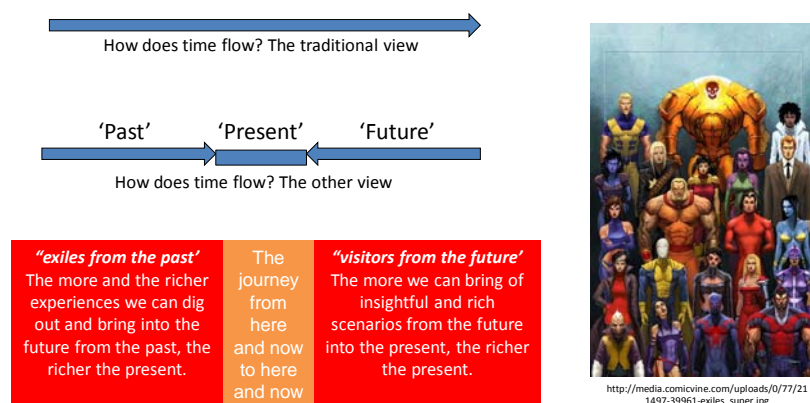# Reframing - Overcoming Resistance to Change

Robert Burke

Our learning comes from our past which affects the decisions we make in the present. Our decisions are often made based on the deep assumptions we have about ourselves and about how we see "The" truth of the world. Another way of putting this is that our learning from the past creates our worldview. Our worldview is the way we 'see the world' and the way we see any situation we come across.

Essentially our personal worldview and cultural worldview determines the way we process information that becomes our automatic thoughts which in turn becomes our behaviour. And we feed this back into our worldview as a continuous cycle which can be thought of as a permanent cloud above our heads, except this cloud can be as if it is built of bricks and mortar, and is very difficult to change.

Overcoming Resistance to Change by Reframing

Time framing – time matters

How does time flow? The traditional view

'Past'   'Present'   'Future'

How does time flow? The other view

"exiles from the past" The more and the richer experiences we can dig out and bring into the future from the past, the richer the present.	The journey from here and now to here and now	*"visitors from the future"* The more we can bring of insightful and rich scenarios from the future into the present, the richer the present.

http://media.comicvine.com/uploads/0/77/21
1497-39961-exiles_super.jpg

Source: Richard Normann (2001) *Reframing Business,* p.196. Wiley

The late Swedish researcher, Richard Normann, created a process for reconfiguration, or change, called 'Reframing'. His process is described as follows.

The *mental* process that corresponds with reconfiguration is *reframing.* That is, we must be able to look at ourselves and at our situation from different perspectives; we must bring different realities into it, and we must be able to move into other realities and see ourselves from different vantage points. This he describes as 'knowable unknowns'. That is, that time always comprise our experiences from the past and our insights from the future into the present.

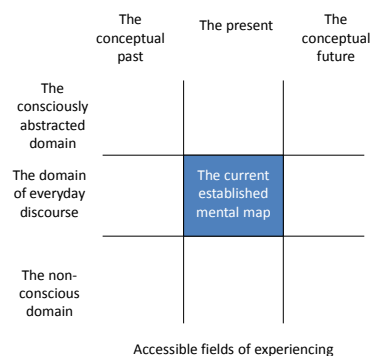**‘Knowable unknown’ a field of exploration in three dimensions**

1. As a potential exploration field and an under-utilized ‘memory of the past’ as well as ‘memory of the future’.

2. Similarly as a ‘memory of the individual’ and ‘memory of the collectivity’.

3. Similarly along the dimension of ‘memory of the non-conscious’ and ‘memory as explicitated, coded knowledge’.

‘memory of the individual’ and ‘memory of the collectivity’

‘memory of the past’ as well as ‘memory of the future’

‘memory of the non-conscious’ and ‘memory as explicitated, coded knowledge’

