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Supporting the Change Agents

Keeping Ourselves Effective on the Journey of Change

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Sustainable development change agents influencing businesses are not simply cogs in a machine or automated steps in a process—they are highly aware people with individual motivations and personal feelings about the looming sustainability crisis and the wider movement of which they are a part. Sometimes they feel negative—fearful, angry, despairing—about the amount of change that is needed and their effectiveness in bringing about these changes.

Using a unique survey of nearly 100 such change agents, this paper gives insights into these motivations and emotional responses, and the ways that these very important individuals support themselves. Conclusions are drawn about the role consultants might play in supporting other change agents—and themselves—in the journey of change.

- Emotion
- Support
- Scale of change
- Change agents
- Organisational change
- Optimism
- Pessimism
- Climate change
- Sustainable development

Penny Walker is an independent consultant specialising in learning and change in relation to sustainable development. Much of her work involves in-depth collaboration with change agents in organisations (e.g. sustainability managers, green champions) and external change agents (e.g. consultants, advisors). She also designs and facilitates stakeholder engagement process in the same field, and trains people in facilitation skills and approaches to change, as well as in sustainable development topics. She lives in London with her family.



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THIS PAPER CAME ABOUT AS A RESULT OF REFLECTING ON PERSONAL EXPERIENCES and seeing an emerging pattern ‘at the margins’ of clients and colleagues wanting to express emotional responses to the unfolding recognition of the scale of change needed to bring about sustainable development and their own apparent ineffectiveness. This anecdotal starting point has been explored both through adding specific interventions to client work and training courses, and also through a more formal online anonymous survey. The results are analysed and some conclusions drawn, including suggestions for sustainable business consultants.

The key findings include the presence of very strong idealistic and altruistic motivations among organisational change agents working in the sustainable development field, including in businesses; very strong agreement among these people that, in order to achieve sustainable development, society needs to change radically; a range of emotional responses to this recognition, both optimistic and pessimistic; a belief that sharing the positive emotions (excitement, curiosity, optimism) helps change agents to be more effective; a polarised set of views on the helpfulness of sharing negative emotions (fear, anger, pessimism); a range of sources of support are used, with the most commonly used being informal networking, conversations ‘at the margins’; change agents would like to make use of support from sustainability-focused coaches and mentors—a one-to-one safe and confidential relationship.

Adding the ability to spot and explore these aspects of personal effectiveness (beliefs, emotions and assumptions) particularly using a coaching and facilitative style, would be useful for sustainable business consultants.

Conversations at the margins

This paper takes as its starting point the personal experiences of the author, an independent sustainable development consultant to businesses since 1996. The services the practice provides explicitly to clients include:

- ▶ The design and facilitation of stakeholder engagement and dialogue
- ▶ Staff training
- ▶ The design and facilitation of action-oriented workshops
- ▶ Guidance on sustainability management tools and approaches

These services are tangible, discreet and relatively easy to describe, price and sell.

Alongside this fee-paying work, clients and colleagues (other consultants with whom the author collaborates to learn and to deliver projects) apparently need conversations that dig deeper, provide a vent for strong emotions and allow them to reflect on their degree of agency.

Informal gatherings and conversations focus on questions that go to the heart of their practice as facilitators, trainers, consultants and change agents. Questions include:

Even if our clients follow our advice, will things change (fast) enough?

Why don't they get it yet?

How can we balance the facilitation of emergence with the sense of urgency and crisis?

Conversations with individual change agents in companies and public-sector organisations reveal people searching for ways to cut through paradoxes; for example:

Our most powerful people feel powerless to act.

My boss will tell me that he feels these things passionately, but in front of other people he will only talk about the business case.

Everyone knows we should be doing more but it feels as if nothing is changing.

