

MOTION LEADERSHIP

THE SKINNY

On Becoming Change Savvy

By Michael Fullan

Summary In Brief

Motion Leadership follows rules of powerful simplicity and transparency. It contains considerable information about the change process and focuses on the skills needed to effectively lead complex change.

A motion leader is like an adaptive leader with the goal of encouraging people to change and learn new ways of doing things. (Northouse, P. (2010) p. 258) The idea of ‘Motion Leadership’ is about helping leaders to move individuals, institutions, and whole systems forward in a positive and effective way while at the same time managing and embracing the intricate challenges inherent within the change process.

Fullan takes a practical approach to the eight elements of “Motion Leadership; change and problems with change, how to connect peers to purpose, transparency, trust and resistance, building capacity, learning is the work and leadership for all; with an on increasing knowledge of practicing and aspiring leaders.

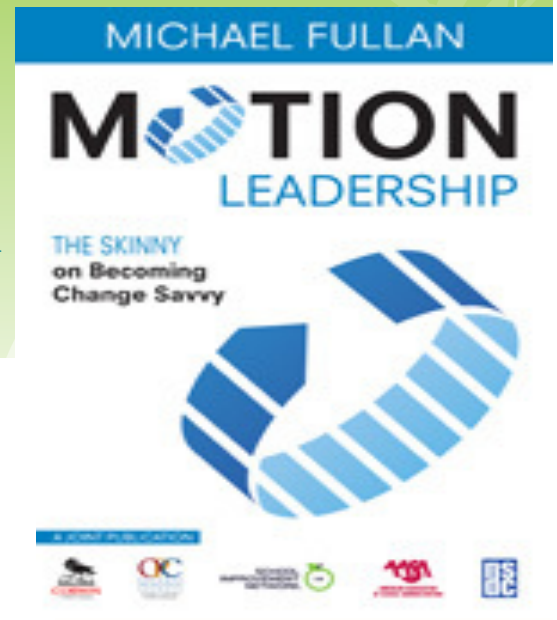
The goal of motion leadership is to encourage people to change and learn new ways of living so that they may do well and grow. In essence, Motion Leaders viewed problems as complex with many facets, however, the ‘*skinny*’ in motion leadership removes the complexity in the problem, making it simple resulting in powerful change within an organization. Therefore, the job of motion leaders is to create a supportive environment that promotes risk taking.

About the Author



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Internationally, Michael is known for his consulting work in educational reform. He is recognized as an expert and authority on large-scale reform, leadership and educational change. His commitment and passion for educational change is to raise the bar and close the gap for all children.



http://www.corwin.com/upm-data/product/30880_Fullan_Motion_Leadership_72ppiRGB_150pixw.jpg

The Skinny	2
Change Problems	3
Change Itself	4-7
Connect Peers with Purpose	8
Learning Is the Work	8
Capacity Building vis-à-vis Judgmentalism	9
Transparency Rules	9
Love, Trust, and Resistance	10
Leadership For All	10



<http://solidemea.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/4i9ERexGT.jpeg>

The Skinny

'Skinny' is an expression that apparently arose in World War 2 when a leader demanded the 'skinny' truth.

So what's the *skinny* on change? It is the idea of making change less complex and more powerful in its impact. It challenges the leaders to confront real change issues while at the same time, unleashing powerful complex processes.

The skinny takes the complex out of complexity.
(Fullan p. 10)

The *skinny* on Motion Leadership is about important things that leaders need to know and understand about working with change. It is about removing the distractions and focusing the effort on the change itself.

The *skinny* in this book are practical; create an attitude of learning by doing, while thinking about what you are doing. *Skinny* involves two main things, the mind-set (attitude) and an action set (practical and grounded). It requires an entire system to be engaged and not just an individual.

The skinny is about the naked unadorned facts – the core essence of (Fullan p. 3) the fact.

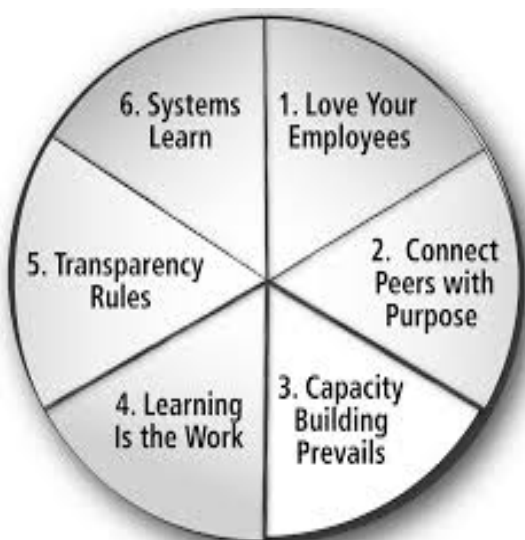
(Fullan p. 3)



Image via MotivationThoughts.com

Fullan describes 'Motion Leadership' as helping leaders to move individuals, institutions and the whole system forward in a positive way, while managing and embracing the detailed challenges inherent in the change process.