‘Knowable unknown’
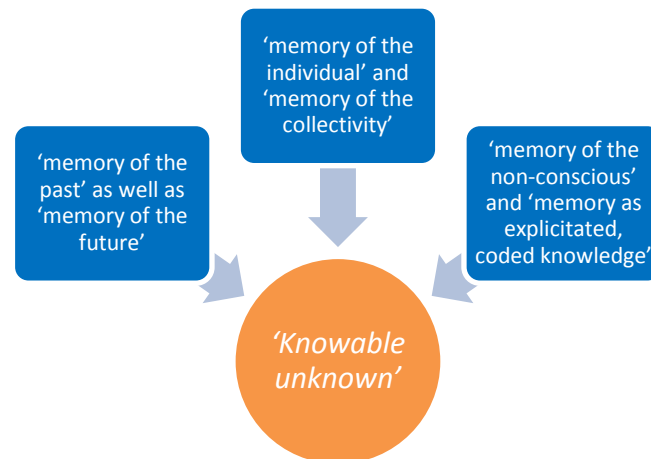
The mental space for reframing

Starting from the knowledge and worldview and the mental map embodied in the language of our *everyday level of discourse* in the (partly) conscious domain, we have at our disposal our personal as well as social, collective, institutionalised *memory of the past.* We also have our ability to move into the conceptual future – our *memory of the future.* We also have the potential opportunity to consciously conceptualise and theorise (‘upframe’) into the more *abstract and aggregated domain,* as well as having potentially available *the realm of the non-conscious* (unconscious, subconscious, tacit).

The mental space for reframing

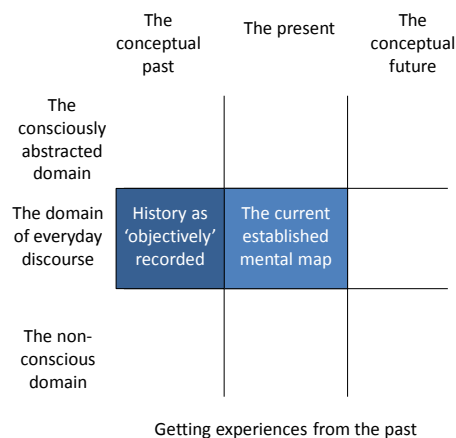| The conceptual past	The present	The conceptual future
The consciously abstracted domain		
The domain of everyday discourse	The current established mental map	
The non-conscious domain		

Accessible fields of experiencing

Our History

Normann states that the most obvious and objective of the territories we can go into would seem to be our historical past, simply recorded as a sequence of events.

These insights illustrate how important it is to understand the events that shaped our mental maps that shaped our interpretations of events that lead to action that lead to new events in a never ending spiral e.g. we look at track records, critical events, the sequence of historical balance sheets and profit and loss statements etc. why certain values and worldviews become established, why certain dilemmas have never been resolved.
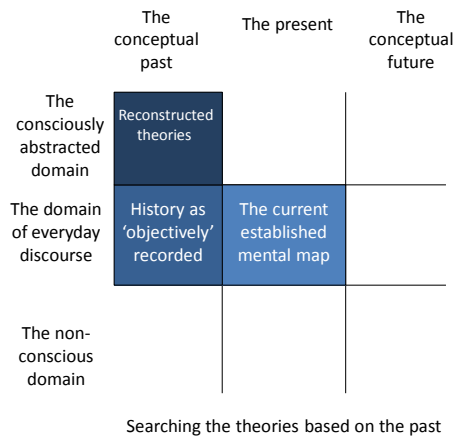
The mental space for reframing

|	The conceptual past	The present	The conceptual future
The consciously abstracted domain			
The domain of everyday discourse	History as 'objectively' recorded	The current established mental map	
The non-conscious domain			

Getting experiences from the past

Our Past

Like all theories, concepts based on historical events may and hopefully will carry a great deal of truth and be generalizable. But they may be more or less good, or they may simply not apply to a situation with new parameters. So we must consider whether the old theories were good in the first place, and we certainly cannot be sure that they will apply to a new situation. Yet we can learn from them, especially if we have the chance to consider the historical context in which they were developed, and if we regard them as part of an accumulated and on-going knowledge development and mind-shaping process.