And sometimes they spring into unguarded honesty:

Anyone else feel like packing it in and going to the pub?¹

These conversations have tended to happen in between consulting assignments, at the margins (e.g. on the walk from the meeting room back to reception), in safer and more trusting semi-social situations. They have not formed part of my explicit consulting assignments, until recently, when they have been introduced into sustainability change agent workshops for specific clients and into open training courses.²

Perhaps these ‘conversations at the margins’ deserve greater attention. I suggest that they occur because sustainability change agents, whether changing their own organisations or acting as consultants to other organisations, are taking on this role as their contribution to a wider movement—an attempt to bring about a sustainable society. This bigger aspiration can be both motivating and disheartening.

I believe that to build our collective capacity as change agents in this hardest of change challenges, we need opportunities to voice unsayable things and ask hard questions, even when we fear what the answers may be or that there may be no answers.

To test this more formally, I set up a survey of change agents and the results are presented here. The second half of the paper explores implications, specific strategies and interventions that can help us ‘look after ourselves’ and our clients on this journey.

Survey of change agents

I was interested in finding out what sustainability change agents—our clients and collaborators—would say about their motivations and beliefs about sustainable development and the ways they deal with their own strong feelings and get support.

About the survey

I created an online survey, using the Survey Monkey tool, and invited people from my own contacts and various e-groups related to sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) to respond anonymously. The survey was not subjected to rigorous design and no attempt was made to survey a representative sample of sustainability change agents. The survey was available for a month and there were 90 responses. The results should be treated with caution, because of the small numbers no elaborate correlations or generalisations can be made. However, they do provide insight into the beliefs and stated practices of the sustainability consultants and change agents who responded. A fuller analysis of the responses is available to download from the author’s website (Walker 2008).

1 Posted by a member of a sustainability e-group, 22 January 2008.

2 For example, change workshops run in conjunction with the UK Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (www.iema.net) and with Forum for the Future (www.forumforthefuture.org.uk) and the Post-Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Business run by the University of Cambridge’s Programme for Industry (www.cpi.cam.ac.uk/pcsb).

- ▶ Who responded?
- ▶ Why are you involved in sustainable development?
- ▶ How much change is needed to get to sustainable development?
- ▶ How optimistic or pessimistic are our change agents?
- ▶ How do our change agents get support?
- ▶ How do our change agents make use of their feelings?

Table 1 SECTIONS OF THE ANALYSIS PRESENTED IN THIS PAPER

Who responded?

Of the 90 respondents, approximately half self-identified as organisational change agents of various kinds—people working to make organisations more sustainable, either from the inside or as external consultants. The remainder self-identified as campaigners, activists, communications specialists working on sustainability topics or ‘other’. Some analysis was made of the differences between the organisational change agents (OCAs) and the respondents who did not fall into this category (non-OCAs).

Over two-thirds of the respondents were located in the UK. The remainder were from a diverse range of countries, including the US, Canada, Australia, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Hong Kong, the People’s Republic of China, India, Kenya, South Africa and Japan.

%	All (n = 90)	OCAs (n = 49)	Non-OCAs (n = 41)
0–16	1.1	0	2.6
17–25	5.7	4.1	7.7
26–35	34.1	36.7	30.8
36–45	27.3	26.5	28.2
46–55	19.3	22.4	15.4
55–65	11.4	10.2	12.8
65+	1.1	0	2.6

Table 2 AGE OF RESPONDENTS

%	All (n = 90)	OCAs (n = 49)	Non-OCAs (n = 41)
Male	45.6%	44.9%	47.5%
Female	54.4%	55.5%	52.5%

Table 3 GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

Why are you involved in sustainable development?

I wanted to test out what people said their motivations were for being involved in this field. Would the business case be prevalent? Or was it the challenge and excitement? Perhaps sustainable development is seen as a career-enhancing subject? Twelve possible answers were given, with respondents invited to specify their one top reason and up to three additional reasons.