(Fullan 2010)



This is why educational leadership is not for the faint of heart. It is a major influence in increasing students' achievement and instilling change, within a school environment. To be an educational leader, one must continue to be a lead learner and grow to increase the chance of survival and success. To have the optimum impact, educational leaders must embrace and push for a positive change in their organizations.

Some '*skinny*' elements of 'Motion Leadership'

http://www.michaelfullan.ca/images/handouts/11_TheSkinny_A4.pdf

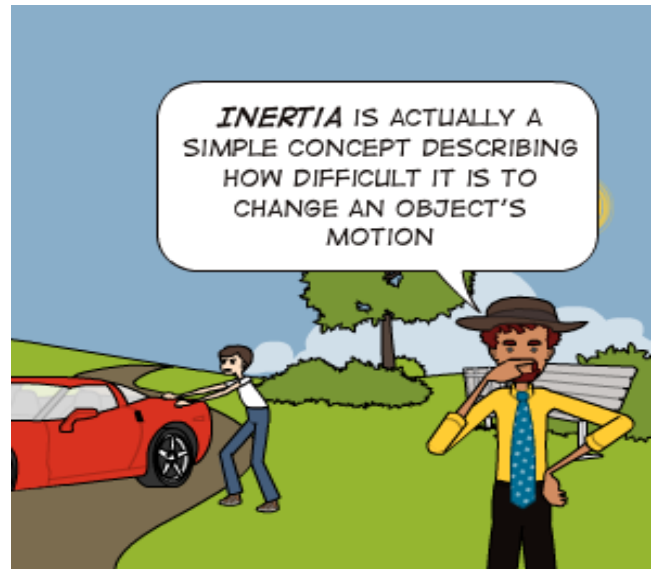
Change Problems

Change problems come in all shapes and sizes but they all have one thing in common – they are mired in ‘inertia’.

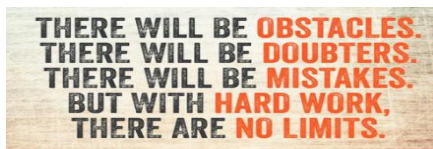
Change problem is ‘whole system reform’ and it is focused on getting inside the movement, thinking about how to change the status quo and overcome the inertia.

This inertia is not due to lack of movement but movement of what they are already doing – changing the direction of the movement for the better, making it more dynamic and exciting. Thereby making the complex change simpler and more powerful.

The goal of all change leaders is to get movement in an improved direction and take the fear out of change.



<http://www.joangarry.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/26lr7ca7chm9jyu.png>



<https://steviemance.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/obstacles.jpg>

To explain the principle of overcoming inertia, Fullan refers to celebrity Chef Jamie Oliver’s attempts to exert influence over the food served in cafeteria in British schools.

While his attempts were met with resistance and frustrations, Jamie Oliver learned and refined his ‘motion leadership’ in practice, as he struggled with getting one and then many more people to buy into his ideas.



<http://www.bpc-consulting.net/data/uploads/change.jpg>

“The *skinny* here is about “*simplicity*” – finding the smallest number of high leverage easy-to-understand actions that unleash stunningly powerful consequences.

New Words

Simplicity:

It is about doing fewer important things very well.

Judgmentalism:

It is perceiving something as ineffective and doing it in a derogatory and negative way.

Ready – Fire – Aim

It means focusing on the right priorities, attending to relationships, but getting action going sooner and treating it as a learning period.

Change Itself

http://images.slideplayer.com/9/2497863/slides/slide_20.jpg



Fullan creates a focus on increasing knowledge rather than providing tips and strategies for practicing and aspiring leaders.

He employs the “Ready, Fire, Aim” metaphor, which include a tight cluster of “change savvy ideas” that can have implications for all forms of leadership.

Fullan’s approach targets systemic change that includes school boards, superintendent, supervisors, educational theories but it may also appeal to principals and vice principals.