The mental space for reframing

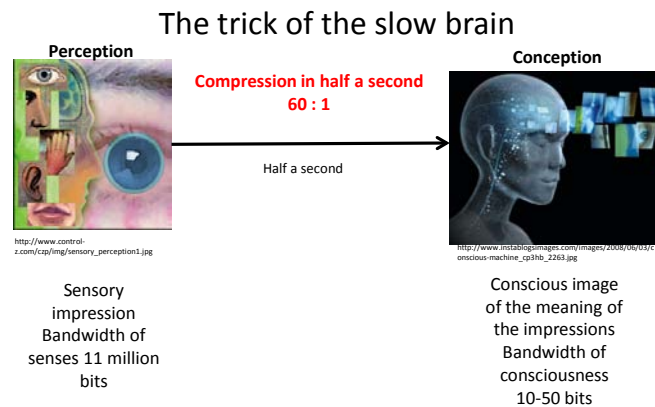|	The conceptual past	The present	The conceptual future
The consciously abstracted domain	Reconstructed theories		
The domain of everyday discourse	History as 'objectively' recorded	The current established mental map	
The non-conscious domain			

Searching the theories based on the past

Earlier we looked at the work of Chris Argyris as a way of working through the anxiety our worldview has created for us. To develop this further**Tor Nørretranders** (2006 p.49) writes[i] of the useful but quite limited contribution of the conscious mind. The illustration below is taken from 'The Biology of Belief' (2005 p.167) by Dr Bruce Lipton, a medical practitioner and medical academic.
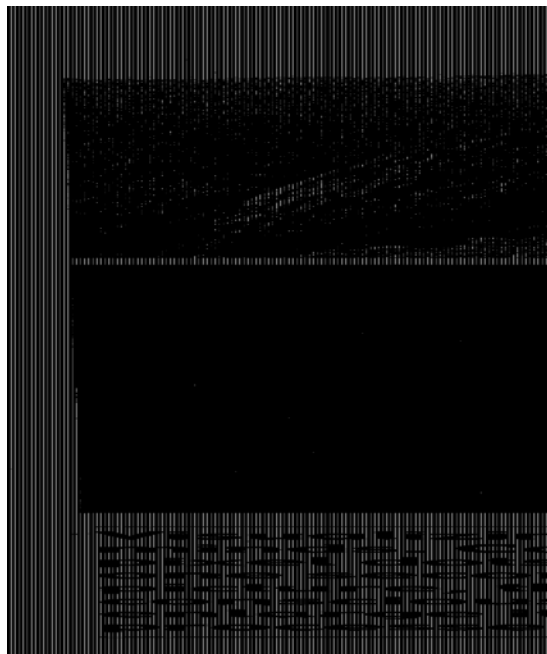
"The cogitating mind that thinks and explains – the *"I"* – can grapple with 30-50 bits of information per second, whereas the unconscious mind, the *"Me"*, processes millions more". (Tor Nørretranders)

Richard Normann (2001 p.209)[ii], refers to this as the 'Trick of the slow mind'. In half a second from 'conception' to 'perception' we are capable of processing 11 million bits of information which is the body's capacity to receive information and reduce this to 10-50 bits of information, our bandwidth of consciousness. 1000 billion nerve cells break down the information to a structure that we can handle consciously – in a non-conscious process controlled by prefabricated models, non-conscious knowledge, and programmed preferences.

The trick of the slow brain

Perception

http://www.control-z.com/czp/img/sensory_perception1.jpg

Sensory impression Bandwidth of senses 11 million bits

Compression in half a second 60 : 1

Half a second

Conception

http://www.instablogsimages.com/images/2008/06/03/conscious-machine_cp3hb_2263.jpg

Conscious image of the meaning of the impressions Bandwidth of consciousness 10-50 bits
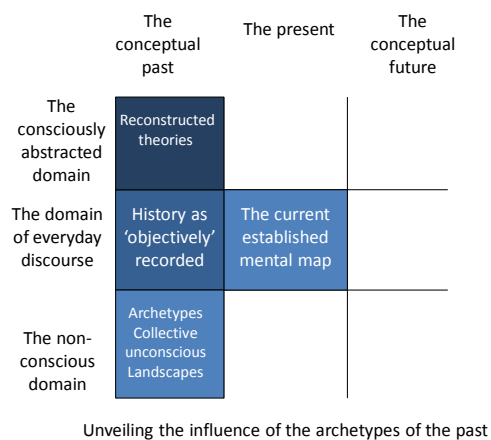
Source: Richard Normann (2001) *Reframing Business*, p.209, Wiley quoting Nørretranders

Archetypes of the Past

The non-conscious domains of the past, the essentials of the past, have been synthesized into narratives, archetypes, exemplars, heroes (e.g. Joseph Campbell's work), myths describing fundamental human modes of behaviour and human dilemmas. Going into the non-conscious past also helps us understand how the physical context we function in is an embodiment of actions of the past and therefore-very often without our even thinking about it-controls much of our actions. By unveiling these forces from the past we can become more conscious of how we came to what and where we are, of our blockages as well as opportunities.

