

# Immunity to Change: A Report From the Field

Jonathan Reams

## Introduction

Many of us have long been fans of Robert Kegan's work, as well as his collaboration with Lisa Lahey. My first introduction was in a doctoral class where we were assigned his (1994) *In Over Our Heads*. I recall that as we discussed it, there was a consensus in our class that we were somewhat annoyed, as it was the only book in our course work that we could not skim! There was a richness to the descriptions and stories that required detailed attention in order to begin to grasp the depth of meaning being conveyed. While for many of my classmates the world of adult constructivist development did not "stick" so to speak, for myself it grew to take a central place in my work as an educator and consultant.

However, as with anything of real substance, mastering the understanding of it takes time. As the distinctions Kegan presented in his work began to take root in my perception of the underlying structure of consciousness in individuals, I found myself wanting to find ways to apply them in the work I was doing. I must say that my early attempts were typically crude, teaching through an intellectual presentation of concepts. My goal was to create activities that were informed by a developmental understanding, however the circumstances of my life did not provide much in the way of opportunities to do this at that time.

More recently, having a position that allows for curriculum development around leadership, I finally got around to reading Kegan and Lahey's (2001) *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work. Seven Languages for Transformation*. I was enthused to see how they applied the core principle of making what we are subject to an object of reflection in a simple and straightforward manner, and set out to test how well their process worked in a class of mature students studying leadership development.

I then ordered their latest work, (2009) *Immunity to Change. How To Overcome It and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization* and read through it in anticipation of being able to apply what further insights it might have in a two day consulting assignment. While the concepts of subject object relations and adult development are rich in their descriptive power, the question still remained for me: how can they be successfully applied in practice?

In this article I will present a description of my experience starting to answer this question. First, however, I present an overview of *Immunity to Change*. My goal here is not to review the book in a traditional sense, but to provide a quick summary of its core points as context for those not yet familiar with the book or Kegan and Lahey's, or Kegan's earlier work. From there I will describe my experience of testing out the work in the two contexts mentioned.

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## Overview of the Book

### Introduction

In opening this book, Kegan and Lahey situate their work in the context of the past 25 years of work in the field of organizational change. Specifically, they comment on one of the critiques of the literature and work around learning organizations, which is that they did not take adult development into account. They note that when Senge's (1990) *The Fifth Discipline. The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization* came out, brain scientists still held the belief, assumption, or to them fact that there were no mental or brain changes after adolescence. While neuroscience has begun to revise its understanding (see books like Begley's (2007) *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain*, about the research on neuroplasticity) of the possibilities for adult development, the implications of that finding for organizational learning and leadership have yet to be realized. It is this task that Kegan and Lahey take on in this book. They frame this by making a distinction between leadership *development* (implying developmental change) and leadership *learning* or *training*.

### Part One. Uncovering A Hidden Dynamic in the Challenge of Change

#### Chapter 1

In chapter one, *Reconceiving the Challenge of Change*, they begin by noting that leaders who view capacity as a fixed resource will fall behind those who work to enable the growth of capacity in their organization. They then introduce the understanding and model of adult development that has now had over a generation to mature, moving from the density and complexity of Kegan's earlier works, (1982) *The Evolving Self* and (1994) *In Over Our Heads*, to a succinct one-chapter summary that gets the essential points across in a simple and accessible manner. In addition, they link adult development with effectiveness in business, citing dissertation research by Keith Eigel (1998) that shows a clear correlation between stage of cognitive development and leadership effectiveness.

They then examine the gap between the level of cognitive capacity present in society and the demands being made by leadership literature such as that of Chris Argyris, showing that Argyris has long been proposing a model of leadership wherein the leader is implicitly being asked to have a self transforming (or fifth order) mind. They cite their own (using the SOI/Subject Object Interview) and other studies (using the WUSCT/Washington University Sentence Completion Test) to show the percentages of leaders at the various stages of development, identifying the gap between the mental demands on leadership today and the capacity generally available.

Finally, they draw on the distinction by Ronald Heifetz (1994) between technical and adaptive challenges to show that most of the challenges leaders face today are adaptive in that they ask us to adapt our level or stage of mental complexity rather than simply apply technical solutions. The misapplication of technical solutions to adaptive problems is seen as a major source of dysfunction.

