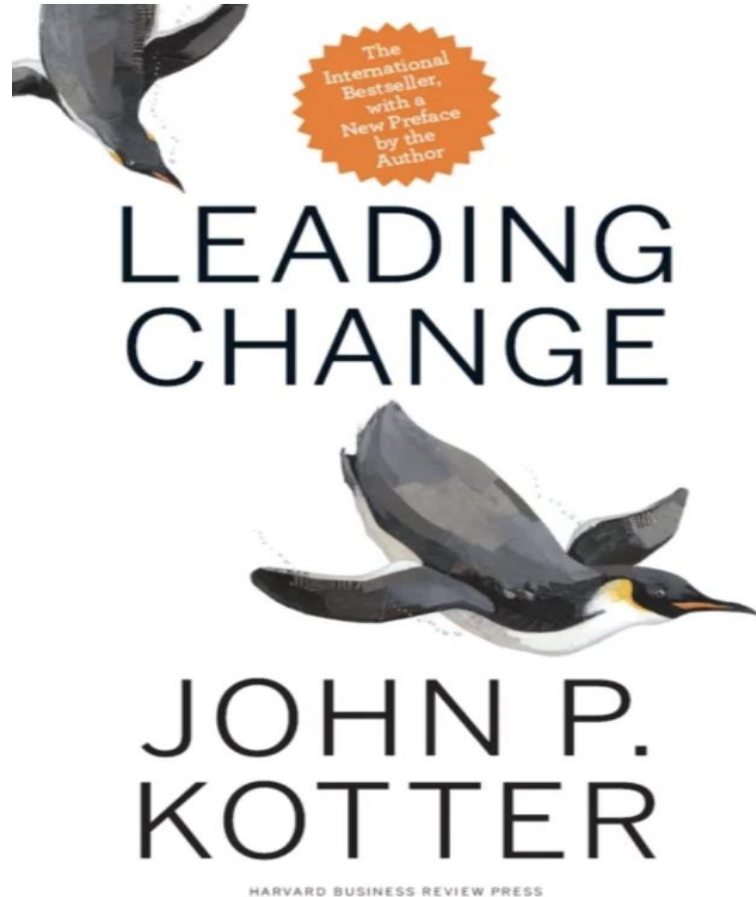# Five theories

Roger Klev

Siv.ing/dr.ing, professor

Praxes AS

Five theories about driving change and innovation

Five theories

1. Change management – «Sense of urgency»

2. Transformational leadership

3. «Ambidextrous» organizations

4. Design and lead organizational development

5. Defensive routines vs Psychological safety
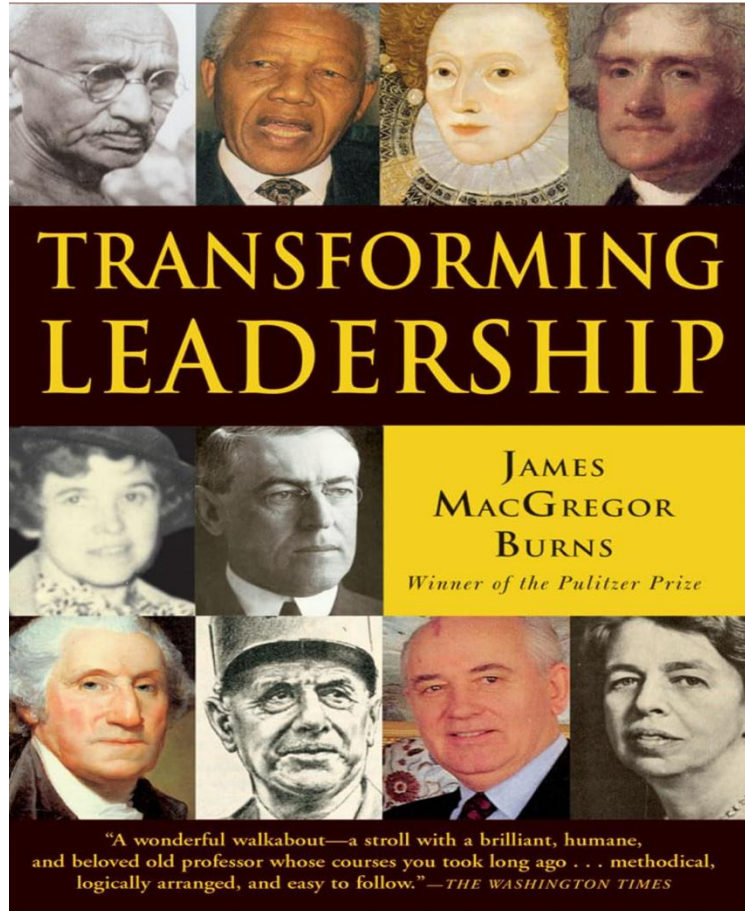
1. Sense of urgency

- John Kotters «Leading change» (1995) shaped the new field of «change management»

