

# Myths and Patterns of Organizational Change



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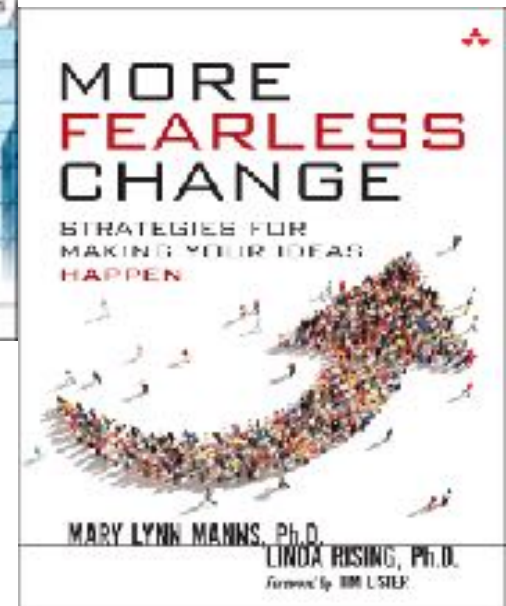
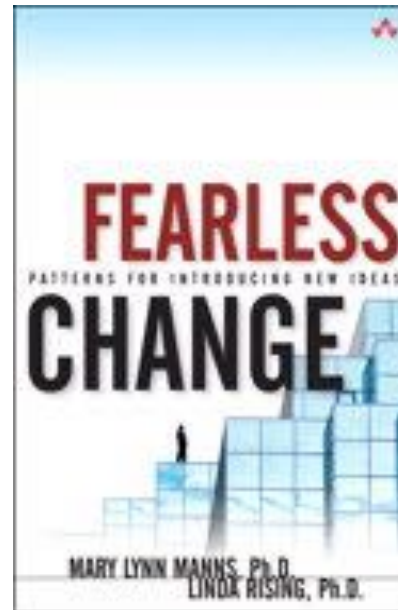
## **Why patterns?**

**Giving a name to a common problem with a known solution means we can have a conversation about the problems and solutions, using the names of the patterns.**

# ***Fearless Change and More Fearless Change***

**Patterns based on:**

- **Social psychology**
- **Influence strategies**
- **Evolutionary biology**



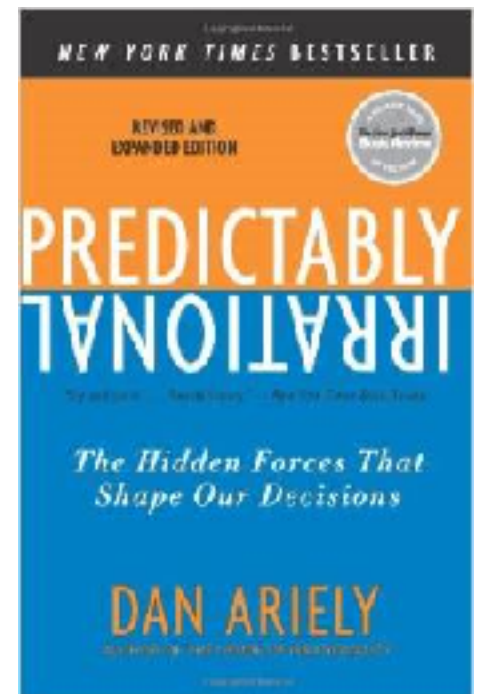
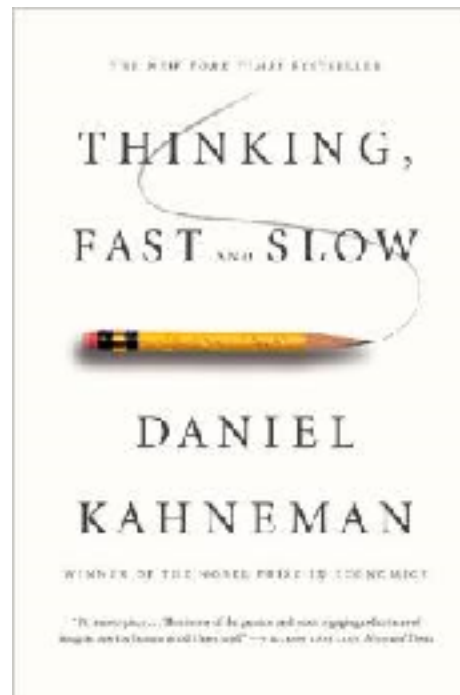