The mental space for reframing

	The conceptual past	The present	The conceptual future
The consciously abstracted domain	Reconstructed theories		
The domain of everyday discourse	History as 'objectively' recorded	The current established mental map	
The non-conscious domain	Archetypes Collective unconscious Landscapes		

Unveiling the influence of the archetypes of the past
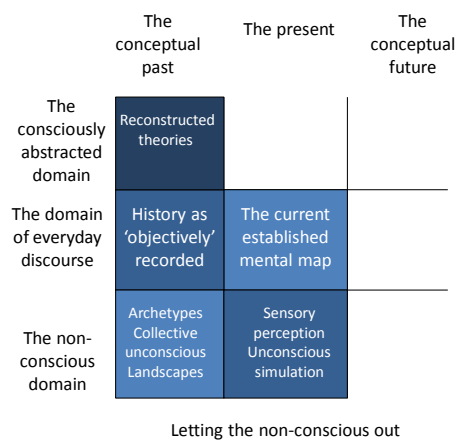
Develop new linkages

Our bodies are continuously exposed to a startling amount of sensory stimuli (and an organisation would be subjective to many more). The question is how we make sense of these. Certainly, most models and techniques of creativity aim at achieving processes that lead to such a state of variability, at *distancing* oneself from a topic and then *closing in,* at walking from the known to the unknown, at exposing oneself to the unexpected and the chaotic which presumably can trouble the perfect functioning of the mechanism and develop new linkages. The mechanism is our ability to sort out the overwhelming complexity to simplify it – the problem is that through this is lost opportunity.

The mental space for reframing

	The conceptual past	The present	The conceptual future
The consciously abstracted domain	Reconstructed theories		
The domain of everyday discourse	History as 'objectively' recorded	The current established mental map	
The non-conscious domain	Archetypes Collective unconscious Landscapes	Sensory perception Unconscious simulation	

Letting the non-conscious out

Creative Induction

Upframing normally implies moving up to a higher conceptual level, generalizing, theorizing, and experimenting with placing a phenomenon into different conceptual categories thereby shedding more light onto it. It is a process which necessarily has a synthetic, not just an analytic, element to it, and so is a creative process in itself. Induction is an integrated aspect of scientific method, though probably the least understood part of it. It involves the generation of new perspectives and hypotheses which then must be tested for correctness or relevance and usefulness. The conscious use of metaphors to generate alternative frameworks can help.
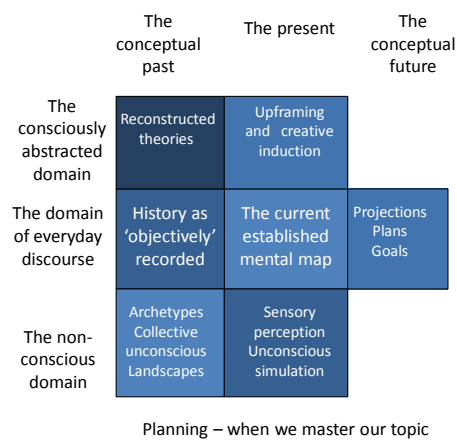
The mental space for reframing

	The conceptual past	The present	The conceptual future
The consciously abstracted domain	Reconstructed theories	Upframing and creative induction	
The domain of everyday discourse	History as 'objectively' recorded	The current established mental map	
The non-conscious domain	Archetypes Collective unconscious Landscapes	Sensory perception Unconscious simulation	

Stimulating creative induction

Into the rational future

Our institutionalised, rational selves, of course, deal with the future. We normally do so by forecasting, and by planning. The future then becomes a set of explicit, conscious intents, goals objectives that we move towards and reach. This process is so common (and nowadays-and not without justification-so discredited) that there is no need to dwell on it. Nonetheless, a projection can be useful in the sense that it creates a yardstick against which other alternatives can be evaluated, and a measure of deviations as time passes and new events occur. And goals and plans can be set once we have a qualified vision of the future and feel we master our subject and territory.

