



## **PLANNED CHANGE**

***Change can be painful or joyful --- It's your choice!***

***Shirley Stetson & Bryant Rollins***

StetsonRollins Consulting believes that all individuals, groups and systems are in a state of constant change. Change is one of the most predictable dynamics in nature.

Natural, or organic, planned change is preferable to the disorienting shock of an unexpected or undesirable change. It is more possible than we think to integrate change into normal processes in our lives, families, work groups, communities and institutions.

By integrating time and processes for proactive change we become more adaptable to those unforeseen changes that will, inevitably, come.

The flexibility and stability that results from this orientation helps to sustain long-term growth and development.

We at StetsonRollins advocate a mindset that includes disciplined commitment to regular Stop-Action for reflection --- slowing down because we're in a hurry. Stephen Covey calls this "Sharpening the Saw" --- pausing regularly to sharpen the saw virtually guarantees long-term productivity.

The most natural process is an "Inside-Out" movement based on Rev. Martin Luther King's philosophy that "All meaningful and lasting change begins on the inside."

But where to begin, and how to know we're on the right track in being proactive, rather than reactive, to change?

The answer is simple: Return to Basic Values.

Values-based change is the best way to create an environment that not only anticipates change, but welcomes it.

There are opportunities every day to practice living according to one's stated values. This is true for individuals, groups and communities.

The model below displays what we mean.

In attempting to move from the Present State to a Desired State it is not a good strategy to go directly from here to there. The process of getting there is as important as the end-state we desire.

As one of our favorite quotes suggests: "Life is the journey, not the destination."

We advocate a process that begins with reflection on Core Values --- what do we stand for in life --- as an individual, as a group or team, as an institution or community?

The main question is: Are we living our values now and what will it take for us to move forward driven by those values we hold most dear?

It is never easy to look in the mirror and acknowledge that I am violating my own or others' values --- or to be open to feedback from others.

However, any authentic process of "Inside-Out" change must be characterized by open and honest reflection; what Jim Collins, in his book "Good to Great:" calls "Facing the brutal facts". At StetsonRollins we often take groups through an activity we call: "Leave Nothing Left Unsaid".

Managing change requires total commitment to agreements and high quality interpersonal relationships characterized by high levels of trust and transparency. When agreements are made there needs to be "Nothing Left Unsaid--- no after-meeting meetings; no conversations at the water cooler expressing doubts; no internal ambivalence.

Clarity about Shared Values is then followed by clarity about:

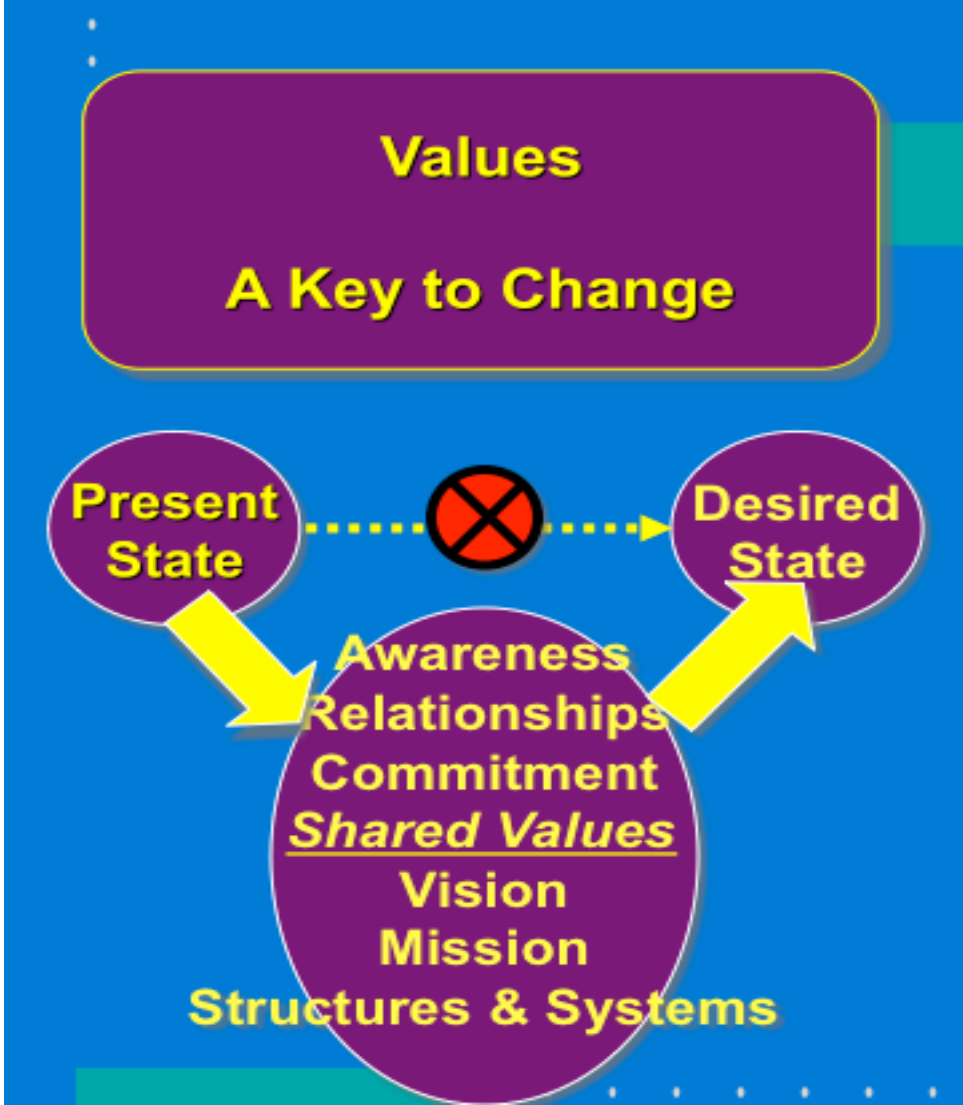
- A Shared Vision of the future we want to create --- often requiring Re-Visioning.
- The Mission moving forward --- sometimes requiring a revised mandate.
- Structures and Systems that will support movement forward.

As consultants, we are often called in to crisis situations in organizations, teams and community settings. In our executive coaching role we often consult with leaders who are in personal or organizational crisis.

A principal difference in how people and organizations handle difficult situations involves their basic mindset: Are they in a culture in which change is welcomed and change strategies fully integrated into their daily routines, or are they so consumed with the daily tasks getting the job done that they haven't taken time to reflect regularly, in a disciplined fashion, on how things are going?

Organizational leaders have a special responsibility for creating cultures that are flexible and adaptable, where change has minimal disruptive impact on the lives of people.

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