

What are the implications?

There are six attributes associated with being perceived as a high-impact change practitioner who is depended upon when the stakes are high and is not easily disregarded or replaced. I'm focusing here, however, on the perspectives and challenges related to the fifth and sixth attributes.

- Providing unique perspectives to critical situations that surface valuable insights
- Boldly bringing viewpoints/ideas/recommendations forward, at times even in the absence of support for doing so

The candor and directness implied in these two attributes is usually displayed by practitioners confident in the value they can provide clients if permitted to convey the full extent of what their experience has taught them. Invaluable, strategic resources distinguish themselves, in part, by coming forward with unusual but beneficial insights and suggestions and by making bold moves that are not always initially well received. In other words, when faced with critical situations, they present the full force of what they perceive to be taking place, the implications they believe are relevant, as well as the actions they recommend.

If you aspire to be a high-impact change facilitator but are working with clients who don't value the essence of who you are, you are likely to be disappointed and feel unfulfilled, not to mention less effective than you could be. It is one thing to find yourself in a situation like this occasionally; it is a deeper problem if you spend long periods in such environments. It should be of significant concern, however, if this describes your change career up to this point.

You can make a living disguising who you really are but, over time, it's unlikely you'll remain passionate about your work. Legions of practitioners have grown hollow after years of attempting to fulfill their responsibilities by catering to what clients thought they *should* be instead of being valued for who they really were.

Both adequate and high-impact practitioners have their place in helping organizations execute needed change. Each provides and represents honorable work. The key is to know what is expected of you (from yourself and others), what level of support you aspire to provide your clients, and the requirements and benefits associated with the two options. Only then can you make an informed decision about the type of match that exists between you and where you practice your craft. Here are the basic options.

1. I'm expected to be an adequate practitioner, and that's how people generally see me. I am comfortable with that status. Therefore, I'm not very invested in strengthening my capabilities in order to be seen any differently.
2. I'm expected to be a higher-impact practitioner, and that's how people generally relate to me. I am comfortable with that status; therefore, I am only somewhat invested in strengthening my capabilities in order to be seen any differently.
3. I'm expected to be a high-impact practitioner, but I'm actually performing at the adequate level. I lack either the ability and/or willingness to meet all six of the requirements and, therefore, I'm not inclined to work toward any greater influence than I have now. I realize this means that I may not be able to stay in my current role.

4. I'm expected to perform adequately and I do. However, I have my sights on achieving greater impact than that and I'm eager to learn what is necessary for me to move to the next level.
5. I'm expected to be a high-impact practitioner. This is a great match with my aspirations and capabilities and I'm currently delivering at this level. I don't feel I have reached my full potential, however, and I'd like to increase my influence even more.
6. I'm at a place in my career where I'm not sure what level of practitioner value is best for me to strive toward. I'm still trying to sort it all out.

All of these options are legitimate ways of saying where you are regarding your future in change facilitation. It is in your best interest, and ultimately that of your clients, to clarify for yourself (and appropriate others) which of the alternatives is the best descriptor of your current thinking and what course of action that necessitates.

This blog is intended for internal support specialists and external consultants who resonate with options 4, 5, or 6. It will delve deeply into what it means to be among the ten percent who bring their full selves forward as high-impact practitioners and who are thought of as strategic, invaluable resources. In particular, I'll be addressing in more detail the distinctions between "what we do" when advising our clients and "who we are"—the character and presence we bring to bear when engaged in our work.