Ready, Fire, Aim identifies nine



The Skinny on Motion Leadership 9 Ready Fire Aim

- Relationships first (too fast/too slow)
- Honor the implementation dip
 - Beware of fat plans
 - Behaviors before beliefs
 - Communication during implementation is paramount
- Learn about implementation during implementation
- Excitement prior to implementation is paramount
 - Take risks and learn
 - It is okay to be assertive

Fig. 3.1 p. 17

**“READY,
FIRE,
AIM.”**



<http://stayviolation.typepad.com/.a/6a00d834515bc269e20177448ec71f970d-320wi>

Relationship First

Motion leader understands that relationship matter so much that, little can be accomplished without establishing positive relationship and trust.

The leader must be part of the learning process, willing to engage in the change process together and learn from the experiences along the way.

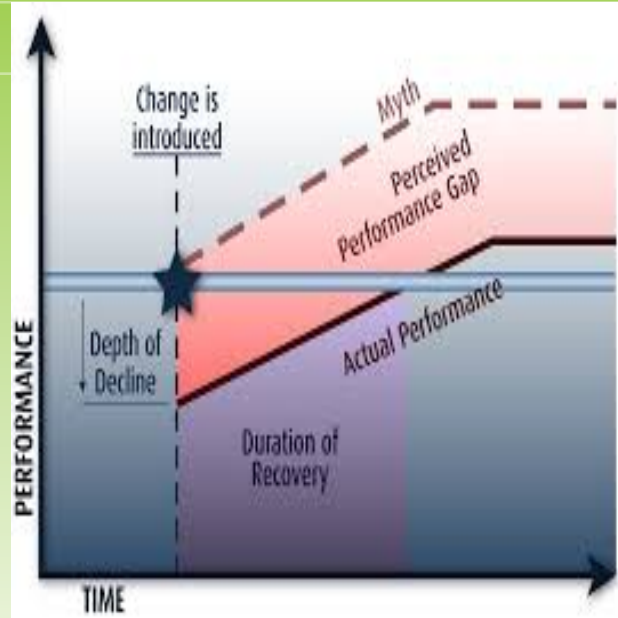
Solid relationship and understanding the learning process will build capacity in others.



http://images.forbes.com/media/2010/07/21/0721_trust.jpg

Honor the Implementation Dip

The implementation dips are unavoidable when new innovation is adopted and there is a decline in result. This may cause doubts and concerns - people may feel badly, while the benefits seem distant and theoretical. Change leaders use small number of powerful forces that get breakthrough results – immense moral commitment and a clump of empathy with those they are dealing with. “The combination of resolute leadership and empathy enables these leaders to find alternative ways when they get stuck. They demonstrate persistence with flexibility but never stray from the core purpose” (p.23).



“Leaders have to be aware that their job is to help people get through the dip.”

(p. 22)

Fig. 3.2 (p. 21)
<https://www.google.tn/search?q=overcoming+inertia&espv=>

The more you know, the briefer you get. (p. 25)

Beware of Fat Plans

Leaders must be aware not to over plan on paper but this does not mean that the planning cycle should be skipped. They need to focus on the priorities during the planning stage. Also, leaders must consider relationship and develop clear and concise plan that should be viewed as a learning process. (p. 24) The plan should be so simple that all participants in the process understand their role in the executing the plan. The *Skinny* “one page plan” may be critical in making the plan as simple as possible i.e. less is more is the essence of motion leadership. The more you know, the briefer you get. (p. 25)

Behavior Before Beliefs

Do not load up on vision, evidence and sense of urgency! Rather, give people new experiences in relatively non-threatening circumstances, and build on it, especially through interactions with trusted peers. This kind of experience will take the fear of out change and lead to people believing that it is possible to change.



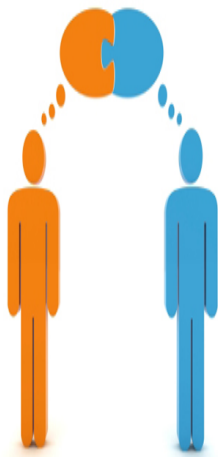
Communication During Implementation is Paramount

Excitement before implementation is understandable, but it does not have much of a foundation. Excitement during implementation is based on more substance. However, to keep the same level of excitement throughout the change process, all stakeholders need to listen to each other, discuss and debate concern in order to make the experience and risk taking easier.



<http://www.faisonopc.com/sites/default/files/images/com>

He reiterated the fact that by communicating, problems can be identified, providing the leaders an opportunity to adapt and modify the implementation game plan. The critical part throughout this process is being able to admit mistakes and coming up with alternative solutions. .



