

# Transformation is Possible

What is the best process?

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**InitiativeOne** transforms leaders and their organizations, helping them foster high impact work cultures defined by authenticity, transparency, safe environments and deep respect.

## There is a Need for Leadership Transformation

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Organizations do not transform spontaneously. Transformed leaders transform organizations. While most acknowledge the need for change, it remains a formidable challenge to develop leaders who embrace, lead and sustain positive change. In the past few years, global research consistently reveals the most critical challenges facing leaders revolve around the development of Human Capital.<sup>1</sup> A number of Management and Human Resources studies have repeatedly shown that Leadership Development at all levels is a high priority.<sup>2</sup> Demand for talent is substantial. The volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) business landscape requires responsive and effective leaders who are able to adapt and execute.<sup>3</sup>

### **Most Leadership Development Efforts Fail to Produce Lasting Change.**

The need has been great, but many who respond are missing the mark. There is a widening gap between the training provided and the skills needed for leading change. In fact, a growing number of leaders readily admit that they are not adequately prepared to meet the challenges that they will face. Although most leaders have invested in development, they have not experienced lasting change.

According to Beer, Finnström and Schrader, “U.S. corporations spend enormous amounts of money – some \$356 billion globally in 2015 alone – on employee training and education, but they aren’t getting a good return on their investment. People soon revert to old ways of doing things, and company performance doesn’t improve.”<sup>4</sup> The forces that pull leaders back into the status quo are potent.

## There is a Better Way

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### **InitiativeOne responds to the needs of executive leaders with a process that facilitates lasting change.**

Before learning more about InitiativeOne’s Leadership Transformation Process and how it differs from traditional approaches that fall short, consider our motivation.

*We start with Why.* Why invest in leaders when so many development efforts fail to produce results? At InitiativeOne we invest because we believe change is possible and preparation for a better future is necessary. We believe most people can lead much more effectively with far more fulfillment and purpose. We believe leaders long to experience positive transformation that will help them discover higher levels of confidence and performance. And we believe there are a few principles that unlock greater capacity. Our vision of better leaders and better organizations inspires us to engage in a process that breaks down the barriers that hinder leaders from being their best. This report shows how we translate our beliefs and our understanding into a remarkable Leadership Transformation experience. We understand why most efforts fail and how to provide the necessary prerequisites for lasting change.

## Leadership Transformation Requires Self-Awareness

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*We believe leaders must learn to lead themselves before they lead others.* It’s a mistake to sidestep a the necessary deep-dive immersion into discovering the best possible version of yourself. Begin with self-awareness and you will enrich your ability to look at the dynamics of individual leaders and the enterprise’s leadership culture. Self-awareness enables you to identify who you are at your very best, how to be your very best at all times, and how to address the things that hold individuals and the organization back.

*“Most leadership development initiatives focus on competencies, skill development and techniques, which is some ways is like rearranging the deck chairs on a sinking ship. Good leaders need to become masters of themselves before they can attempt to be masters of anything else.”<sup>5</sup>*

InitiativeOne's Leadership Transformation reverses the trend. If you only focus on the problems outside of yourself, your vision of reality will become distorted and self-awareness will suffer. Our process helps leaders look in the mirror and embrace responsibility. Transformation illuminates from the inside out. When you change your thinking, embrace change that begins within, you will see yourself and your world in a different light.

## **Leadership Transformation Requires Behavior Change**

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*We believe extraordinary change is possible.* Not everyone believes change is possible. It's naïve to think the overwhelming failure rate of leadership development efforts has not affected confidence and optimism. As a result, too many leadership development programs play it safe. Instead of wrestling with deeper issues, the focus is primarily on skills and knowledge. Increases in skills and knowledge provide some benefit, but they will not prepare leaders for lasting change after the training ends. When leaders return to confront real world challenges that require self-mastery and the audacity to adapt, there is a sinking feeling of inadequacy. Intentional behavior change is abandoned in favor of reactionary efforts to react to the loudest noise.

"Becoming a more effective leader often requires changing behavior. But although most companies recognize that this also means adjusting underlying mind-sets, too often these organizations are reluctant to address the **root causes** of why leaders act the way they do."<sup>5</sup>

*We Understand Why Change is Difficult.* It's good to acknowledge that change is a difficult and uncomfortable proposition. It's better to uncover the mystery of change and empower people to overcome the obstacles.

*Change begins beneath the surface.* Unhealthy patterns of thinking yield unhealthy leadership practices. Becoming a more effective leader often requires changing behaviors that are rooted in deeply held beliefs. Habits, behavioral patterns, emerge from deep within. Even though most companies are willing to concede that changing behavior dictates exploring underlying mind-sets, too often these leaders and organizations are reluctant to address the root causes of why leaders act the way they do. When it comes to behavior change, there are no shortcuts. For better or worse, the way you think will affect how you live and lead.