The mental space for reframing

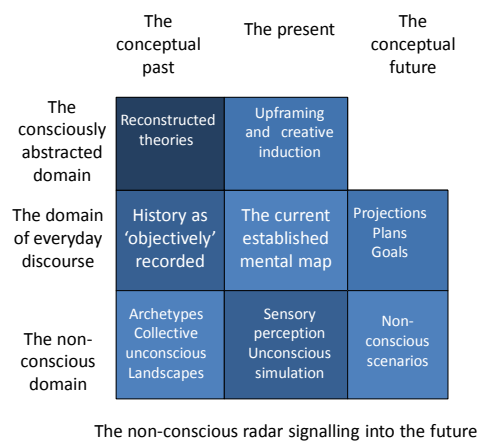|	The conceptual past	The present	The conceptual future
The consciously abstracted domain	Reconstructed theories	Upframing and creative induction	
The domain of everyday discourse	History as 'objectively' recorded	The current established mental map	Projections Plans Goals
The non-conscious domain	Archetypes Collective unconscious Landscapes	Sensory perception Unconscious simulation	

Planning – when we master our topic

Non-conscious scenarios

The wonderful mechanism that handles sensory perception also produces images of the future, scenarios, on a continuous and unconscious basis. They seem to be based on assumptions that the models we already hold will continue to be valid. They are not, however, projections but mental images of alternative futures mostly within our established frameworks. As time passes, information is subconsciously sifted against these alternative images of the future. We basically notice (if that!) only information that indicates towards which of the future states events are bringing us. We then adapt our behaviour according to these signals.

The mental space for reframing

	The conceptual past	The present	The conceptual future
The consciously abstracted domain	Reconstructed theories	Upframing and creative induction	
The domain of everyday discourse	History as 'objectively' recorded	The current established mental map	Projections Plans Goals
The non-conscious domain	Archetypes Collective unconscious Landscapes	Sensory perception Unconscious simulation	Non-conscious scenarios

The non-conscious radar signalling into the future

Artefact scenarios

We can also move into the conceptual future *with a consciously transcendental creative intent*. In so doing we try to go beyond the intents, goals, and objectives that are normally derived from our established, institutionalised mind-set. We also go beyond the production of non-conscious scenarios automatically undertaken by our subconscious. Scenarios become stronger as conscious artefacts and as tools for triggering creative action if they are based on upframed, creatively synthesized interpretations of the present and the past. The mechanism by which this happens has already been suggested.

The mental space for reframing

	The conceptual past	The present	The conceptual future
The consciously abstracted domain	Reconstructed theories	Upframing and creative induction	Artefact scenarios
The domain of everyday discourse	History as 'objectively' recorded	The current established mental map	Projections Plans Goals
The non-conscious domain	Archetypes Collective unconscious Landscapes	Sensory perception Unconscious simulation	Non-conscious scenarios

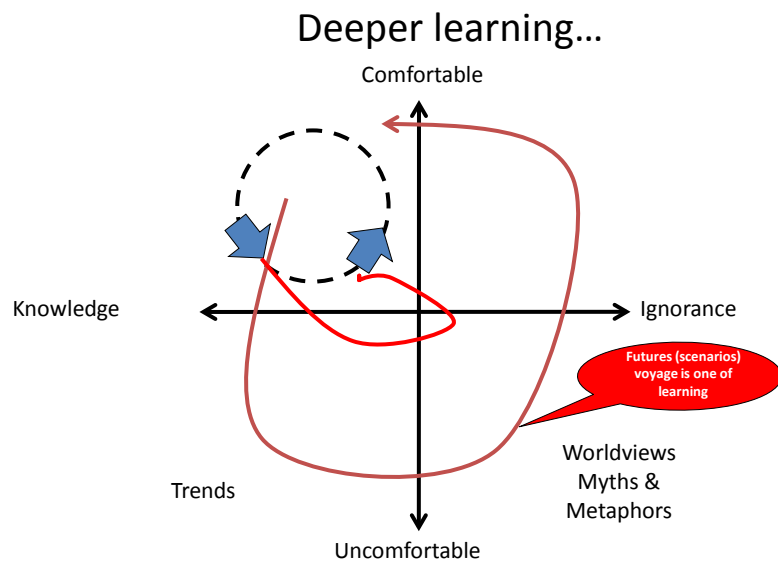Conscious upframed scenarios as catalysts for reframing

