

Treating Organizations As Living Systems To Solve Complex Challenges

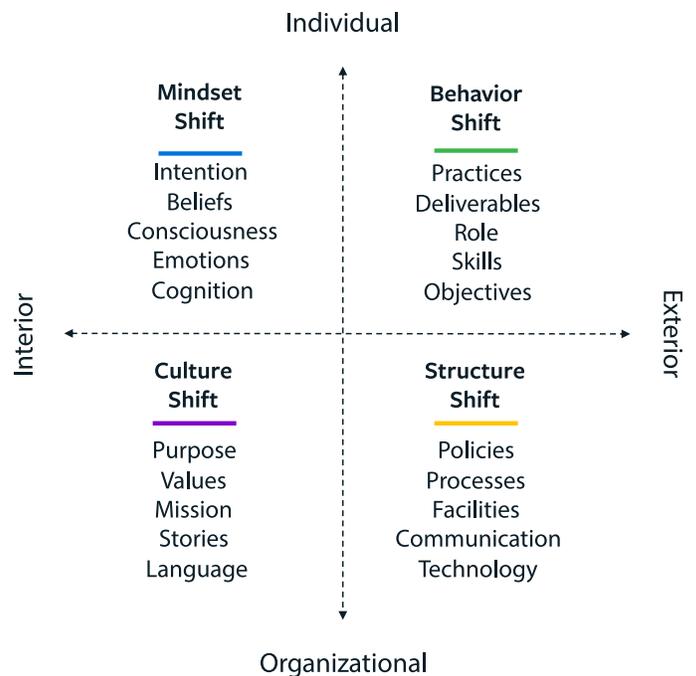
The Energy Project helps organizations solve their most complex problems and fuel sustainable transformation by treating the organization as a dynamic living system. Our framework, which we call the System Quadrants, is adapted from a model for that was originally developed by Ken Wilber.

The work we do with organizations is guided by a core principle: the free flow of energy and information is critical to the optimal functioning of any living system. This is possible when leaders themselves begin modeling transparency, openness to feedback, and new behaviors, which in turn create a ground of trust and free others to follow suit without fear.

Business transformation begins by shifting mindsets and culture.

In the diagram on the right, the top two quadrants refer to the individual's role in the system; the bottom two to the organization's. The right-hand quadrants refer to what is observable and can be measured objectively; the left-hand to what people experience internally, and subjectively.

When something needs to change in an organization, the typical starting place is in the bottom right-hand quadrant, around structure. This might mean a new strategy, a process, a technology, or a reorganization. Some organizations also give attention to the upper right, focusing on behavior, which could mean teaching people new skills, or giving them new roles, or asking them to operate in different ways collaboratively.



Unfortunately, that turns out to only be half the challenge of driving change. In order to embed new strategies and new behaviors, it is also critical to

understand the resistance that invariably stands in the way. The answer resides in the left-hand quadrants and it begins in the upper left — what’s going on inside people and specifically how they think and feel. Most organizations and their leaders fail to fully appreciate and address the invisible mindsets — individual and organizational or cultural — which drive and hold in place current behaviors.

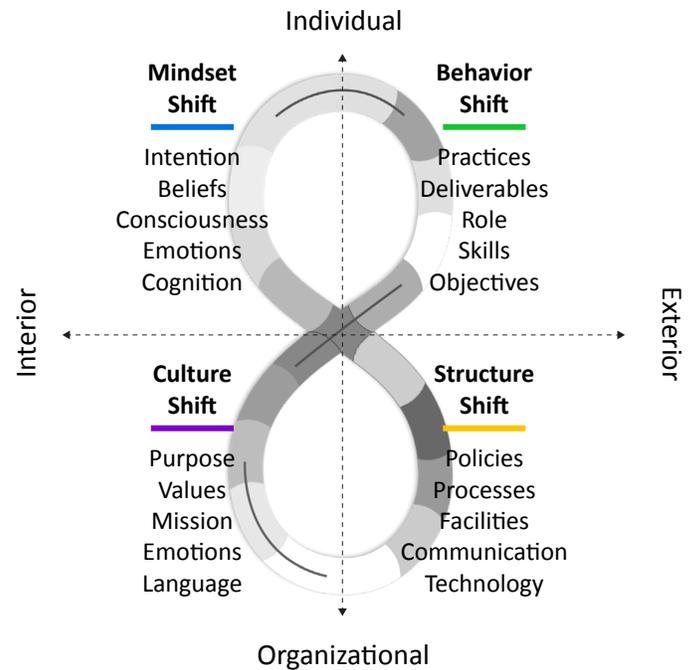
Challenging the systemic blocks to organizational transformation.

To embed organizational change, it is critical first to help leaders begin to challenge their fixed beliefs and assumptions; see through their blind spots; acknowledge their insecurities rather than acting them out; and spend less energy defending their own value so that they have more energy available to create organizational value. Instead, most of us are inclined to hide, rationalize, minimize, cover up, deny or blame others for our mistakes and shortcomings, because they make us feel unworthy and vulnerable.

Building resilient growth cultures fueled by continuous learning.

Performance-driven cultures often exacerbate fears by creating a zero-sum game in which every employee is measured regularly as a success or a failure, a winner or a loser. Instead, our work focuses on cultivating continuous learning cultures, which still reward performance, but also treat failures and individual shortcomings as critical opportunities for growth, improvement and evolution in an era of relentlessly rising demand and complexity.

This process, we’ve learned, requires a delicate balance by leaders between challenging and nourishing themselves, and those they lead. Too much challenge, too continuously overwhelms and breaks us down. Too little challenge precludes our growth and eventually makes us weaker. Over time, the blend of role-modeling and coaching by leaders is what fuels a shift in the collective mindset, meaning the culture, in the lower left quadrant.



A performance culture asks, “How much energy can we mobilize to reach our goals?” and the answer is only a finite amount. A culture of continuous learning, growth and evolution asks, “How much energy can we liberate?” The answer is infinite.

– Tony Schwartz
Founder & CEO

Let us help you solve your most complex business problems.

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