Transformational Learning:
Diagnosing and Disturbing the Immunity to Change
Dr. Lisa Lahey

Overview

Why is change so difficult, even when we are genuinely committed to it? How can we do a better job closing the gap between what we intend and our actual behaviors? Based on Kegan and Lahey's Immunity-to-Change approach (see *Immunity to Change*, Harvard Business Press, 2009), this experiential session is designed to enable participants to identify assumptions they currently hold that are likely to interfere with successfully enacting new ideas and behaviors that would increase their effectiveness. This process helps individuals, teams and organizations make those personal and collective changes that are most important to them – but have proven resistant even to thoughtful plans and heartfelt intentions.

The objectives of this session are to:

1. Identify a compelling individual, professional improvement goal.
2. Identify your personal barriers to change.
3. Understand the systemic nature of immunities to change.
4. Understand the basic steps of overturning an immunity to change.
5. Stimulate discussion about the relevance of this change approach to the equity and inclusive work you are currently engaged in.

To prepare:

1. Please identify a meaningful self-improvement goal that connects to the work you are engaged in at your campus to create a more equitable or/and inclusive learning community (e.g., faculty recruitment, graduate student admission, retention; university policies). Ask yourself:

> **If I could get better at ONE THING — the One Big Thing that would make the biggest difference in my ability to create a more equitable and/or inclusive learning community, what would that One Big Thing be?**

Sometimes you know intuitively what your Improvement Goal is because it's something you've been trying to get better at or change for a while and you've been unable to do it.

If nothing comes to mind or you have a couple of areas of improvement in mind, you might want to identify a handful of people whom you could ask for feedback. These should be people who know you well, grasp the challenges of diversifying the university, and whose perspective and intentions you really trust. What would they recommend you consider as your highest priority improvement goal?

A good Improvement Goal for our work together meets these guidelines:

- Your goal is true *for you*.
- It implicates *you* — it's not a goal for someone else's improvement.
- It's not an outcome (like…my goal is to be more successful in persuading others, or to increase the diversity in my department). It's about *what YOU want/need to do to improve* (possibly in the service of a specific outcome.)
- It's stated in the affirmative (something you're going to get better at or start doing, not only something you're going to stop doing.)
- It's important to you — on a scale from 1-5 it's AT LEAST a 4 and probably a 5.
- There's room for improvement in this area.

Here are a few examples of common goals people have selected for this exercise: *I am committed to getting better at…*

- Asking hard questions that may unsettle others
- Bringing the topic of diversity into the conversation
- Asking others to take on more responsibility
- Reaching out to a less familiar part of our community
- Making larger asks from key faculty or administrators
- Challenging long-standing assumptions about who is a "good fit" in our department
- Listening more critically to the way others reason about the policy decisions that can impact faculty diversity

Write down whatever goal you decide on. Then, clarify why this is an important goal for you to achieve. What's most important to you about reaching this goal? In what ways would reaching that goal make a difference for you and what you care about? What costs are you currently paying? *Please bring your goal and the reasons it is important to you to our session on Thursday, February 2nd.*

2. Please read this HBR article, *The Real Reason People Won't Change*, which describes the Immunity-to-Change methodology and gives you some examples of what completed ITC maps look like.