How all this works out in practice is that our worldview is formed from our unconscious competence, which is non-rational and instantaneous. Because of this we are loath to challenge our worldview because of the anxiety this creates and the resultant discomfort it causes us. Unfortunately this also applies to our future planning, strategic or other, so we generally plan for the future in the comfort/knowledge zone of the matrix shown below. Most planning is carried out in this zone. Perhaps this is one reason why it is claimed that less than 10% of strategic plans are ever implemented. They appear to be done only as a "social defence against anxiety".

What happens when we start to move into the knowledge/discomfort space 'the heat' increases and can become too hot and we scramble back to our comfort/knowledge 'safe' place, usually the technical solution space, avoiding the adaptive challenge this zone represents.

However, if we are able to dive deeper into the arena of the knowledge/discomfort zone this is where futures thinking is really valuable. The knowledge/discomfort zone is the place of emerging issues and trends. There is some knowledge available, but we are very uncomfortable with it. The futures theories and methodologies suggested in this paper are effective ways of navigating the
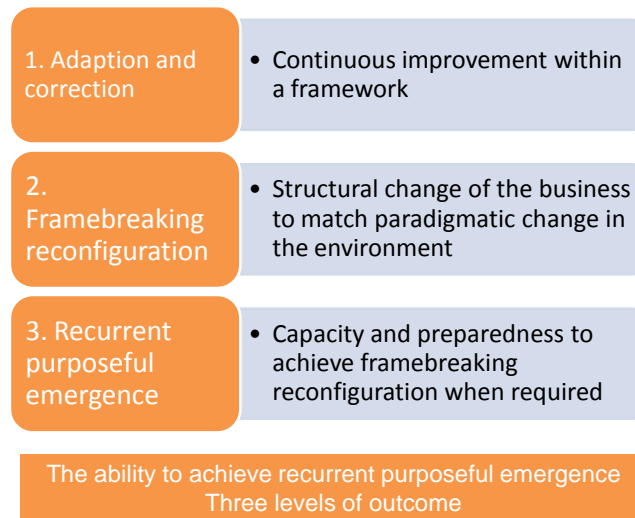
understandable anxiety change produces. It helps us become 'comfortable with being uncomfortable'.

Moving into the discomfort/ignorance zone is where the challenge to our worldview becomes the obstacle. Our worldviews are the reason we do what we do, for an extreme example it is often why nations go to war, and to times where we find intolerance (ignorance) of other worldviews or "other ways of knowing". Our ability to navigate this zone however, helps us become more comfortable with being uncomfortable, more open to reframing to reconfiguration.

Deeper learning…

Comfortable

Knowledge

Ignorance

Futures (scenarios) voyage is one of learning

Trends

Worldviews
Myths &
Metaphors

Uncomfortable

Source: Angela Wilkinson & Rafael Ramírez, University of Oxford

Critical Processes and Critical Capabilities

Frame-breaking Process

1. Adaption and correction	• Continuous improvement within a framework
2. Framebreaking reconfiguration	• Structural change of the business to match paradigmatic change in the environment
3. Recurrent purposeful emergence	• Capacity and preparedness to achieve framebreaking reconfiguration when required