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## Chapter 2

In *Uncovering the Immunity to Change*, Kegan and Lahey present and illustrate their notion of the immunity to change. The first step is to learn how to formulate challenges as adaptive, and they use detailed examples from the “laboratory” of their work with leaders over the past few years. These examples show the development of their four column map, work first outlined in their previous book (2001) on *Seven Languages for Transformation*. Through showing contrasting maps of the immunities to change, they also show how the underlying structure of immunity is the same even if the particular challenge or issue is different.

They then make three premises about overcoming this kind of immunity. First, that overcoming it does not mean needing to get rid of all our anxiety management systems. Second, that anxiety is produced not merely from the onset of change, but from feeling defenseless in the face of it. Third, that the immunity systems we have developed can actually be changed. They link this to how it shows up in the stages of development, and then identify the concept of optimal conflict as the condition that best supports the kind of development being sought. Optimal conflict is made up of persistent experience of frustration, that allows us to feel the limits of our current way of knowing in some area of life we care enough about and that we have sufficient support to avoid being overwhelmed by the conflict.

They close the chapter by looking at three dimensions of the immunity to change: change prevention systems, feeling systems, and knowing systems. This leads them into the fourth column or the “big assumptions” that are seen to hold people. It is the revealing of these big assumptions that allows for the complete picture to emerge, integrating the three dimensions of the immunity to change.

## Chapter 3

“*We Never had a Language for It*” or *Engaging the Emotional Life of the Organization* is the title of chapter 3 and here Kegan and Lahey share, again through examples, how they learned from their clients the need to put the right issue in the first column. This is called the “one big thing” that each person identifies (with the help of feedback from others). This is designed to include people’s private lives as well. The need to link personal and organizational development becomes clear through further illustrations. They also describe the need to have a champion at the top, or to have the leader truly committed to acting on this work.

The authors then reveal how their focus on individual development has been supplemented by learning from clients who have a much better understanding of how to look at things systemically and organizationally. This enabled their work to not only address the adaptive growth of individual’s meaning making systems, but also of the emotional life of the organization.

## Part 2. Overcoming the Immunity to Change in Organizations, Individuals, and Teams

### Chapter 4

Chapter 4, *Overcoming the Groupwide Immunity to Change* takes a collective approach to the immunity to change work. In line with the concepts of learning organizations, this chapter presents three brief and three more detailed examples of how groups of various sizes and from various sectors of society were able to make use of the four column process to create organizational learning. Some of these groups began with individual immunity maps, while others applied the process on a longer term scale by making use of surveys to get input into commitments, and pilot projects to test out the big assumptions that emerge.

Kegan and Lahey make an important distinction that the third column work, which can prove the most challenging, “simultaneously provides a *cognitive* awareness of a change prevention system at work, and the *emotionally* unsettling insight that the true barrier to change come from within the system” (p 118, emphasis in the original). This is similar to what Scharmer (2007) describes as third stage or reflective dialogue. In both descriptions, the critical insight that allows shifts to happen come when those involved in reflecting on the challenges faced realize they are actually sustaining the very system they wish to change.

### Chapter 5

*David Doesn't Delegate* goes into depth of the story of one leader's work of using the immunity to change process to actually change behaviors. This is accomplished through taking his initial big assumption and seeing an even bigger underlying core value and assumption about it, and then trying out actions that tested the assumption. The use of some further tools to support this process are introduced, and the successful outcomes are detailed. An additional benefit of this chapter is that the example used also illustrates some of the core issues facing leaders as they face challenges of building capacity in teams they are responsible for leading.

Beyond this rich and instructive illustration, the authors show how the question of changes of mind and or of behavior is not a chicken or egg which comes first question, but a dialectic interplay that takes the explicit challenge being faced and uses working on it to facilitate development. In this way the immunity process is used along with our work and life challenges to help us see the picture of *what has been authoring us*. This central proposition of moving from being held by assumptions to self authoring a new relationship to them is well served by the illustration in this chapter.

### Chapter 6

In *Cathy Can't Contain Herself*, we hear the story of how Cathy worked through her immunity map. Rather than a step by step process, her story shows that sometimes a very intense experience can test our big assumptions to the core all at once. The chapter provides a second example of the many forms this work can take, and at the same time the core pattern that runs through the immunity work.

## Chapter 7

In *The Case of Nascent Pharmaceuticals*, Kegan and Lahey bring together the power of doing the individual immunity work within a group context. They go into depth on the processes they used with the team that Cathy was a part of. Three workshops over six months, individual coaching, and the use of various survey and assessment instruments enabled the team to make significant progress on their goals. These goals, trust and communication, are good illustrations of common issues teams everywhere often face.

