

# THE DEEP CHANGE FIELD GUIDE



A Personal Course  
to Discovering the Leader Within

ROBERT E. QUINN

Based on the  
bestselling **Deep Change**—  
over **100,000** copies sold




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# THE DEEP CHANGE FIELD GUIDE

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# THE DEEP CHANGE FIELD GUIDE

## A PERSONAL COURSE TO DISCOVERING THE LEADER WITHIN

Robert E. Quinn

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*To Roger W. Thomas*



# CONTENTS

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Preface	ix
About This Field Guide	xiii
1 AN INVITATION TO CHANGE	i
2 EXPERIENCING SLOW DEATH	27
3 THE POWER OF SELF-CHANGE	47
4 PERSONAL CHANGE AND POSITIVE ORGANIZING	69
5 THE FUNDAMENTAL STATE OF LEADERSHIP	95
6 MORAL POWER	113
7 LEADERSHIP AND POSITIVITY	127
8 INVITING OTHERS TO DEEP CHANGE	147
Put the Learning to Work	169
Continuing Your Journey	173
About the Author	177
Index	179



## PREFACE

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*The Deep Change Field Guide*, based on my book *Deep Change*, is about finding ways to negotiate our constantly changing world. It is about the move from being reactive to being proactive. It is about growing when it is tempting to surrender. Its purpose is to help you empower yourself and the communities in which you operate.

I have been writing about change for a long time. *Deep Change* was published in 1996. It was based on the simple notion that as individuals and organizations we must adapt or die. When we are faced with novel challenges, we almost always feel that it would be easier to simply keep doing what we did before. The choice to stay in our comfort zones represents the path of least resistance. The choice to change is far more difficult.

*Deep Change* was written to help us choose change and move forward. It described how people who committed to change found themselves transformed by that commitment. They became change agents as the energy they found in themselves became contagious. They gained the power to help those around them transform themselves and to revitalize their relationship, group, or organization. This is the essence of deep change.

In *Change the World* (2000), I explained that great change leaders shared a number of characteristics. They were deeply committed to their cause, developed a vision of what they wanted the world to be like, and devoted themselves to finding ways to bring change about. They cared little about what other people thought of them, but they cared deeply about the people around them. Above all, they wanted to help the people around them break out of the slow death process—they

wanted to change the world by teaching others how to change. A significant element of the process was the teachers' commitment to continually changing themselves.

As I read stories sent to me by the many people who read my books, I saw many connections to principles I had articulated. I then wrote *Building the Bridge As You Walk On It* (2004). In that book, I articulated a new concept called the *fundamental state of leadership*, which emphasized how leadership does not depend on position. Instead, leadership comes from influence. As we react to our ever-changing context, the nature and effectiveness of our influence vary continually. By taking charge of our own psychological state, we can alter our influence and the quality of our experience. We can choose to enter the fundamental state of leadership.

Finally, in *Lift: Becoming a Positive Force in Any Situation* (2009), my son Ryan and I integrated the fundamental state of leadership with the science of positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship. We demonstrated the academic basis for the concept and provided tools for application.

That brings us to the present volume. The goal of *The Deep Change Field Guide* is to help you understand and apply the deep change concept in your life. The field guide first presents the essence of the material in *Deep Change* and then adds a sprinkling of content from *Change the World* and *Building the Bridge As You Walk On It*, while interspersing questions and activities to help you learn.

As you go through the field guide, you may be surprised to learn that you already possess the tools you need. Because our culture places great emphasis on hierarchy and expertise, we assume that education is a process in which experts instill knowledge based on past experiences into passive recipients. This guide follows a different model. It invites you to reflect on the experiences of others, actively apply that knowledge to your own life, and seek inside yourself the tools of personal change. As you transform yourself through this process, you will learn how to help others find within themselves the capacity to change. By opening yourself to new learning and questioning your assumptions, you will become a transformational leader.

I invite you now to begin a journey that will change your life.

\* \* \* \* \*

Many people have worked hard to make this book possible. I would like to particularly thank three. Kathe Sweeney constantly pushed and inspired. She was

a great leader. Seth Soderborg was instrumental in managing every phase of moving the book forward. He was brilliant and disciplined. Janis Chan was a marvelous developmental editor who improved everything. My thanks go to each one.

Robert E. Quinn



## ABOUT THIS FIELD GUIDE

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*The Deep Change Field Guide* is a self-teaching course that will help you embark on a journey of personal transformation. Each chapter includes clear explanations of the key concepts of deep change with stories to illustrate them, reflection questions to help you think about the concepts and apply them to your own life, and activities to help you pull together what you have learned and focus on your insights.

