About learning and change

"It's what we think we know already that often prevents us from learning." *(Claude Bernard, French physiologist)*

"The challenge…is not only to learn what you need to know but also to *un*learn what you no longer need. That means eliminating the habits, practices, and assumptions that once worked – even those that may have accounted for past successes – to make room for new methods that better fit your new circumstances." *(Anna Muoio, "The Art of Smart," <u>The Fast Company</u>, July-August 1999)*

"The more success you achieve – either as an individual or as an organization – the more difficult it is to change. All of the learning that led to one kind of success becomes implicitly coded and works against your ability to unlearn.

The challenge then becomes how to uncover those deeply ingrained assumptions. One way is to create what I call knowledge ecologies – to cultivate diverse opinions and skills…"*(<u>Fast Company</u>, July – August 1999. John Seely Brown, Xerox Corporation)*

"We tend to fall in love with the things that we think are true…You can't unlearn anything. Most of what organizations call 'unlearning' is superficial – just slapping a new label on an old can of beans.

"We are what we experience and learn. We learn how to view the world and make sense of it.

"What we learn makes us who we are. We can't unlearn that. The learning process helps us gradually, and usually unconsciously, compose an internal mode of reality – our perspective.

" Unfortunately, perspective is a fun-house mirror: It distorts and discolors everything we see, learn and experience…

"When external events – the world around us - - change and no longer fit our internal model, we start to blunder. Life gets messy. We become confused, stressed, and anxious. Rather than alter our perspective, we try to force others to conform to it…

"We can't discard mental 'stuff'. But we can create a mental attic and put a sign on the door that says 'Things I know that are no longer so.'

"Call all those old, best-loved ideas into question. Until you understand your thinking about a certain thing, you'll never change it.

"So question that habit of mind, and lug it into the attic if it's no longer useful. Don't try to get rid of it; just refuse to dwell within it any longer.

"Change is not about understanding new things or having new ideas; it's about seeing old things with new eyes – from different perspectives. Change is not about reorganizing, reengineering, reinventing, recapitalizing. It's about reconceiving! You create a whole new order. Do that, and creativity will flood your mind." *(Dee W. Hock, VISA International)*

"It will not do to leave a live dragon out of your plan if you live near one. " *(JRR Tolkien, The Hobbit)*

If I had an hour to save the world, I'd spend 55 minutes defining the problem." *(Albert Einstein)*

A view of planning:
1. **Core values** provide the organizational foundation and hold people together.
2. **Complacency** is death.
3. **Information** is power.
4. **Diversity** is strength.
5. An effective planning process **tests mission** and defines identity.
6. **Those who show up decide**.
7. Planning is **learning** – and learning is **change**.
8. Define what's **sustainable** – then manage growth.
9. Build **organizational capacity**.
10. Pick **the right people** and build the right team.

"Giving up the illusion that you can predict the future is a very liberating moment. All you can do is give yourself the capacity to respond…the creating of that capacity is the purpose of strategy." (*Lord John Browne,*)

"It's important to be stubborn on the vision and flexible on the details…" (*Jeff Bezos*)

"When the rate of change outside exceeds the rate of change inside, the end is in sight" *(Jack Welch)*

"It's all very well planning what you will do in six months, what you will do in a year, but it's no good at all if you don't have a plan for tomorrow." *(Wolf Hall, Hilary Mantel)*

"A good plan today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow." (*General Patton*)