<http://blog.1and1.com/blog-us/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2013/09/Sharing-Ideas1.jpg>

Learn About Implementation During Implementation

Motion leaders have the ability to learn from others that have been in the same situations but are further down the implementation road. As a global learning community, motion leaders need to discover resources that will save time and energy. This will lead to a creation of a we-we identity that can support the complexity of implementation by sharing ideas and adjusting procedures to maneuver the journey.

Excitement Prior to Implementation is Fragile

Everything we know about motivation tells us that deep excitement comes from doing something worthwhile, doing it well and getting results. “Excitement in advance of doing something is understandable but it does not have much of a foundation. The fall in the implementation dip will be greater if high aspirations precede it. Premature excitement is not a substitute for the hard work of implementation.” (p. 29) Motion leaders know that excitement has to be earned and experienced, it cannot be faked. Therefore, they strive for small early successes, acknowledge real problems, admit mistakes, protect their people and celebrate success along the way.

Take Risks and Learn

The skinny on risk taking is for leaders to create a climate and culture that encourages action and learning from mistakes. A leader must develop a safe and caring environment that give room for risk taking, failure, and innovation.



http://www.getacoder.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/take_risks.jpg

It's Okay to be Assertive

If you want to get anything done, you have to combine assertiveness and humility. Fullan identified **Three Conditions of Assertive Leadership:**

- When they have built trusted relationships,
- When it turns out they have a good idea, and
- When they empower people from day one to help and shape the idea.

Humility cannot be overlooked. Fulan talks about being a wise leader and defines wisdom as using your knowledge by doubting what you know, learn first and always as you go, acts and keep others involved every step of the way.

Change Savvy Leaders

- They know a great deal because they are learners.
- They respect the complexity and live by the definition of wisdom
- They combine assertiveness and humility

(p. 31)

The *Skinny* of Change means:

- To get anywhere, you have to do something
- In doing something, you need to focus on skills
- Acquisition of skills increase clarity
- Clarity results in ownership
- Doing it together with others generates shared ownership
- Persist no matter what. Resilience is your best friend.

(p. 32)

*All effective leader
leaders combine
resolute moral
purpose with
impressive empathy.*

Key

Message

Connect Peers With Purpose



http://shipmentslogbook.com/wp-content/themes/business-lite/images/Collaborative_.png

Collaboration is key to getting focus and coherence in otherwise fragmented systems. Both top down and bottom up change don't work – the BEST way to tightens things up is to get peers to do it. Thus, the role of a leader is to enable, facilitate and cause peers to interact in a focused manner. 'Peers interaction is the social glue of focus and coherence.' (p. 35)

Motion leaders who learn how to connect peers to purpose participate directly – they don't dominate but they are experts moving the group directly. They push for precision and specificity, link instruction to practice and foster transparency of outcomes. However, they cannot stop there – they must become part of a network or cluster to ensure they are not cut off from sources of support.

Fullan identified four factors necessary for collaboration to be successful:

- There needs to be “resolute leadership” with a culture of high expectations – no excuses but shared focus of action.
- People needs to experience and build power of allegiance to each other
- This will lead to the unleashing of “professional power”
- Conditions for sustainability become established

(p. 40 – 41)

Learning Is The Work



People need to get better at learning within the context of their organization by being more specific and precise about putting high yield learning practices into place and willing to innovate and be creative (seek constant improvement).

Change savvy leaders must be consistent and innovative in their search for continuous improvement.

Leaders must be patient to understand that “learning is the work” is challenging until people gain competence in their skills. As skills are developed, the work becomes easier. Simplicity is the key! From simple to complex and back to simple – complexity loses its mystery. (p. 58)

<https://www.google.tn/search?q=learning+is+the+work&espv=2&biw=1080&bih>

Capacity Building Vis-a –Vis Judgmentalism

Capacity building concerns knowledge, skills and disposition of people individually and collectively. It is the group with shared purpose and belief that gets things done.

Judgmentalism is perceiving something that is not working and conveying it in a negative way.

Savvy leaders identify problems, are candid about their presence, and yet are empathetic enough that the people affected do not feel personally judged. A good leader makes people feel good about continuing to work on something that they see as hard.

Always assume
others are doing
the best they can

<http://1.bp.blogspot.com/>

Transparency Rules



Transparency is about openness of results in all its subcategories and *deprivatization* of practice. System reform cannot happen unless one knows what being accomplished and is experiencing success. (p. 59)

However, there is a strong relationship between transparency and nonjudgmentalism. When people feel like they are being judged, they become closed and reserved. Practicing transparency is a risk-taking proposition, but if done well and persistently; the gain far outweighs the costs. Change savvy leaders know that you can't directly make people change, but you can create a system where positive change is virtually inevitable.