The more popular primary reasons were

- ▶ To 'save the planet'
- ▶ It's the only logical thing to do, given the impact of the way we have done things up to now
- ▶ To help people now have better lives, by working for social justice/fairer use of resources/human rights/maintaining ecosystem services³
- ▶ I want to bridge the gap between my personal values/lifestyle and values/activities at work

The most popular secondary reasons—with no difference between OCAs and others—were:

- ▶ To help people in the future have better lives, by working for social justice/fairer use of resources/human rights/maintaining ecosystem services
- ▶ To help people now have better lives, by working for social justice/fairer use of resources/human rights/maintaining ecosystem services
- ▶ I want to bridge the gap between my personal values/lifestyle and values/activities at work
- ▶ Because it's a satisfying use of my expertise, knowledge and capabilities

The least popular reasons in both primary and secondary motivations, for all respondents, were:

- ▶ To differentiate my organisation from our competitors
- ▶ It's a growth market
- ▶ I sort of fell into it by accident
- ▶ It's the next step on my career path

It would seem, then, for respondents to this survey, that the 'business case' does not feature as a motivation and that they are involved in the field for more idealistic and inspirational reasons.⁴ This is as true for organisational change agents as it is for the other respondents. This comment from an OCA shows a very thoughtful approach:

For some time I worried that I shouldn't be using my influence with large organisations to promote an 'agenda' (SD) [sustainable development] but I have concluded that this is not only the only way I can work, but that the influence I have is a gift and privilege I must make the most of.

Other comments sketch out the complexity of motivations:

³ This was slightly less popular with OCAs than with others, being the sixth most popular choice for OCAs and the second most popular for non-OCAs. However, the numbers are small, so it is hard to draw confident conclusions.

⁴ The tension between personal motivations and organisational drivers is explored in Walker 2006.

Difficult to answer. Many are true and there is no single reason. Now it is my core skills and interest (and it is an exciting time), but originally it was to bridge the gap in values and work and to best use my skill in an emerging market.

How much change is needed to get to sustainable development?

The next question sought to explore respondents’ beliefs about how much change is needed. Are we in the realm of small changes or transformational ones? As change agents, what scale of endeavour do we see ourselves engaged in? The question asked, ‘To respond adequately to the challenge of sustainable development (i.e. meeting the needs of 6.6 billion people on a planet with a finite ability to provide essential ecosystem services) how much change is needed?’⁵

For the most part, respondents believed that a lot of change is needed in society as a whole, in their own society⁶ and in their own organisations, with a very strong common response to this question (Fig. 1). More change is thought to be needed in society than in respondents’ own organisations. OCAs were less likely than non-OCAs to opt for the most extreme ‘radical far-reaching change’ response when it came to their own organisations, with responses peaking before the end of the scale (Fig. 2).

% of respondents		No change is needed, we're already there					Radical far-reaching change is needed
Thinking about society (the whole world)	All	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	9.5%	21.4%	65.5%
	OCAs	0	0	2.1%	10.6%	23.4%	63.8%
	Non-OCAs	2.8%	0	0	8.3%	19.4%	69.4%
Thinking about my own organisation (or your working practices, if you are self-employed)	All	1.2%	3.6%	14.3%	17.9%	31.0%	32.1%
	OCAs	0	2.1%	17.0%	19.1%	36.2%	25.5%
	Non-OCAs	2.8%	5.6%	11.1%	16.7%	25.0%	38.9%

Table 4 HOW MUCH CHANGE IS NEEDED?

5 The question was worded in the same way as a question that I have used in workshops and training courses over the last 12 months, which enabled me to see whether anonymous responses were different to those in more public situations. Broadly, they were the same.
 6 During the pilot phase, some respondents suggested that the question should distinguish between global society and the respondent’s own society. The results did not show significantly different responses for those two levels of society and the ‘whole world’ results are used here.

