



# ChangeNRG Profiles

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**The 4 Energies of Leading Change**

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## **Background**

Based on our experience implementing large change efforts and consulting to leaders doing the same, we have been struck by the existence of repeatable leadership behaviors.

As we reflected on these patterns, we were reminded of a book about personalities called *Who are you Really?*, by Gary Null. Dr. Null's expertise is helping people overcome serious illnesses such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes. Over many years of helping thousands of people, he noticed that all people seem to have a natural energy, a natural way of being, that does not change. He saw that some people choose to accept their energy and go with it, making the most of their lives. Others ignore their true energy. They live their lives in ways that are out of sync with their nature or true energy. This creates an imbalance in their lives, which impacts their health negatively.

Dr. Null's book inspired us to conceive our model of the **Four Change Energies**. We see leaders as having a natural energetic reaction to change. By energetic, we mean that when change is happening there is a force that meets the change; an energy that arises from people in response to the change. This is similar to the idea that people at work also have a natural way of interacting, thinking, and communicating, as assessed by such instruments as Myers-Briggs, Social Styles and DISC.

We noticed the following four ways leaders use their energy in the face of change:

- Gaining and using power and influence to lead the change
- Challenging the system/organization to be even better
- Focusing on the details of how to make the change work
- Creating the new organization/processes

## **Basic Principles of ChangeNRG**

We think that reactions, responses and actions within organizational change can be defined by 4 distinct energies or forces. Our basic principles include:

- Each of the 4 change energies always exists and are needed for successful organizational change.
- We all have each energy type to some extent within us.
- Everyone has a natural tendency or dominance in one energy over the others. We still have the other energy types; however, one energy is the most natural and easy for people to exhibit.
- Each energy type can be operating either positively or negatively through each stage of change. It can also be perceived positively and negatively based on the perception of others.

## Overview of the Four Change Energies

- **The Power Seeker** focuses on gaining and using power/influence to lead the change
- **The Idealist** focuses on challenging the system/organization to be even better
- **The Make it Worker** focuses on the details of how to make the change work
- **The Creator** focuses on how to create the new organization/processes

**The Power Seeker** focuses on gaining and using power and influence to lead the change.



Power Seekers are the leaders who take charge and motivate people to move forward to the change. This is the energy that most leaders want to have and want others to have. This is illustrated by the large number of people asking for people to be “Change Agents” in companies. Executives want people to ‘take the ball and run with it’, which is what Power Seekers do.

Power Seekers are actually focused on power and influence. They are looking to have it, add to it and use it. This makes them fit into what people view as a leader. Because of this, Power Seekers are very comfortable leading the charge of the change. They enjoy being in charge in general and have no problem being in the front a of a change effort. They excel in running things and motivating others to work out the details. They confront issues and people head on so that the change can be successful. Leading change efforts takes a lot of energy and they have it. They drive people to get results. They influence people to come along.

The problem is that not all people are not natural Power Seekers. This can frustrate executives, and leaders themselves, as there is an expectation to be this way. An important learning for all leaders is that the other 3 energies are just as valuable during change.

**The Idealist** focuses on challenging the system / organization to be even better



Idealists want to move the organization forward to be the best they can be. They are not easily satisfied with a pragmatic approach, but rather look to make significant changes. This is very helpful, as a Power Seeker won't do this. The Power Seeker will take what is, figure out how to use it to their advantage and lead others to do the same. The Idealist is less concerned about them self and more concerned about creating an optimal system.

The Idealists are the ones who bring up issues that other don't want to. These can be people issues or process issues. Either way, this is important before and during changes. Many people are too fearful to challenge leadership, but not Idealists. They have a lot of passion and high ideals. They are striving to create the most just, productive work environment possible. They challenge people to stretch their thinking and limits.

Idealists are usually good at debating ideas. They bring up good points and have all the arguments as to why things ideally should be better. Others often don't see that Idealists are

striving for the ideal and not necessarily knocking the pragmatic approach. Instead, people are often rubbed people the wrong way, as Idealists appear to not be satisfied with how things are. That is true. They are not satisfied. However, it is out a desire to achieve an even better organization.

