

Courage and discipline are as important as technique.



I am concerned by how quickly some practitioners who, although very skilled in their implementation approach and confident in its potential for success, cave the first time a client pushes back. Many practitioners won't confront clients with the truth that the shortcuts they want are not in their best interests—what looks like a quicker, less-complicated route will not lead to successful realization of the goals. What's missing (assuming a solid methodology and proficiency in its application) is courage and discipline:

- High-impact practitioners display the **courage** to be explicit when clients' requests run counter to what their approach calls for. ("I agree it would be better to have strong sponsorship from our leaders, but that isn't going to happen, so how do we make this change succeed anyway?")
- They also demonstrate the **discipline** to stand resolute in the face of pressure to concede. ("If you want to remain assigned to this project, you'd better start accommodating the way we do things around here.")

As change facilitators, we face a challenging dilemma. On one hand, there is no doubt we are in service to the clients we support. They are the ones who decide whether we bring our knowledge and skills to bear during the implementation of their initiatives. More specifically, we are part of the execution process only to the extent they see value in what we do and how we do it.

On the other hand, much of the time, clients (especially sponsors) aren't in a position to know what is in their best interests as far as which change execution processes and techniques to use or when and how.