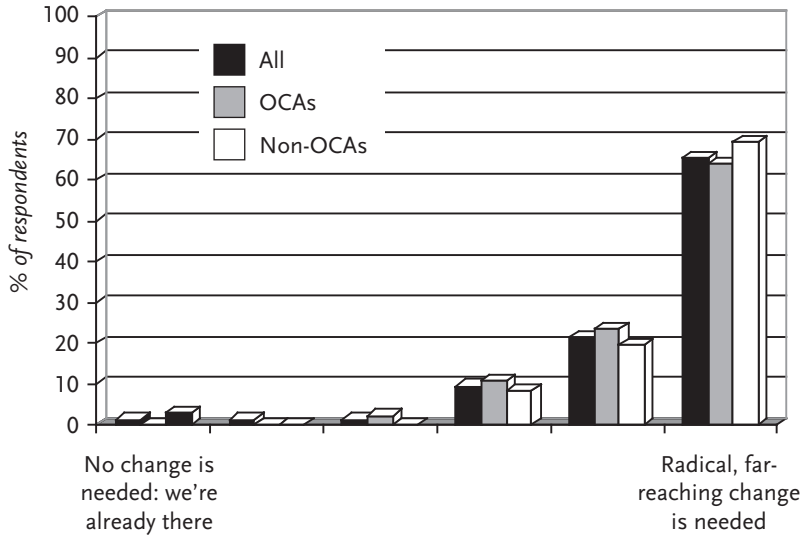


Figure 1 THINKING ABOUT SOCIETY (THE WHOLE WORLD) . . . HOW MUCH CHANGE IS NEEDED?

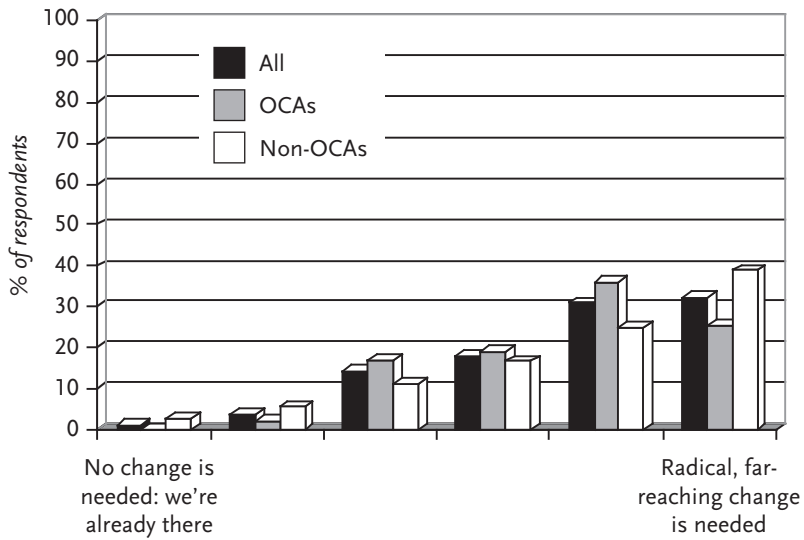


Figure 2 THINKING ABOUT MY OWN ORGANISATION . . . HOW MUCH CHANGE IS NEEDED?

Some of the organisational change agents made comments about their choices:

I think my organisation has an idea of what that radical change needs to look like, but we're a long way from getting there.

It's hard to think about really radical change—I'm tempted to put the tick in the previous circle [this respondent ticked 'radical far-reaching change' for all levels]—but it's harder to imagine how we can really do it without radical change at all levels.

My footprint is not sustainable; I'm a fractal of the wider system, full of paradox . . .

We need paradigm shifts, we need to forget about economic growth and start talking about happiness and survival.

It will be a miracle if we pull it off. But it is still worth trying.

Again, these comments do not seem to be tied to a traditional 'business case' or to a cautious view of the changes needed.

It is worth noting at this point the work of Ballard and Ballard on 'agency' in relation to climate change. Agency is the felt experience of being in a position to do something meaningful, that is feeling that the action one can take is both 'do-able' and 'meaningful' (Ballard 2005; Ballard and Ballard 2005). Intuitively, as the scale of the challenge increases, the meaningfulness of a particular action will reduce, other things being equal. It may be expected, then, that people who believe that radical far-reaching action is needed may feel they do not have agency.

How optimistic or pessimistic are our change agents?

The survey presented 14 statements (eight broadly pessimistic and six broadly optimistic). For each one, respondents were asked to grade how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statement.