In moving from individual to group work, the additional complexity of the dynamics involved becomes clear. The tendency to avoid bringing personal issues to the group setting because of tendencies to pathologize individual problems is nicely dealt with through the use of framing and processes that enable each team member to see the strengths that are one end of a continuum related to those weaknesses. The coordination of the various tools used to support the process, the timing of the work and the importance of the leader setting the tone and acting as an example are all well illustrated.

## Part Three. Over to You: Diagnosing and Overcoming Immunities in Yourself and Your Organization

### Chapter 8

*Unlocking Potential* describes three necessary ingredients to successfully take on the work of unlocking your immunity to change: a vital energy source of motivation for change, both cognitive and emotional aspects working together and action or behavioral work. The gut level, or vital energy is required to help us go beyond feeling that something is important, to feeling it is absolutely necessary to address the adaptive changes revealed.

Engaging the thinking and feeling together is required as no amount of thinking about the work will get it done, as also no amount of emotional effort by itself will either. It is a combination of “thinking about our feelings and feeling our way into new thinking” (p. 216) simultaneously that moves us along in the adaptive or developmental work. Finally, action must be taken, the hand put to the wheel so to speak to generate the experiences and experiments that can test our assumptions and move the insights into reality. The power of doing something that reveals the assumptive nature of our deeply held beliefs is what can enable us to take a perspective on them rather than being held by them.

### Chapter 9

*Diagnosing Your Own Immunity to Change* covers the territory of the Seven Languages book, at least the first four chapters. It provides the benefit of adding clear criteria by which you can evaluate if your column entries are sufficient to the task of helping create a robust x-ray map of your immune system. Kegan and Lahey describe how they learned over time how to help the people for whom the original four column exercise was only interesting and not deeply moving produce a better map.

They begin by stressing the importance of generating the right first column commitment. If it is not something sufficiently important, and more to the point, something that aims at a personal adaptive change, it will uncover an immunity system that does not really matter to us, wasting the potential the exercise has. In the second column, the need to describe specific, concrete behaviors is stressed so that later on you will be able to better see why you do these things. The third column is generated through the simple question of what is at risk if I do the opposite of these behaviors? These “worry box” fears are then reframed to make the competing commitments of the third column. Again, criteria are provided to enable you to evaluate if you are getting sufficient depth in your entries here.

The fourth column big assumptions are generated next through a simple process of imagining what must be held as “true” for the third column competing commitments to make sense. The power of this is that it reveals territory that we have previously been subject to, and that our immune systems have acted as guardians of. They protect us from venturing into what is assumed as unsafe territory. The simplicity, power, and elegance of this process comes through quite clearly in this one chapter summary of four chapters in their previous book. But now what to do with the insights gained?

## Chapter 10

*Overcoming Your Immunity to Change* is where Kegan and Lahey take this work beyond where the *Seven Languages* book went. They take the immunity map, and frame it very succinctly “You can see the very good reason *why* you are holding yourself back: You want to save your life as you know it” (p. 253). The developmental pattern of taking what has us or we are subject to and making it an object of reflection involves reaching deep into our self image or identity. The brilliance of this work shows through here as the authors lay out a careful, step by step process for allowing you to experience the limits of this identity, and begin the process of constructing a new one.

The work of testing big assumptions is set out in clear stages. First is designing a test. Here they make an important distinction between an event focused approach and a process or learning focused one. Our tendency to take immediate action to solve the problems identified in column two leads to thinking that if we can simply do something that goes against our competing commitments or big assumptions, we will have overcome them. Kegan and Lahey point out that the point of the test is to learn something about our big assumption – to see if and to what degree it might be true, false, or more nuanced than we imagined. They again provide helpful criteria for guiding the design of the test, and examples of how it might look.

The second step is running the test you have designed. Here it is important to make detailed notes on what actually happened, both about how you felt during the test and how others responded or acted. They emphasize directly observable data, and warn against allowing interpretation to sneak in. The third stage is the actual interpreting of your test, and here again examples illustrate the points made and a guide sheet keeps us on track.

Once these steps are completed, they show how to consolidate the learning by identifying how you get hooked into activating the big assumption and entire immunity system. In addition, you

learn how to identify new practices you develop that help release you from the grip of the immunity system. All of these are shown to be repeatable, and how they can help evolve and even develop new immunity maps over time.

## Chapter 11

*Surfacing Your Collective Immunity to Change* applies the same four column process to a group. They strongly advise not going straight for this approach, but to run individuals through the individual process first to get a real feel for it. They again lay out criteria and steps for groups running this process together, and as one might imagine, doing it as a collective adds a certain degree of complexity that then requires an appropriate amount of time to go through.