The ability to achieve recurrent purposeful emergence
Three levels of outcome

Source: Richard Normann (2001) *Reframing Business,* p.241, Wiley

In order to lead and plan for the future (which is the purpose of all planning) there are certain critical processes and capabilities required. These can be learned and have the capability to help us dive deeper.
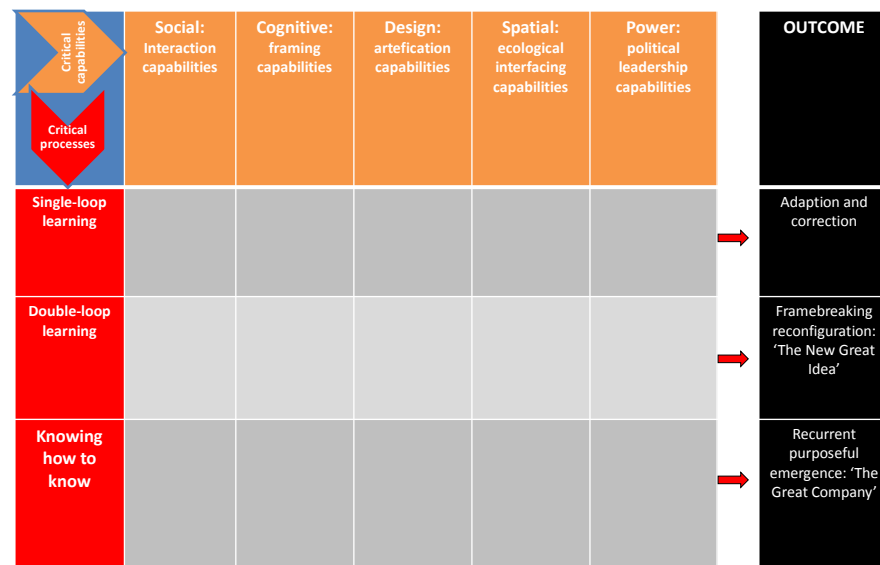
Normann (2001 p.249) argues there are five domains of critical capabilities and three domains of critical processes.

The five critical capabilities are:

1. ***The style of interaction (the social domain) -*** Critical issues are discussable and confronted rather than non-discussable or internal power games.

2. ***Cognition, world views and mind-frames (the cognitive domain)*** – the ability to move between conceptual levels of 'seeing' things from the angles of different paradigms – of framing.

3. ***Artefication skills (the design domain)*** – artefacts can be physical or mental (memes). Manifest the identity of the concept of 'structure'.

4. ***Ecological interfacing (the spatial domain)*** – 'the edge of chaos' for the purpose of reinventing ourselves to survive without fully 'controlling'.

5. ***Political leadership (the power domain)*** – using power to protect emergent processes as well as to mobilise power to move ahead.
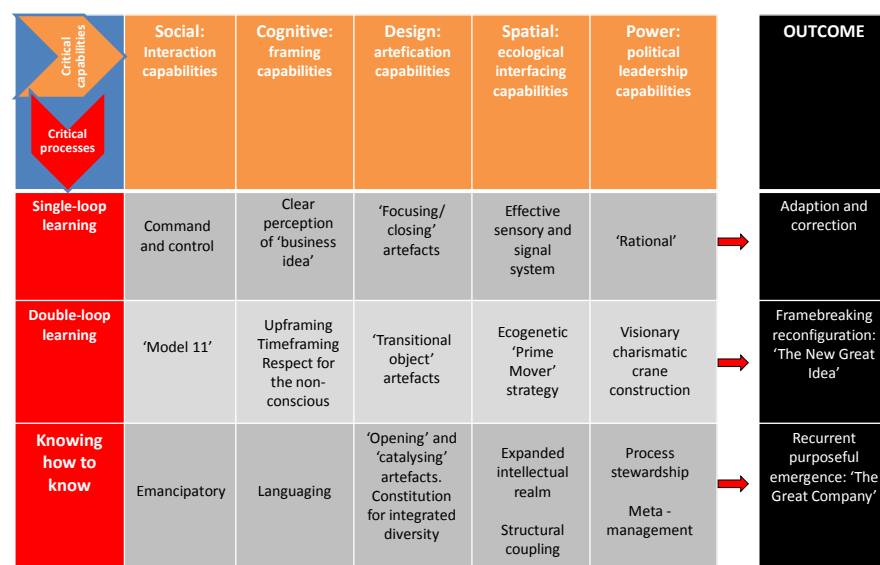
The three critical processes are:

- **Single-loop learning** (maintaining consonance) leading to adaption and correction within the existing paradigm – (innovation).

- **Double-loop learning** leading to reframing and a new consonant framework – 'the great new idea' (creation).