- «Not establishing a great enough sense of urgency» was one the most frequent explanation why change efforts failed

- Example of importance of great sense of urgency: The rapid and radical changes during the pandemic

1. Sense of urgency

- *Important*, and *urgent*

- Example: Who experience the urgency of accellerating production start?

- How is it experienced? How does this urgency manifest itself?

2. Transformational leadership

TRANSFORMING LEADERSHIP

JAMES MacGREGOR BURNS

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize

"A wonderful walkabout—a stroll with a brilliant, humane, and beloved old professor whose courses you took long ago . . . methodical, logically arranged, and easy to follow."—*THE WASHINGTON TIMES*

- A leader who inspires, motivates and empowers, and who is able to build shared visions and a commitment to achieve them

- *Transformational* versus *transactional* leadership

2. Transformational leadership

- Do the managers exercise leadership in driving change?
  - Are you, as leaders, visible role models?
  - Do you, as leaders, communicate (talk, listen, interact) with employees about the goals and what we need to do to get there?
  - Do employees feel, from their leaders, that they make a difference, that they are seen and valued?
  - Do employees learn from their leaders that their competence, creativity and commitment are needed and valued?
- Do the leaders *reduce others' sense of uncertainty?*

3. Ambidextrous organization

The Ambidextrous Organization

by Charles A. O'Reilly III and Michael L. Tushman

From the Magazine (April 2004)

Summary. Reprint: R0404D Corporate executives must constantly look backward, attending to the products and processes of the past, while also gazing forward, preparing for the innovations that will define the future. This mental balancing act is one of the toughest of all... **more**

The Roman god Janus had two sets of eyes—one pair focusing on what lay behind, the other on what lay ahead. General managers and corporate executives should be able to relate. They, too, must constantly look backward, attending to the products and processes of the past, while also gazing forward, preparing for the innovations that will define the future.

A version of this article appeared in the April 2004 issue of *Harvard Business Review*.

- «Exploit» and/or «Explore»?

- The challenge: The routines, practices and culture which are designed to control and manage risk, cut cost etc, will work against the routines, practices and culture needed to drive innovation and change

3. Ambidextrous organization

- Are the units and people who manage risk and costs also the key players who drive innovation and change?

- Is there a need for more permanent structural changes to be or to become ambidextrous, or is the project organizing sufficient?

- Ways to create ambidexterity:
  - Organizational structures
  - Allocate different people to different types of efforts
  - Create clear separation of activities through time management, for individuals and units

4. Design and lead participative processes
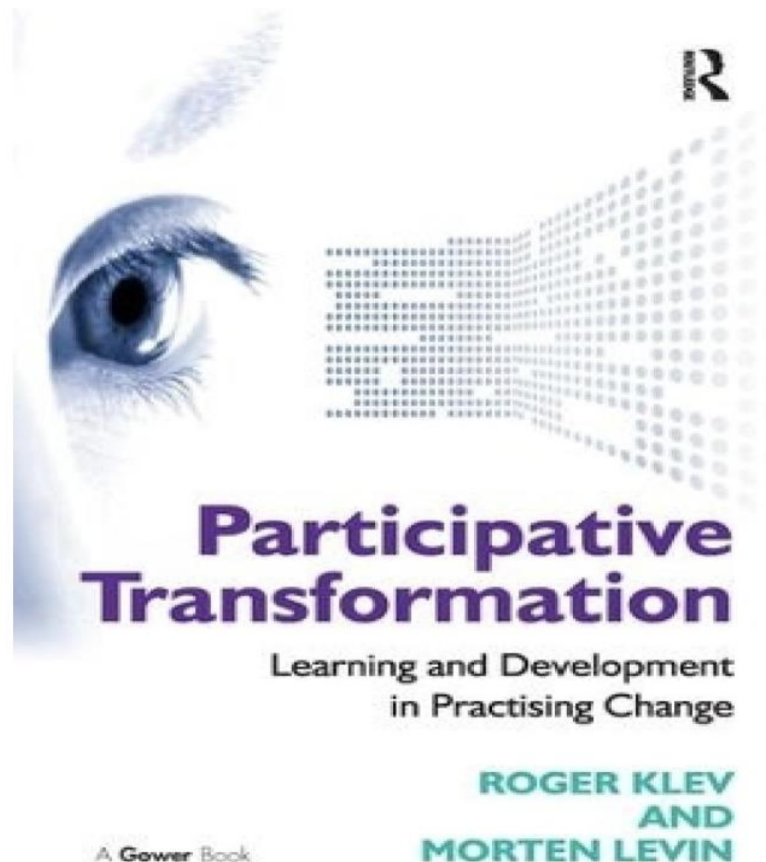
- Organizational change means by definition that many actors (internal stakeholders) need to learn/think something different than today, and to act accordingly

