

# Background Reading

## Pace and Timing

Leading Beyond Authority is a long game. The issues are never simple and the numbers and different kinds of people involved make it more complex. This means quick wins are few and far between and results and rewards not very tangible. Leaders are in it for their passion and not for their own immediate reward.

Tom Frawley (Northern Ireland Ombudsman) states: "There is no such thing as rapid change – it's an illusion. People are obsessed with step change. They underestimate how few people really understand the need for change. They will take a lot of persuading most of the time. To produce it, you have to go relentlessly at it, and push for it, over a long period of time."

### **Waiting – but ready (strategic opportunists)**

Having the end in mind as you work through long change will allow a leader to be ready to take new paths. It may be plan B or plan C, or maybe even plan Z. Leading change in complex areas requires the leader to have thought through many options and be able to adapt and develop a new strategy or way forward when opportunities present themselves. Being stuck to a five year plan as the people and environment around you changes will see you left behind.

### **Patience**

Pushing for change without direct authority can cause coalitions to collapse, it can lose people along the way. The strength of Leading Beyond Authority lies in being able to take people with you while knowing when not to let others stop progress. But this can take time, it can mean being patient, and in doing so can be hard work. It's important for this not to take over, to make sure your energy levels remain high, that you have supporters and are working on something you are passionate about.

Remember it's not all about going fast: "It's all about pace, keeping going, sometimes slowing down to make sure people are with you, but never losing momentum and never going backwards. Usually, the people in the way are an obstacle, rather than a vehicle moving in the opposite direction. An obstacle can hurt you, or delay you, but it has no energy. It's just a bunch of people saying no. Whereas an oncoming vehicle will probably kill you. If you're the one with the energy and the pace, there is unlikely to be an orchestrated response which might be more difficult to overcome. The expression I use all the time is 'Just run on by'" – p144 Janet Paraskeva

### **Participants wanting to understand more about this may:**

- Have hit an obstacle in creating change, or become impatient with others
- Be an emerging leader in a large company and feel change isn't possible
- Often be frustrated that other people can't move faster and stay ahead of change
- Be working on implementing a large scale change programme