- Learning how to learn/**knowing how to know** leading to recurrent purposeful emergence - 'The Great Organisation'

	Social: Interaction capabilities	Cognitive: framing capabilities	Design: artefaction capabilities	Spatial: ecological interfacing capabilities	Power: political leadership capabilities	OUTCOME
Single-loop learning						Adaption and correction
Double-loop learning						Framebreaking reconfiguration: 'The New Great Idea'
Knowing how to know						Recurrent purposeful emergence: 'The Great Company'

A scheme for differentiating capabilities at three levels of renewal

Source: Richard Normann (2001) *Reframing Business,* p.250, Wiley

	Social: Interaction capabilities	Cognitive: framing capabilities	Design: artefaction capabilities	Spatial: ecological interfacing capabilities	Power: political leadership capabilities	OUTCOME
Single-loop learning	Command and control	Clear perception of 'business idea'	'Focusing/ closing' artefacts	Effective sensory and signal system	'Rational'	Adaption and correction
Double-loop learning	'Model 11'	Upframing Timeframing Respect for the non-conscious	'Transitional object' artefacts	Ecogenetic 'Prime Mover' strategy	Visionary charismatic crane construction	Framebreaking reconfiguration: 'The New Great Idea'
Knowing how to know	Emancipatory	Languaging	'Opening' and 'catalysing' artefacts. Constitution for integrated diversity	Expanded intellectual realm / Structural coupling	Process stewardship / Meta - management	Recurrent purposeful emergence: 'The Great Company'

A n attempt to identify capabilities for renewal at three levels

Source: Richard Normann (2001) *Reframing Business,* p.264, Wiley

Zero, Single & Double Loop Learning
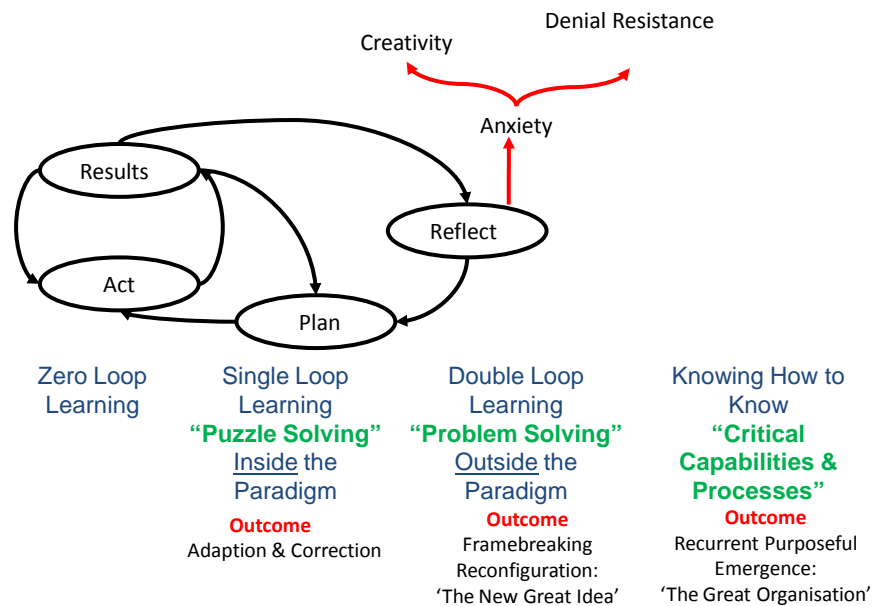
Zero Loop learning is just reacting. We want a result so we do an action hoping that the action will achieve the result we want and we will get a quick fix. If it doesn't we do the action all over again, but this time we do it harder! In other words we do not give ourselves the opportunity of learning why we didn't get the result we wanted in the first place but instead we go straight back into the same action expecting that miraculously this time we will achieve the result we want.

Chris Argyris (1991)[iii], James Bryant Conant Professor, Harvard Business School, in his seminal article 'Teaching Smart People How To Learn' coined the terms ''single loop'' and ''double loop'' learning to capture the crucial distinction between 'problem solving' through action or through learning and reflection.

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[i] Thiele, Leslie Paul (2006) *The Heart of Judgment: Practical Wisdom, Neuroscience, and Narrative,* Cambridge University Press

[ii] Normann, Richard (2001) *Reframing Business,* Wiley

[iii] Argyris, Chris.,(1991) Teaching smart people how to learn, *Harvard business review*, Vol.69, No.3, May-June 1991, p.99-109