

Counterintuitive thoughts about culture and culture change

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“You knew?”



What is culture: a complexity perspective

- Patterns of relating, created in each moment
- Self-organizing
 - Stability and change
 - Butterfly Effect (amplification of small differences)
 - Sand Pile Effect (Inverse Power Law)
- Requires order and disorder (freedom and constraint)



Implications for the work of culture change

- Set aside the machine metaphor; understand the emergent nature of the work
- Notice the patterns we are creating in each moment
- Try acting differently to create new patterns
- Foster behavioral accountability (new constraints)
 - Ask groups to create their own expectations
 - Encourage peer feedback and accountability
 - Have a back-up mechanism when peer-accountability isn't possible
- Pay attention to selection, orientation, and incentives
- Use skills training in support of larger program



Starting an epidemic of mindfulness

- **Engagement:**
widening circles of people reflecting and creating together
- **Emergence:**
the change process can't be designed and controlled, each step arises from the previous one; follow the diffusion of innovation curve



