trunk and what is branch. If I cut a branch, another comes out, but if I cut the trunk and delete, the character, the connection with the root, nothing else will come out. In the root hides the potential, the talents that give us a purpose and give us a vision, and a reason to action.

Remember is thinking radically, thinking with thoughts based in the root. Many psychologists and psychiatrist friends have told me that, if patients only talk about the present and future they will not have addressed important unsolved issues, which they need to integrate into new changes. It is not possible to build without remembering our foundations.

It can seem paradoxical again because earlier I talked about breaking, and that is right. When something does not seem paradoxical, it is because it does not integrate the whole. Therefore, we have to break and remember. Allow me

to express the same in other words. Success is to complete the purpose for which our organizations were created and we have been born. Therefore, a necessary condition, although not enough, is connecting with our purpose, which derives from our talents that constitutes our roots, our core. Therefore, remember is connecting with our purpose.

Build

Just as it is key to understand the way to break, it is key to understand the way to build.

You build from the inside out and from the future to the present. Once again, these statements can seem paradoxical. When you think about building, you could suppose that you should do it from elements that you do not have. What we want is to change and the idea of starting with the end in mind can sound confusing. Before arriving to a new place, we must find north, and it is said that the easier place to find north is from home.

In other terms, meaning must be sought in our talents; we build from what we are and not from what we are not. I have heard many people saying, "I want to be" or "We want to be" and that is a conceptual mistake that does not help organizational nor personal change. You already are what you are; therefore, it is not possible to become something else. The right thing is, building, defining what you want to "do" motivated by a vision derived from a purpose, derived from your talents, from your identity.

Why does a person or organization go on a learning journey to build? I believe it is to continue building a solid foundation (trunk and roots) that contributes to have meaningful purpose for existence. Building will not leave much time for leisure and will bring other organizational and personal problems, however, we engage in changes to do what is necessary to complete the purpose for which we are here, now.

Many times, we will see people that apparently have everything and continue to develop projects, working and taking risks, and we will ask ourselves, why do we do all that if we really do not need to? The answer is clear; we do this for experiencing fulfillment with building a solid foundation for our organizations and ourselves.

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