## THINK ABOUT IT

As you read each chapter, you will find a number of questions that are designed to help you reflect on specific concepts in terms of yourself and your organization.

## PERSONAL REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

Each chapter ends with several activities. Each one is designed to help you internalize the notions in the book. We encourage you to engage them.

## Reflect

The first activity at the end of the chapter asks you to quickly write down the points, concepts, or ideas that stand out for you the most while they are fresh in your mind.

## Watch a Film

The next end-of-chapter activity is a film assignment. It is perhaps the most important activity of all, and we strongly encourage you to make it a part of your experience. The films are readily available on DVD or through online or mail-order services such as Netflix. They have been selected to help you discover the ways in which transformative experiences lead people to change themselves and help others achieve deep change. The questions are designed to help you think about how the leaders in the films exemplify these concepts and then apply that learning to your own situation. Here's a list of the films you will watch:

Chapter 1—*Norma Rae*

Chapter 2—*Moneyball*

Chapter 3—*The King's Speech*

Chapter 4—*The Devil Wears Prada*

Chapter 5—*Remember the Titans*

Chapter 6—*Stand and Deliver*

Chapter 7—*Gandhi*

Chapter 8—*Dead Poets Society*

## Make a Journal Entry

Keeping a leadership journal is an excellent way to expand and continue your learning. This activity asks you to select statements from the chapter that resonate with you and then reflect on life experiences you relate to those concepts.

## Write a Memo

Writing a memo to someone you know (whether or not you actually send it) about what you learned in the chapter helps you pull together your insights from the Think About It questions, the quick reflection, the film, and the journal activity to focus on the essence of what you learned.



### **Apply the Learning**

The best way to learn something is to do it. The last activity in each chapter asks you to select some actions you will take to begin and continue your journey toward mastery of the deep change process.

## PUT THE LEARNING TO WORK

The final chapter of the book will help you pull together what you have learned from this field guide about the process of deep change and decide how you will use that learning.

## GETTING THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE

Everyone learns differently. You might want to read the field guide quickly, then go back to read through each chapter one at a time, answering the questions and doing the activities. Or, you might want to take one chapter, or even one section of a chapter, at a time, so you can assimilate the concepts at your preferred pace. Take the course in whatever way works best for you.

Here are a few suggestions to help you get the most value from the learning process.

- Take enough time to think about the questions and do the activities. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions, and no right or wrong ways to do the activities. By being thoughtful and allowing yourself enough time, you will greatly increase the value of the course.
- Write down your responses to the questions. It doesn't matter whether you write in the book itself or make notes on your computer: the act of writing helps you understand the concepts and retain your insights. Your written notes also will provide a reference you can return to later.
- Although the films are very engaging, you will learn less if you think of them as entertainment. Instead, think of them as case studies that provide deep lessons on transformational leadership. Since transformation is a difficult concept for

the left brain to grasp, watching the videos and engaging your right brain will make a big difference in your learning experience.

Before watching a film, read the accompanying discussion questions. While you are watching the people in the film face a challenge, put yourself in their shoes and ask what you would do. Pause the film as needed to note your observations.

When you have finished watching, write down your answers to the questions. If any of your colleagues are also taking this course, it's a good idea to watch the films and discuss the questions together.

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# THE DEEP CHANGE FIELD GUIDE

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## CHAPTER ONE

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# AN INVITATION TO CHANGE

### IN THIS CHAPTER

- Change attempts often fail because of the assumptions we make.
- We often find ourselves in situations that require us to adapt but choose to distort reality and deny what the world is telling us.
- To be excellent, we have to be at the edge, a place of uncertainty and learning.
- When we are committed to a higher purpose, we move forward through the fear of conflict, and as we do, we learn and we see in new ways.

I recently received a phone call from an information technology executive whose team had spent months designing a technical change that was about to be launched across the corporation. Other senior people had consistently advised him to talk to someone who “understands change in terms of people and culture” before rolling out the change. So he asked me to come in and speak to his team about how to implement the change process. He also mentioned that his people were not very interested in hearing about the role of culture in their change effort and could see little value in such a visit.

This executive was a very educated and experienced man. Yet he was about to launch a companywide change without having considered the role of culture in the change process. Such ignorance is unimaginable—it’s the equivalent of learning that your brain surgeon is ignorant of the organ known as the heart. Yet such ignorance is also very widespread; it often seems as though ignorance about the