Love, Trust And Resistance

“Love your employee! (p.65) There is a general tendency in most people to respond according to how they are treated. If the work is meaningful and people feel supported by the leader, they will go the extra miles necessary to get the work done.

Trust is powerful! The two major component of trust are: *Integrity* (sincerity, reliability, honesty) and *competence* (skill and effectiveness). However, a savvy leader strives to have a balance of the two.

There will always be some resistance and leaders need to take the time to listen and seek different opinion in order to grow and honor the process. (p. 67)

There is power in knowing change itself as purposeful peer interaction, non-judgmental capacity building, learning is the work trio, transparency of data and practice. These stances and strategies combine to synergize support and pressure and become irresistible force.

Therefore, change savvy leaders should learn to combine love, trustworthiness and empathetic feeling with firm handling of resistance and they will be rewarded by



<http://www.askotherstrustyourself.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Resistance-182x300.jpg>



<http://sosleadership.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Gr8LeadersWordle.png>

Leadership For All

Becoming change savvy makes you more confident and humble at the same time and leaders have two key responsibilities:

They have to always be learning and refining their skills in order to bring about change

They have a responsibility to teach other the same.

Motion leaders change the system by changing how other leaders around them change each other, thereby moving individuals, then the organizations and lastly the system. The *skinny* of change is to unclutter – to strip away the fat to a very small number of gems that have the virtue of being simultaneously simple and powerful.

Critical Evaluation

“Motion Leadership” proves the old adage that good things come in small packages. The book is tightly packed with wise advice and illustrated by relevant practical examples. This book offers a succinct approach to leadership that respects the contributions of those within the organization, while focusing on goals for change.

“Motion Leadership” describes the complexity of bringing about positive change on a large scale and invited leaders to learn from the people who have been in that situation before as another old adage says that, experience is the best teacher.

Also, it contains ‘basic insight and ideas about change’ by moving from practice to theory with increasing refinement. It strips away the excess to get to the essentials and providing a book that is far from bloated. It gets to the ‘skinny’ of change. Fullan explained that, “getting at the skinny is about making change less complex and more powerful in its impact.” (p. 3) In order to lead effectively, build relationships, trust others’ competency and integrity, a leader would benefit tremendously from leading from a caring core. To Fullan, building an organization’s capacity and engaging everyone in leadership are primary goals that trump any temptation to indulge in judgmental behavior.

Fullan addresses several major points about leadership in an engaging and provocative manner. He says, “leaders must develop relationships first to a degree before they can push challenges,” suggesting that the headstrong leader who comes into a new situation should respect the organization’s culture but not become its victim. “Leaders”, says Fullan, “should strive for small successes and be ready to admit mistakes”. (p. 45) Motion Leadership focuses on positive action and shared ownership. The ‘skinny’ is that nothing succeeds like collective capacity.” (p. 41)

One of the most compelling arguments I found in the book concerns the issue of transparency. Fullan believes that transparency is mandatory because, ‘you cannot get system reform without knowing what is being accomplished. He urges leaders to be open with their plan. (p. 59)

“Motion Leadership” will appeal to systemic leaders interested in reflecting upon and refining their ability to lead the change that is expected when they are appointed. Though the approach to the book streamlined in congruence with this message, Fullan could spend more time discussing the importance of the notion of care to change leadership.

Fullan’s “Motion Leadership” models an approach to leading for change. He states, “These days, all newly appointed leaders, by definition, have a mandate to bring about change”. (p. 8) Therefore, educational leaders who are intentional about a caring approach, that is trusting and optimistic, must consider change that is rooted in the approach describe throughout the book rather than ‘change for change’s sake.’

Despite the fact that the focus of this book is on large-scale systemic change, the core elements should resonate with school-based leaders as they consider moving toward common goals that support student learning.

Questions ???



http://www.texaswildlifeguy.com/wp-content/uploads/single_red_question_mark_1600_clr.png

What simple changes can you implement as a leader in your team or grade that will make the largest impact with your team members or the teachers in your school?

Think of a practical school experience where excitement prior to change caused problems?

Identify a recent personal leadership failure and how you reacted to it?

What are your two best strategies for connecting colleagues?

What is your biggest fear about transparency in your school?

References

Fullan, M. (2010). Motion Leadership: The Skinny on Becoming Change Savvy

Northouse P. (2016) Leadership: Theory and Practice. (7th ed)

Fullan, M. (2010) Motion Leadership with Michael Fullan (video file) retrieved on October 26, 2015 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0_VY7cWN4E