# **Myth #1: Smart people are rational.**

**“Rational” defined in classical economic theory: makes decisions by weighing the additional benefits against the additional costs of every option. Richard Thaler, 2017 Nobel Prize in Economics**

# Behavioral economics

**Kahneman  
& Tversky  
changed  
the way we  
think about  
thinking.**





# Keep these patterns with you

Take on a role:

***Evangelist*** (not a fanatic)

Run lots of small experiments. Iterate:

***Just Do It***

***Time for Reflection***

***Small Successes***

***Baby Steps***



# Stories better than facts

- Arguing facts increases resistance.
- Telling stories engages and brings others in.
- Different areas of the brain are involved.
- Make an *Emotional Connection*



# **Organizations are Complex Adaptive Systems**

- **Small, simple, fast, and frugal trials or experiments used to Probe, Sense, Respond are the way to evolve**
- **You hope for but cannot plan on a tipping point**
- **It's about learning as you go – therein lies the power of pairing/mobbing – implicit learning**





**Myth #2:  
Good always triumphs over  
evil. (*Just World Fallacy*, one  
of our many cognitive  
biases.)**



***Do Food:*** A most under-  
appreciated pattern but one  
of my favorites 😊!

# Maria's Rule



**There are  
very few  
problems  
that cake  
cannot  
solve.**

**With special thanks to Morten Elvang**



**Myth #3: If I just had enough power I could make people change.**




**Threat, firing, killing are very effective but only get compliance. You want commitment.**




# **Downsides of Compliance**

- **Compliance requires overhead.**
- **Over time, this overhead increases and can be as costly as the initiative itself.**
- **Usually people will appear to be compliant but often just doing what they have always done.**



**You can buy a person's hand, but you can't buy his heart. His heart is where his enthusiasm, his loyalty is. You can buy his back, but you can't buy his brain. That's where his creativity is, his ingenuity, his resourcefulness.**

**Stephen R. Covey**  
**The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People**



***Personal Touch:*** Each person is asking, "What's in it for me?"

**You must address a genuine user need. Data does not equal empathy.**

**Jeff Patton**





# Different people accept new ideas differently

This is new so it's cool!

**(Innovators--2.5%)**

It's interesting, but I want to learn more.

**(Early Adopter--13.5%)**

I want to know what other people think.