## Conclusion

*Growing Your Own, or How to Lead so People Develop*, pulls together the core themes of the book and makes it clear that what will enable organizations of any kind to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is taking a developmental stance and being able to master the immunities to change. The main body of the chapter is an examination of seven crucial attributes of this work. Summarized, they say that mental growth continues after adolescence, that there is a distinction between technical and adaptive learning, that people have an intrinsic motivation to grow, that these kind of mindset changes take time, and that they involve both thinking and feeling, that reflection and action are interdependent and enable each other, and that there needs to be sufficient safety and support for facing the risks in this depth of change of mindset.

## Report From the Field

Reading over this brief summary of the book, you might want to say “sounds great, sign me up,” or alternatively find yourself more skeptical and saying “sounds too good to be true,” or have a degree of both responses mixed together. My tendency is to begin with enthusiasm and then find the reality of trying to apply things a bit of a humbling experience. Since all the theoretical understanding in the world does not make up for a lack of experience, I felt it critical to try applying the techniques laid out in this work.

## Phase One

My first opportunity for application came in the winter of 2009 when teaching a new course on leadership development and organizational transformation in a masters in organizational leadership program. I had designed the course around a combination of individual development along with how to apply that work in service of organizational transformation. Students were mid level professionals from a variety of sectors, coming from various parts of Norway.

They received a leadership assessment<sup>1</sup> to give them a sense of where they were at in terms of key leadership dimensions. Following their debrief and some overnight homework related to

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<sup>1</sup> I used The Leadership Circle 360 feedback instrument – <http://www.theleadershipcircle.com/> as it incorporates Kegan’s distinction between the institutional or socialized mind and the self authoring mind.

their feedback, I led them through the four column exercise as described in the *Seven Languages* book. There were some challenges keeping them on track at times, and getting them to understand what was being asked of them. Some of this could be attributed to language issues, as not all the students were totally fluent in English, and some of it undoubtedly was attributable to the limitations of my first attempt at giving the instructions.

In *Immunity to Change*, Kegan and Lahey describe how after doing the four column work for a while they noticed that around 30-40% of people did not get to a really profound and useful big assumption. I would say that this was reflected in the work with this group of students as well. For some it produced insights like “I never realized that all this time I was being driven by the opposite of my self-image.” For others it helped them see something new about themselves, but not in a way that made a huge impact for them.

For follow-up in the month until the last two days of the class, they worked on an action plan to test out what they had learned. The idea was to have a conversation with someone about their leadership feedback, and see if they could try doing one small thing differently that would challenge their assumptions identified in column four. The results of this work seemed to have mixed effect, seemingly dependent upon the depth of insight gained from the four column work and the student’s ability to create a really good experiment.

The last part of the course went through the last three or the social languages. With students all coming from diverse organizations rather than a team within one organization, this work was less directly applicable. It was more abstract and indirect for them to work on how they might apply these languages in their organizations, but it still appeared to be of value for them. Overall, I was quite happy with my initial application of the four column work, but was looking forward to learning more and trying it again.

## **Phase Two**

### **Setting**

The opportunity to try again came soon, as I was given the opportunity to do this work as follow up to some previous work a colleague in the UK had done with a senior management team of a public service organization. In preparation, I bought and read the *Immunity to Change* book. Having had the prior experience working with the four column exercise helped immensely when reading over the refinements that Kegan and Lahey brought to this new book. I also had a clearer focus for the two days with this team, allowing for taking more time in laying the foundations and allowing each step in the process have the time it required.

The main improvement I found in the new book was an explanation of why the four column work as originally designed had generally gotten really good results for only 60-70% of people. Kegan and Lahey provided a better explanation of the framing and pre-work that would enable people to generate the kind of first column commitment that would get the process going in the right way. They noted that if you start with something that is not a really core, crucial issue that will make a difference not only to you but also to those around you, then the whole process will



be limited by only being able to reveal competing commitments and big assumptions about relatively unimportant matters.

### **Opening Moves**

They also provided a much better integration of how to combine this work with teams as well as individuals. The three social languages are in essence gone, but in their place the methods for working teams through a collective four column exercise more than makes up for this. Taking this work, (and after an experiential exercise that revealed their organizational culture quite clearly) I began with asking the team to define an improvement goal for their department. I asked them to come up with just one thing that if it was able to happen, they felt it would make a substantial difference. They spent a couple hours developing a common vision and understanding for this, and appeared quite pleased with their work thus far.