Adding together the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses, these are the statements that generated the most agreement:

- ▶ Even if we think we will lose the battle to 'save the planet' and ensure justice for all, we must always fight for that goal as if we know we can win (87.2% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed)
- ▶ There are other people who I work closely with who are as passionate and engaged as me (59%)
- ▶ I'm run off my feet helping people to make positive changes—people like us are in demand right now (51.2%)
- ▶ I'm really optimistic that with ingenuity and leadership we'll build a sustainable society (46.2%)
- ▶ I get frustrated by the way so many people I work with just don't seem to 'get' it (39.8%)

The heroic 'battle to save the planet' statement was the most strongly agreed with by a large margin. These statements generated agreement from all respondents, with minor differences between OCAs and others. One clear distinction between OCAs and their counterparts, who are not involved in organisational change, was the response to this statement 'I'm fearful about things like climate change, ecosystem collapse and/or societal collapse, sometimes to the point of being overwhelmed by my feelings.' This was the fourth most-agreed-to statement for non-OCAs (36.6% agreed or strongly agreed), but the ninth most-agreed-to by OCAs (22.5% agreed or strongly agreed). The statements that generated the strongest disagreement were:

- ▶ My colleagues don't give a monkey's. I'm afraid of looking foolish when I mention things like recycling paper (62.8% respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed)
- ▶ I feel isolated in my work (50%)
- ▶ Sustainable development is easily achievable and I don't think about it in apocalyptic terms (50%)
- ▶ I sometimes feel like a hypocrite and am worried that colleagues/clients will see me like this too, if I try to get them to change their behaviour (43.6%)

There was little difference in the responses of OCAs and non-OCAs, in relation to these statements. Some OCAs commented on their responses:

Found it difficult to choose answers here. I do feel a blend of pessimism (it's a challenging road, constantly pushing for change) and optimism (some real change is happening). I do think that however hard it might be and however bleak I feel at times about the work that needs doing, we must do it! I do genuinely think, then, that we can make lasting, sustainable change happen.

I see both sides—many like me who are deeply committed and passionate. Then again—I talk about the malaise of the mainstream and how so many have their head in the sand. I do know that we will face more devastation as a result of our actions. But I once heard a powerful story about the holocaust. It said that there were some who had given up—believed life was hurtful and they died or withered away. Then there were some who believed in the power of life—they kept up their routines, even married, studied as they could—they continued to live and love—many of these people were freed and have continued to live on. This has taught me that the sun shines above, even though we only see clouds on a rainy day. There will be much good that comes from much bad and I will be on the side of bringing in much good.

My sense of urgency fuels my effort—I do not stay in despair but expect things to get worse overall—how much we/I do not know.

Personally, I have found the overwhelming sense of impending doom so powerful as to be debilitating in my work. I am trying to find a position that is more positive, whilst not ignoring the data.

How do our change agents get support?

A list of 11 different kinds of support was provided and respondents were asked to say for each one whether they currently make use of it, would like to or neither do nor would like to make use of it. An average of 5.5 kinds of support are made use of by each respondent.

The most commonly used ways of getting support were:

- ▶ Signing up to e-newsgroups, email groups or web-based discussion forums with a sustainable development focus⁷
- ▶ Talking with friends who work in this field too
- ▶ Conversations and sharing experience with peers/competitors in other organisations
- ▶ Formal networking with other sustainable development types (e.g. through organised networks, professional bodies)

⁷ Invitations to take the survey were sent out through e-groups, so it is to be expected that this would score highly in 'currently use'.

The least commonly used forms of support are any kind of coaching or mentoring. Working with a coach or mentor with expertise or interest in sustainable development, whether inside or outside the organisation, was the most desired form of support not currently used. Mentoring or advice from a professional body or equivalent was also a popular choice for ‘would like to use but don’t’.

The least popular forms of support (of those who do not currently use this form of support, a low percentage would like to) were a coach or mentor with no sustainable development specialism (whether inside or outside the organisation).