*Looking beneath the surface is uncomfortable.* If there is a growing consensus that leaders must look beneath the surface and that leadership development approaches that neglect this prerequisite fail to deliver results, then why do so many neglect this part of the process? There is a simple answer to the question. It's just too uncomfortable. It takes time. The demands of leadership and the pace of life work against the process. Investing time in an uncomfortable process of self-examination is difficult for leaders who measure success in terms of immediate return on investment. So, most development efforts aim above the surface. InitiativeOne helps leaders connect the dots between limiting self-beliefs and unhealthy behaviors.

## **Leadership Transformation Requires Courage in Real Situations**

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*We believe leaders can learn to become comfortable with being uncomfortable.* The InitiativeOne Leadership Transformation process does not shy away from the hard questions. In fact, early in the process leaders engage in reading, self-reflection and collaboration designed to reveal the beliefs that limit the capacity to change. Transformation is never easy. It's not comfortable. The path of positive change requires leaders to stop reaching for low hanging fruit and accept a bigger challenge. The process helps leaders identify limiting self-beliefs and bring toxic patterns of thinking to the surface with a focus toward lasting behavioral change and increased results.

“The only way to teach courage is to require it of people. To offer them opportunities to draw from the courage they already have. To give them opportunities to step into **real situations they find uncomfortable** and truly take the time to connect with the sensations that come with that.”<sup>6</sup>

*We understand that uncomfortable does not mean unsafe.* Movement toward leadership transformation requires a safe environment. Success will begin when participants create a safe culture together. Although safety frequently begins with a degree of emotional courage from a single leader, safety is not a decree or edict that comes from above. It cannot be another plaque on the wall. It has to be an ongoing shared responsibility. The effectiveness of leadership development processes is directly proportional to the level of safety and trust. When leaders feel safe they will invest in the behaviors that build trust.

Unless the environment is safe, leaders will not exercise the “emotional courage” required to practice leadership in real time. Leadership development takes place in the trenches, in the midst of challenging relationships and genuine risk.

## InitiativeOne Leadership Transformation

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The InitiativeOne Leadership Transformation process transcends the usual seminar format by providing extensive group facilitation, the heart of the process, in a safe environment. The powerful group interaction effectively surfaces and addresses key issues undermining leadership and organizational effectiveness. The team interaction also provides an extensive “practice field” for modeling and transferring these new leadership behaviors throughout the rest of the organization. The process will have a direct impact upon a leader’s behavior both professionally and personally.

This process requires nine weekly, 3-hour sessions, plus weekly preparation for each participant. The nine sessions typically occur over an eleven-week period in order to accommodate leaders scheduling constraints.

The Maintenance Phase of the Leadership Transformation Process consists of four (4) quarterly 3-hour follow-up sessions, beginning three months after the completion of the Phase I. Upon completion, participants will be eligible for 16.8 Continuing Education Units through the University of Wisconsin Green Bay.

For more information, Visit Initiative-One.Com or Call (920) 432-0268

## References

<sup>1</sup> The Conference Board, CEO Challenge 2015, Creating Opportunity out of Adversity: Building Innovative, People-Driven Organizations. C. Mitchell, R. Ray, B. Van Ark.

<sup>2</sup> In the 2014 Deloitte University Press Global Human Capital Trends report, the surveyed companies reflected an 86% high importance/urgency rating for Leadership Development while only 15% of the same companies reported they were ready for the challenge.

<sup>3</sup> Moldoveanu, M. and Narayandas, D. 2016. *The Skills Gap and the Near-Far Problem in Executive Education and Leadership Development* Harvard Business School working paper available at [http://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Publication%20Files/17-019\\_13738e75-0725-44bc-a405-7155873a5d3d.pdf](http://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Publication%20Files/17-019_13738e75-0725-44bc-a405-7155873a5d3d.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Beer, M, Finnström, M and Schrader, “Why leadership training fails – and what to do about it.” *Harvard Business Review* (2016): 50-57.

<sup>5</sup> Williams, R. 2013. Why Leadership Development Fails to Produce Good Leaders. *Psychology Today*. Available at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/wired-success/201310/why-leadership-development-fails-produce-good-leaders>

<sup>6</sup> Gurdjian, P., Halbeisen, T. and Lane, K. 2014. Why Leadership Development Programs Fail. *McKinsey Quarterly*. Available at <http://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/leadership/why-leadership-development-programs-fail>

<sup>7</sup> Bregman, P. 2013. "Why Leadership Programs Ultimately Fail." *Harvard Business Review*. Available at <https://hbr.org/2013/07/why-so-many-leadership-program>