They also appeared quite comfortable working at this level, which I observed was focusing on their department as an almost external entity. While they did see their role in things to a degree, it was clear that their attention was focused on the issues “out there.” The next step was to get them to come up with an improvement goal for how they as a senior management team operated within themselves.

This step proved to be a bit more challenging, as the natural inclination for their attention to stray to externalizing issues required occasional herding. It was clear that a reflective, introspective focus was not something they were accustomed to. Thus my herding of attention was necessary, combined with some framing to enable them to glimpse how this would be important to the larger department goals. This helped them stay on task and come up with a succinct, well phrased improvement goal that had themselves in the center of the picture.

### **Getting to the First Column**

It was from using this section on team use of the immunity to change work that a foundation was built for them to move towards the individual work. I asked them to individually reflect on “one big thing” they could personally have as an improvement goal that would contribute to the team improvement goal. They then took this first step and worked in pairs to refine their improvement goal. To ensure that it met the criteria, the final step was to share it with the whole group, and hear from each person whether this improvement would make a substantial difference to that person. This process enabled a serious level of commitment and support to emerge for each participant, as the public sharing of their improvement goal and having it validated by their colleagues helped it meet the criteria for a first column commitment.

This process also provided an opportunity for some push back on the leader’s proposed improvement goal. At a subtle level the energy behind his goal was not as solid or deep as the others’ had been. At a practical level it did not meet the criteria in a variety of ways. The willingness of one of the team members to challenge him on this enabled the conversation to deepen for the whole team, and led to them contributing to the creation of the leader’s improvement goal. This new goal, then, converted along with those of the others into their first column commitments, enabled the process to move forward with a solid foundation.

Doing the above took up the entire first day, and even spilled over into the second day. My initial timeline for the work had them completing their second columns by the end of the first day. Thus we were somewhat behind schedule, yet it was clear to me that it was far more important to lay the groundwork well. The work of getting them to identify the second column items was fairly straight forward. Asking them to list all of the things that they did or did not do that prevented them from realizing their first column commitments led to long lists of behaviors that were easy enough for them to identify with a minimum of guidance. We were then ready to begin the more challenging work of turning their attention towards their generally unconscious and competing commitments in column three.

One of the things I had experienced during the first try at applying this work was that giving people the four columns all together on one page led to a number of challenges and back tracking. Some raced ahead and filled all four out immediately, thinking it was an action plan exercise. Others could not help but think and ask about the later columns, and made me jump around a bit to explain something coming later and get them back to being focused on the step we were on at the time. From that experience, I decided to use separate pages for each column's work, handing them out only as we got to that step. This kept everyone on track better, and enabled me to focus my instructions on other things. The primary area I was able to focus on this time was to check the natural tendency for them to move towards analyzing and rationalizing the items in column two, and generating the kind of "New Year's resolutions" Kegan and Lahey talk about as the typical way people respond to their second column behaviors. I found that this shepherding of their attention away from its natural course required plenty of attention, but also paid big dividends in that it helped them become aware of their thought system in action.

### **Redirecting and Aikido**

This suspension of their normal patterns of thought and behavior created a more supportive space to enable the more challenging next step of generating their third column competing commitments. This stage of work reminded me of Scharmer's movement through the U process as they went from downloading past patterns and responses through suspending those and then as we moved into the third column work, redirecting their attention to places that were normally not visible to conscious attention. I have thought about this step as a kind of Aikido move, taking the natural energy generated by the first column commitments and self-generated obstacles and gently turning it to propel people into an internal space that normally hides from view and resists attention.

To accomplish this move, I followed the well laid out instructions and criteria Kegan and Lahey provide and asked the group to imagine what it would feel like if they did the opposite of the behaviors in column two. Getting connected with the affective aspect of this imaginative exercise further helped to redirect their attention away from the habitual drive to come up with rational solutions to the "problems" they had identified in column two. I emphasized that the method of this work was to counter such natural tendencies, especially given that such methods were in large part what produced the kinds of situations they found themselves in already. Rather than try to "solve their problems," we were going to aim to generate better problems that could "solve them."