- Leading organizational change is to design and lead collective learning processes

4. Design and lead participative processes

- Establish shared understanding of challenges

- Design/identify arenas for dialogue

- Mobilize employees/stakeholders

- Engage participants in shaping ideas and solutions which become new practices

- Learn together from early experiences, and adjust goals and processes if appropriate
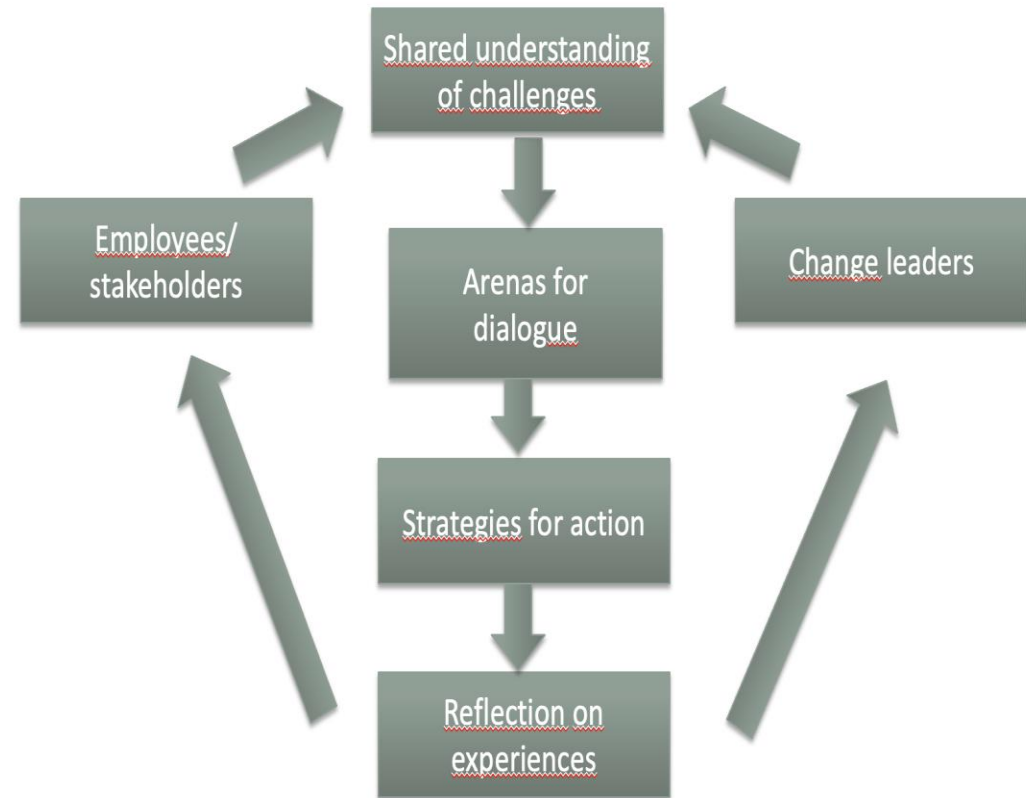
5. Defensive routines vs Psychological safety