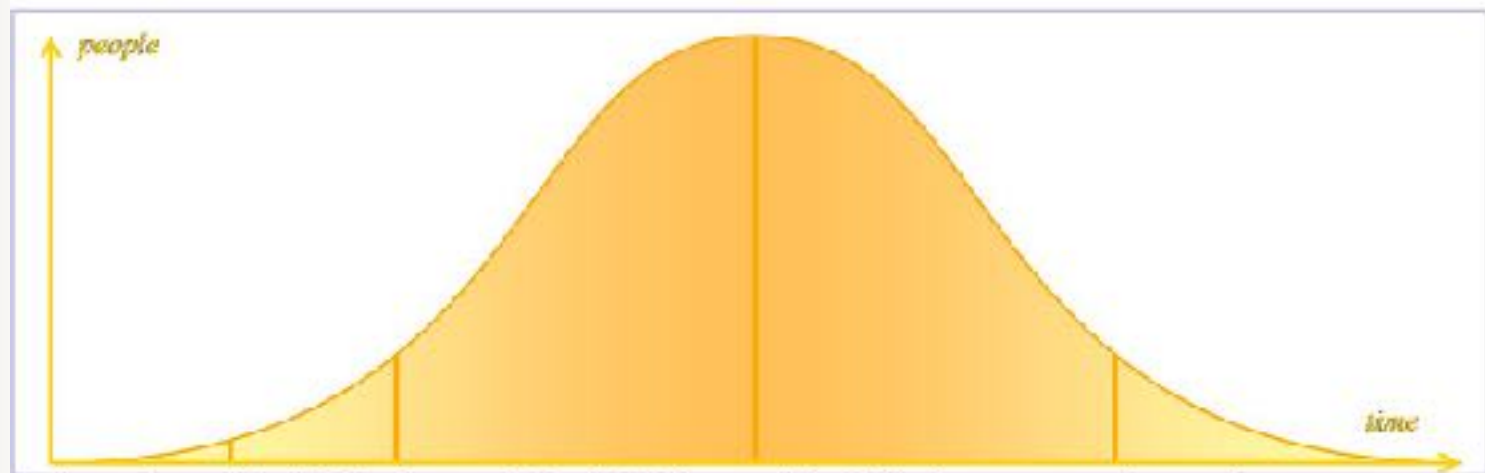
**(Early Majority--34%)**

If I have to. I guess.

**(Late Majority--34%)**

We've always done it this way.

**(Laggards--16%)**



**Innovators**

(2.5%) are risk takers who have the resources and desire to try new things, even if they fail

**Early Adopters**

(13.5%) are selective about which technologies they start using. They are considered the "one to check in with" for new information and reduce others' uncertainty about a new technology by adopting it.

**Early Majority**

(34%) take their time before adopting a new idea. They are willing to embrace a new technology as long as they understand how it fits with their lives

**Late Majority**

(34%) adopt in reaction to peer pressure, emerging norms, or economic necessity. Most of the uncertainty around an idea must be resolved before they adopt

**Laggards**


(16%) are traditional and make decisions based on past experience. They are often economically unable to take risks on new ideas

*Bryce Ryan & Neal Gross (1943)*



# Caveats about adoption curve

- These are roles not people
- There is a correlation with age, both for individuals and organizations
- People can change -- encourage movement “up” the curve
- Why would we be hardwired to behave this way?
- Imagine if everyone were an Innovator 😊!



**Myth #4: Skeptics, cynics,  
resistors—THOSE people must  
be BAD or STUPID or BOTH!  
Ignore them!**



***Fear Less:*** Listen, really listen with respect. Learn all you can. Use the resistance to your advantage. Find a way to let your opponent “win.”




# **Your belief changes everything**

- **Men who thought they were talking to beautiful women behaved differently and so did the women.**
- **What you believe about the person you're talking to affects you AND the other person.**



**Seek first to understand,  
then to be understood.**


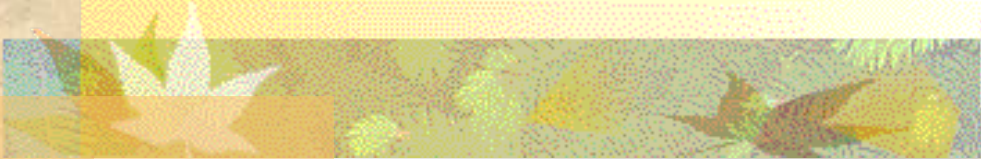
**Stephen R. Covey  
The 7 Habits of Highly  
Effective People**




***Champion Skeptic:*** Encourage a resistor to play the important role of “Devil’s Advocate.” Treat this person as a valued partner in the change effort.

**Note:** this is about learning, not keeping the skeptic busy!





**Myth #5:**  
**You're a smart person, so  
you don't need help from  
others. After all, it's *YOUR*  
idea!**



***Ask for Help:*** The idea is yours and you believe in it, but the change must NOT be “all about you.”

**Bringing in others is the best way to influence them.**



***Sincere Appreciation:* Recognize  
the contributions of others.**



# Power Thanks

- **Sincere**
- **Timely**
- **Detailed**
- **Describe impact**
- **Thanks for working late last night. You fixed that bug, so now we can do the customer demo on time.**



## **Grateful people**

- **Have more energy and optimism**
- **Are more resilient**
- **Have better health**
- **Suffer less depression**
- **Are more compassionate, more likely to help others, less materialistic, more satisfied with life.**



**There are other patterns in *Fearless Change* and *More Fearless Change* to help you introduce new ideas. This is just a start!**

**Thanks for listening!**