As the group worked on generating their “worry box” as Kegan and Lahey call it, I could see that while some shepherding of attention was still required from time to time, they were getting better at holding themselves in this new space of attention that was opening for them. Once they had these worry boxes filled in with a firm hold on what they felt was at risk if they were to behave counter to their column two behaviors, I then asked them to convert their worries to commitments. In other words, simply take the worry or fear and reframe it, saying that they were committed to not having the worry or fear happen, such as “I am committed to . . . not having people dislike me.” These commitments were to involve both rational thinking as well as the feeling component they had gotten in touch with. It is in this simple reframing that the brilliance of Kegan and Lahey’s process becomes most apparent from my view. If the process has been done well and all the criteria met, it completes the Aikido move and lands people squarely in a place where genuine, deep and powerful insights are now directly in their line of attention rather than hidden from view.

As the group completed their third columns, there was a palpable sense of settling into a quality of energy where things were falling into place. I gave them a worksheet that allowed them to list all three columns on one page now, and just as Kegan and Lahey describe, they could suddenly see their column two behaviors as making perfect sense. These behaviors were now not simply their failures to live up to their commitments, but perfectly sensible behaviors that kept them safe in light of their now revealed competing commitment. They could see that simply trying to solve the “problem” of those behaviors was doomed to failure, since they were actions in service of equally powerful commitments to a kind of self protection.

Now we were ready to move into crafting the fourth column “big assumptions” that held them. This work went along fairly smoothly and with a little guidance they had their complete four column map of their own immunity to change. I was struck by the depth and simplicity of what were really archetypal human issues, and by the quality of authenticity with which they named, described, and sat with this x-ray into the depths of their psyche.

A student of mine who had observed the masters in organizational leadership class mentioned in phase one above brought to my attention the parallels between this process and Scharmer’s description of the stages of the U process. Reflecting on this, I could see how once the fourth column was done, one way to describe the quality of presence in the room could be in terms of Scharmer’s notion of presencing. People were certainly in touch with a deeper, more authentic sense of themselves and from this place could now be directed to look at what wanted to emerge in the future. The next step in this work, designing a safe test of a big assumption, would help crystallize their initial sense of this new direction.

### **Preparing to Make it Stick**

By now it was already mid afternoon on the second day, and there was a need to make sure we moved the group through to completion of this step. The real benefit of the work done so far would only come with the implementation of well structured research projects that would again avoid fixing the problems identified, but rather gather helpful information on the big assumptions holding the entire system in place. The premise as I understand it from my own experience is that if you are able to sustain awareness of this system in operation, and test out new behaviors that

might reveal a different picture than the one painted by the big assumptions, then the equilibrium of the system will shift and release itself without you having to force it. Change will happen, but you cannot “make” it happen.

On this basis, we worked to provide the team with a way to support each other in maintaining this stance after we left. After they each spent time drafting up a specific, concrete and actionable test of their big assumption, (supported by a set of worksheets to guide them through the steps of that process), I had each person share their test, and let everyone on the team be aware of how to support their learning after they ran the test. This gave them practical ways to follow up from the two days. How the work plays out for them over time remains to be seen, but there was no doubt that each and every one of them had stepped into a new world of possibility.

The closing check out bore witness to this. While there were many comments acknowledging the quality of work they had done, one in particular represented the sentiments quite well. The leader of this team described how he had been skeptical of the value of spending two days away from their already overloaded schedules. He figured that they would go through the motions and then get back to the “real world.” He followed this by saying: “Now I have answers to questions I did not even know existed before.”

## Conclusion

From the above description, it should be obvious that I perceive my field testing of this work as a resounding success. Of course there is much more to learn about doing this work. But what was clear was that following the structure laid out and using the criteria and guidelines Kegan and Lahey provide to support facilitating the work should enable any reasonably competent facilitator to enable people to have powerful insights and begin the process of overcoming their immunity to change.

Kegan and Lahey describe throughout the book how the early work to understand the nature and structure of adult development was engaged in a dialectical process with praxis, and the testing of the ideas against the realities of human experience enabled an ongoing refinement of how to apply the ideas successfully. Thus my question at the beginning of this article of how the powerful understanding of adult development can be applied has a solid answer. Kegan and Lahey’s *Immunity to Change* work provides the ingredients necessary to go beyond theorizing or describing and into actually enabling the first steps of transforming consciousness. While there may be further aspects to be revealed about what is required of the facilitator to support this work, the foundation is certainly solid in moving forward.

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**Jonathan Reams, Ph.D.**, is *Editor-in-Chief of Integral Review and currently an associate professor in the Department of Education at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, where he teaches organizational counseling, coaching and leadership development, and is also pursuing research in the area of leadership development.*

Email: [Jonathan@Reams.com](mailto:Jonathan@Reams.com)