

## Book review

# The Science of Change: Discovering Sustained, Desired Change from Individuals to Organizations and Communities by Richard Boyatzis (2024). Oxford University Press

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### Article history

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The author of this book is Richard Boyatzis is a Distinguished University Professor at Case Western Reserve University, and a Professor in the Departments of Organizational Behavior, Psychology, and Cognitive Science. With a PhD in Social Psychology from Harvard University he has become internationally recognised for his work in coaching, competencies, desired change, emotional intelligence, neuroscience, management education and leadership.

At the start of this book Boyatzis writes 'This is a book about my life's work' and so *The Science of Change* brings together many of his 200 publications written over 50 years. The breadth and scope of this work is unusual and impressive.

The Intentional Change Theory lies at the heart of the book, with its 10 Principles:

1. Sustained desired change starts with exploring the Ideal Self or the personal vision of the individual, and at a group level, the shared vision.
2. The Positive Emotional Attractor (PEA), the psychological and physiological state that enables excitement, hope and joy, empowers the person or group to be open to new changes, experiences and learning.
3. Any new change is often discontinuous and nonlinear because of the complex dynamic interactions between individual and group emotions, relationships and settings.
4. The exploration and realisation of the Real Self, which involves identifying strengths and weaknesses relative to the Ideal Self in both the individual and groups, is the next principle.
5. This realisation enables the development of the Learning Agenda or plan to utilise strengths to develop the Ideal Self.
6. The next phase involves repeated experimentation and practice of new desired attitudes, behaviours, feelings and thoughts.

7. Intentional Change Theory (ICT) is a fractal theory that describes change at an individual, dyadic, team, organisation, community, country and global level.
8. These changes are built and maintained through the medium of Resonate Relationships which are characterised by empathy, emotional connection and trust.
9. Resonant leadership, with its focus on emotional intelligence and ability to both connect and inspire is the facilitator of desired sustained change.
10. Social identity groups assist in developing enduring change by helping or hindering movement towards the individual's Ideal Self or the group's shared vision.

*The Science of Change* offers an integrated and helpful way to view and facilitate desired change. It contains a holistic approach that includes both personal and group developmental themes. The positive future-focused use of the Ideal Self or group shared vision, starts the process with a compelling vision of desire change which facilitates the commitment and energises the development of improvement. The contextual use of self-awareness enables the development of understanding in the Ideal and Real Self as well as the Learning Agenda and the impact of repeated experimentation and practice. The PEA provides a practical orientation for the coach or any change agent to frame the developmental process. The recognition of Resonate Relationships builds a supportive and nurturing environment to foster change. The acknowledgement of the discontinuous and nonlinear change promotes realism and practicality in the change process.

*The Science of Change* contains not only an in-depth exploration of ICT but also a very useful appendix of practical assessments and tools that can be used as resources for research on ICT processes and principles.

This book impresses with its depth of scholarship as demonstrated by the 37 pages of references. It is clearly written and represents a very positive practical approach to change based on an impressive lifetime of research and writing. The book is highly recommended for individuals undertaking professional development, for coaches and mentors guiding others through this, for business leaders wanting to improve performance, for educators and trainers in the change area and for researchers with social change agendas.