The most popular forms of support overall (people either use them or would like to use them) were:

- ▶ Conversations and sharing experience with peers/competitors in other organisations
- ▶ Talking with friends who work in this field too
- ▶ Formal networking with other sustainable development types (e.g. through organised networks, professional bodies)
- ▶ Attendance at training courses and learning programmes, where at least part of the purpose is to share experience and get tips on making sustainable development a reality
- ▶ Signing up to e-newsgroups, email groups or web-based discussion forums with a sustainable development focus
- ▶ Informal networking (e.g. ‘green drinks’, socialising, occasional coffees) with other sustainable development types

OCA’s comments included:

Many of the things that I have ticked as not needing I did years ago. I usually play these roles for others. I do not wish to sound arrogant, but I have become pretty self-sufficient and do not feel as if most of these have much to offer me any longer.

Our organisation has found that certain staff already have a natural skill or education in sustainability issues. We have tried to harness that by giving them the time and encouragement to develop their expertise and then feed back into the organisation as a whole.

My role in sustainability is a bit lonely. I have been promoted at work partly because of it, but the promotion has resulted in me having almost no time to further it at the moment. Very frustrating! Having more contact with others in a similar position would be motivating and invigorating.

How do our change agents make use of their feelings?

Change agents have strong feelings—some positive and some negative—about the field in which they work. Are they open about these feelings in their work and how do they think these feelings impact on their effectiveness? Figures 3 and 4 explore openness about feelings in work settings and in support settings.

Overall, around two-thirds of respondents said they are open ‘most of the time’ and they are more likely to be open ‘all the time’ than ‘infrequently’ or ‘never’. OCA’s have a marginal tendency to be more open in their work than in support settings, unlike non-OCA’s who have a marginal tendency in the other direction. Overall, there is a slight tendency to be more open about feelings when giving and receiving support than in work, but this is very small.

Whether the feelings are negative or positive is perceived to make a difference to the impact of sharing the feelings. There is clear agreement among all respondents that