Skilled Incompetence

by Chris Argyris

The ability to get along with others is always an asset, right? Wrong. By adeptly avoiding conflict with coworkers, some executives eventually wreak organizational havoc. And it's their very adeptness that's the problem. The explanation for this lies in what I call skilled incompetence, whereby managers use practiced routine behavior (skill) to produce what they do not intend (incompetence). We can see this happen when managers talk to each other in ways that are seemingly candid and straightforward. What we don't see so clearly is how managers' skills can become institutionalized and create disastrous side effects in their organizations. Consider this familiar situation:
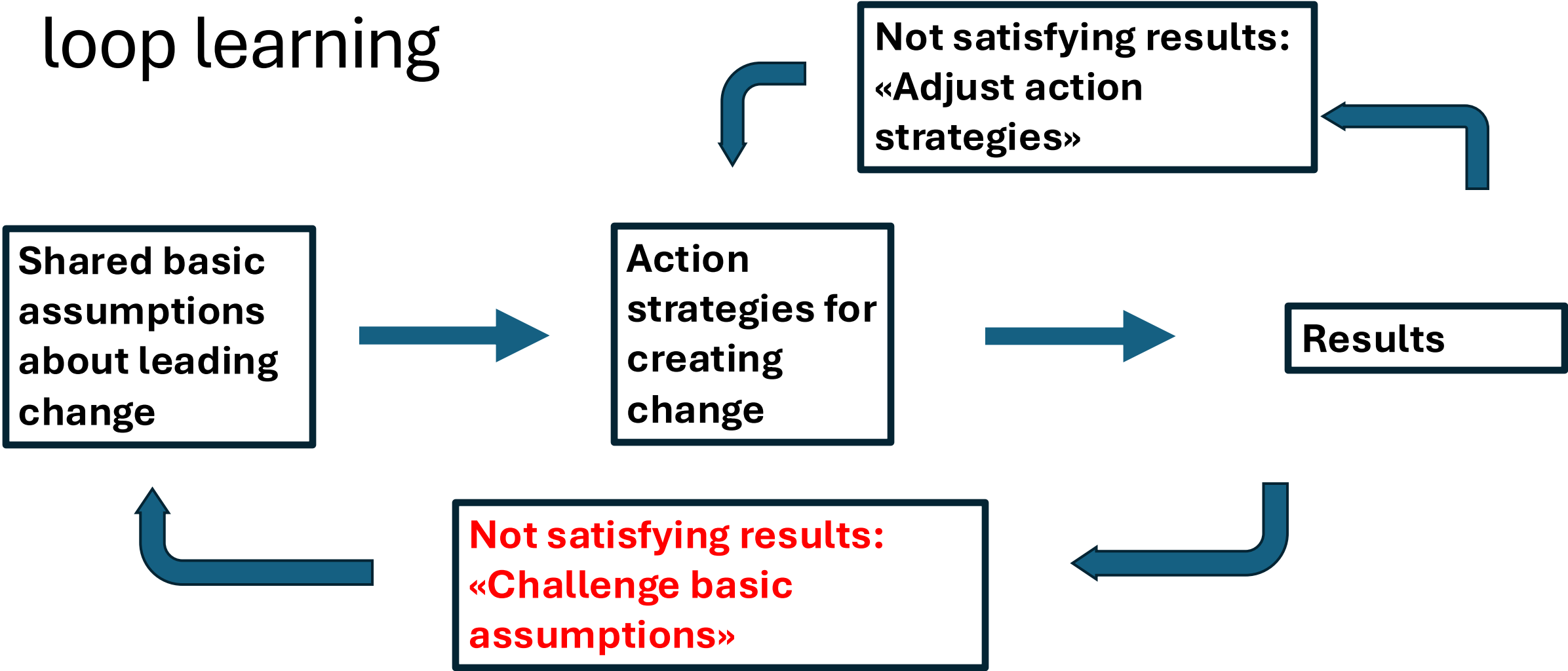
Psychological Safety

the
fearless
organization

Creating **Psychological Safety** in the
Workplace for Learning,
Innovation, and Growth

5. Defensive routines vs Psychological safety

- Defensive routines are patterns of communication «designed» to protect us and others from embarrasment and perceived threats

- «Skilled incompetence»: These communication patterns do not produce the desired results for the organization (hence «incompetent»), but we can be very skilled at using them

- Psychological safety: The shared belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for raising ideas or questions, for raising concerns, or for making mistakes

Single and double loop learning

5. Defensive routines vs Psychological safety

- If your change efforts does not produce the desired results:

- Is it perceived as safe, for any manager, to challenge existing basic assumptions behind change initiatives and to introduce new ideas?