

Waking up involves exploring who you are.



The kind of effort involved in “waking up,” as I’m describing it here, runs contrary to what many people want when it comes to advancing professional competencies. Today, the popular notion is that people in our field can elevate their game by accelerating their knowledge and skills.

A problem occurs when change practitioners who aspire to mastery-level work assume they can prepare themselves for the leap by simply attending training that is more technical in nature.

It doesn’t work that way. As they mature professionally, additional technical training tends to generate less and less benefit.

Change agents pursuing mastery of our craft generally come to view technical preparation as a maintenance issue—something primarily aimed at keeping them attuned to thought leader perspectives and the latest trends. As such, maintaining technical proficiency becomes an activity that usually takes up only a small portion of their time and mindshare. Instead, they place their learning emphasis on “who to be,” not “what to do.” They learn how to show up as they apply the techniques with which they are already familiar, instead of becoming skilled in yet another technique. Instead, they invest in waking up.