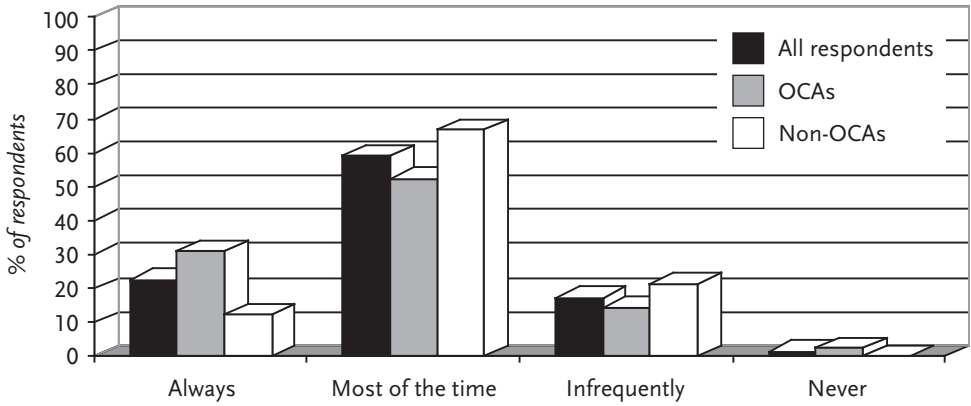


Figure 3 | I AM OPEN ABOUT MY FEELINGS/DEGREE OF OPTIMISM OR PESSIMISM AS PART OF MY WORK

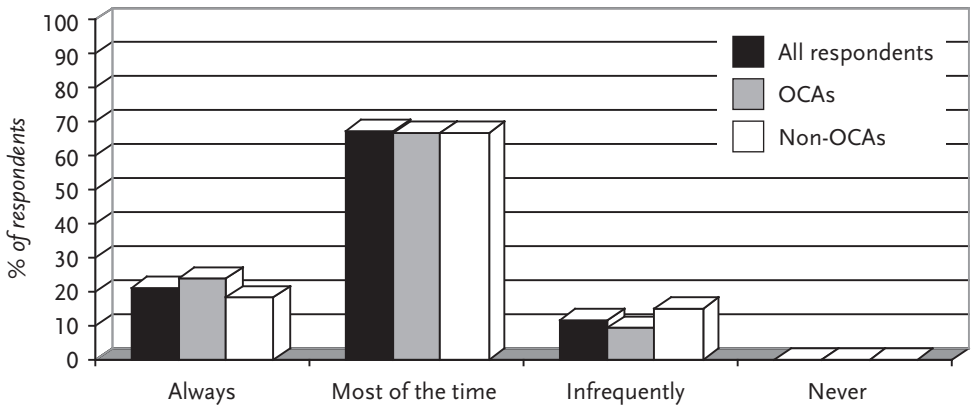


Figure 4 | I AM OPEN ABOUT MY FEELINGS/DEGREE OF OPTIMISM OR PESSIMISM AS PART OF GIVING AND RECEIVING SUPPORT

sharing positive feelings with colleagues and clients helps them to be more effective (84% of respondents agree or strongly agree). There is less agreement that doing so in a confidential setting helps with effectiveness, although this is still perceived to be the case (72% of respondents agree or strongly agree). There was a very mixed response on the impact of sharing negative feelings with colleagues and clients, with responses spread out along the spectrum of agreement and disagreement, as shown in Figure 5. Although non-OCAs mostly disagree that sharing negative feelings helps them to be more effective, OCAs mostly agree and overall respondents are not in agreement with each other about this.

Sharing negative feelings in a confidential setting is seen by most as helping their effectiveness (with 53.4% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this), although not as much as sharing positive feelings in a confidential setting is perceived to (72%). So it seems as if there is no agreement among the respondents about what to do with their negative feelings, outside of confidential settings. Share them? Conceal them?

Despite the size of the change challenge, the change agents were not overly burdened with negative feelings—there was more agreement with the optimistic statements than the pessimistic ones. However, it is clear from responses and comments that some

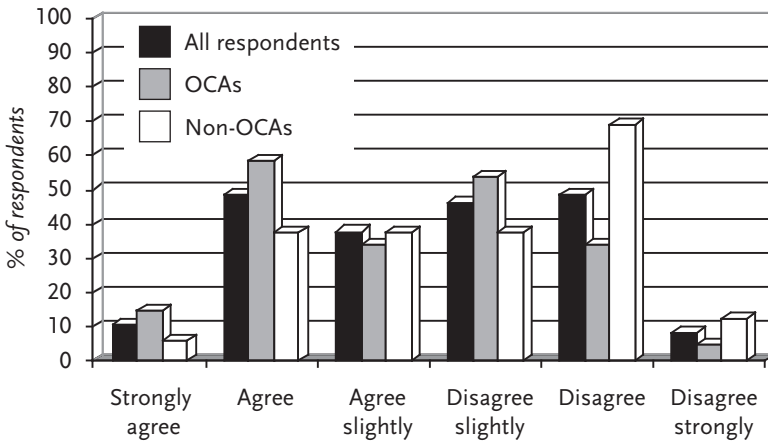


Figure 5 SHARING MY NEGATIVE FEELINGS WITH COLLEAGUES AND CLIENTS HELPS ME TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE

organisational change agents working in the field of sustainable development have strong pessimistic feelings. As a group, the organisational change agents do not have a clear view about what to do with these negative feelings in work situations—while slightly more than half think that disclosing them helps effectiveness, the others take the opposite view. This could lead to disagreements in consulting assignments and change programmes, with team members being uncomfortable with each other’s degree of openness. One OCA commented:

The issue of containing feelings is a complex one. The feedback I have is that about two-thirds of people I have worked with find my sharing them to be negative, and about one-third find it positive. After years of taking the opposite view, I now think that containing them is usually best.

Implications for consultants

Identifying with the client system

The respondents to the survey included external organisational consultants, internal consultants and other change agents—that is, people such as the readers of this paper and their clients.

As a consultant to businesses in this field, I am motivated by what may be considered ‘non-traditional’ drivers for a business consultant. It appears as if I am not alone in this, with a very high proportion of survey respondents picking motives akin to those I would have picked.

I have beliefs and assumptions of my own about the scale of change needed. These also appear to be shared for the most part by respondents to the survey, who overwhelmingly indicated that they see a need for a very great deal of change at a societal level and a fairly large amount of change at the level of their own organisations.

This potential for congruence between my motivations and assumptions, and those of peers, clients and collaborators in the field has a number of implications. On the positive side, it may lead to faster establishment of rapport and trust. On the negative side,

it may lead to an inability to empathise with the wider client system, if the change team is very different in its beliefs, assumptions and motivations from that wider system.

Their strong altruistic or non-traditional motives may bring internal and external change agents into conflict with others in the organisation who espouse—and may be genuinely motivated by—more traditional business case arguments.

Exposing assumptions to conscious attention

At a recent workshop of internal change agents, participants were faced with the disparity between their assessment of the degree of change needed (radical and far-reaching) and the things they had identified as changes they still wanted to make in their own organisation (for the most part relatively modest and non-strategic). One participant stated that he thought the group did not want to face the gulf between the two, because it was ‘depressing’. This view was challenged by other participants, who said that they did not find the gulf depressing. Others supported the original response.

A group such as this, which does not share its assumptions, will not see the range of possible emotional responses, will not be able to offer each other support when it is needed and may shy away from important conversations because of wariness about sparking a particular uncomfortable emotional response.

Understanding a possible cause of ‘stuckness’

Now and again our efforts to create change become ‘stuck’. Sometimes it is not clear what has led to the stuckness and thus what might unstick things. Psychotherapist and eco-psychologist Mary-Jayne Rust has written about responses to the current ecological crisis. Speaking to the UK Guild of Psychotherapists she said:

Many people who have immersed themselves in the facts about what is happening in the world [specifically climate change], admit to me in private that they see little chance of us getting through this, yet most of them are fearful of discussing this in public for fear of sounding too depressing or nihilistic (Rust 2007).

Although survey respondents had more complex responses than this, the observation may chime for a lot of them. Rust continues:

If many people are secretly thinking this, and I suspect they are, their motivation for taking action in the face of climate change will be zero. As therapists, we know that when we face our worst fears, and feel the effects, we stand a chance of moving through darkness into enormous creativity.

Negative emotional responses to the scale of the challenge can be a cause of ‘stuckness’. Encouraging people to share their emotional responses is one intervention that can help to unstick things. If internal change agents are uncertain about taking this step, the consultant (acting in a coaching or facilitative role) can help them to rehearse doing this in the relative safety of a one-to-one conversation, action inquiry group or training workshop.⁸

Naming unspoken beliefs about ‘why we are doing this’

In situations where the explicit narrative is about rational organisational drivers for change towards sustainability (e.g. cost reduction, customer demand, brand positioning, stakeholder concerns, future-proofing against resource constraints), clients and

⁸ For more on specific interventions, see Walker 2007a, 2007b.

consultants may not feel able to talk about the gap between their personal recognition of the scale of change needed in society and the (relative) modesty of organisational change under discussion.

There may also be an unspoken set of personal drivers which are not discussed, leading to tensions which remain unrecognised and thus unresolved.

Actions

What might we do, to support this set of idealistic yet pragmatic people who are doing their bit for sustainability through trying to create change in businesses?

We should be ready to add change at the level of the wider system to the agenda, rather than assuming that it should be off limits: for example, political activity or work with government, practical work in the community and sector-wide or multi-stakeholder initiatives. Doing this will increase the sense of agency for those who feel that their organisational-change efforts do not currently address the scale of change needed.

Emotions need to be part of our repertoire and we should take steps to feel confident in enabling people to share them in appropriate settings. We should understand our own underlying assumptions, motivations and emotional responses and recognise that those of others may be different.

We should seek out and put in place sources of support for ourselves and for those of our clients who feel isolated and unsupported in managing the tension between the change needed and the change they have a mandate to bring about.

Especially, we should develop our coaching and mentoring skills, and make informal and 'safe' networking easier.

We should bear in mind the possibility that a particular process is 'stuck' because of this kind of tension and prepare interventions that respond to it. This might include using a tool such as the anonymous online survey to explore the different motivations, beliefs and assumptions in a group. Feel free to use or adapt this one—attribution would be appreciated, and I would be glad to hear about the results.

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