**The Make it Worker** focuses on the details of how to make the change work

The third energy is even different still. Not power focused or idealistic, they are the pragmatists.

Make it Workers make things happen and keep things running. They want to support leaders and keep things running smoothly. These are pragmatic detailed oriented people who enjoy the pride of a job well done. They usually don't need or want the spotlight. They just want to focus their energy on steadily getting things done.

Make it Workers are the backbone of every company. They are the workers. They are the people who do their job well, day in, day out without asking for much. They are critical during change as they will keep things running through the turbulence of the changes. They will make sure the transition goes as smoothly as possible, and that the new world works.

**The Creator** focuses on how to create the new organization/processes.

Creators see the possibilities. They are critical during change. The other 3 energies are not focused on creating. They are busy leading, challenging and making things works. It is the creative energy that says, "What if we did x?" that starts the thinking about a new possibility. They are similar to the Idealist, in that they are looking at making things better. They are different in that they are less interested in the debate about the idea than in creating something new.

Creators work best under time pressure and short time lines. If they have too much time, they may come up with so many ideas that they have a hard time choosing one. Additionally, they often need other pragmatic people, the Make it Workers, to help them craft their ideas into implementable ideas.

	<b>Power Seeker</b>	<b>Idealist</b>	<b>Make it Worker</b>	<b>Creator</b>
<b>Focus</b>	Gaining and using power and influence	Striving towards the ideal	Supporting existing systems	Creating something new and better
<b>Energy Level</b>	Raw, powerful energy.	High, passionate energy.	Patient and steady.	Volatile and unpredictable.
<b>Symbolic Person</b>	The General	The Instigator	The Worker Bee	The Artist
<b>Catch Phrase</b>	Let's do it	I have a dream	Let's make it work	What if

### **Constructive Contributions of Each Energy**

Like people, each energy can at times be constructive and at other times counter-productive. Here we outline the positive contributions each style makes.

**Power Seekers** When a change is announced, the Power Seeker energy likes to be put in a special role of power and/or importance. Once a role of influence is attained, the Power Seeker energy is the true Power Seeker of the change, working to bring people along. They focus on the big picture, as the details are less important and can be worked out later (by someone else).

**Idealists** push the organization to be the best they can be. They are forcing people to think through their ideas and support. They challenge people to get better.

**Make it Workers** are focused on the details of how to make the change work. They make sure that details are thought through so the change will succeed. Even if the details are not available, they will give it their best to support success, as they hate to see things not work.

**Creators** see the possibilities. They are willing to go along and explore the possibilities, making things up they move along. They are comfortable with the ambiguity.

## What Resistance Looks Like

Dominant Energy	What Resistance Looks Like
Power Seeker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plowing forward, impatient with questioning</li> <li>• May be seen as insensitive, manipulative, arrogant because they are concerned about their status and success</li> <li>• Can take advantage of the power they acquire at expense of organization's needs</li> </ul>
Idealist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If it's not perfect, I will not support it</li> <li>• "Give me liberty or give me death"</li> <li>• Their sticking to ideals can cause extra conflict with Power Seekers who want to plow forward</li> </ul>
Make it Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nitpicky and inflexible because they lose the big picture and get stuck on details of how things will work</li> <li>• Delayed decisions and stalled work when all the details are not worked out</li> </ul>
Creator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bored and disinterested because not creating anything new</li> <li>• The sensitive artist - can be very unpredictable. They are sensitive, and with this can come volatility. For example, some changes may inspire them with the new ideas or new direction. This will lead them to be very enthusiastic early adopters of the change. Down the road, they may become tired of that idea and want to move on to the next new thing.</li> </ul>

# Strategies to Reduce Resistance



**Power Seekers** - To lead Power Seekers, help them figure out a role or way for them to be in charge. Power Seekers thrive on gaining power and influence. Make them a point person for the effort. Give them a special assignment within the change. If you do not, you will have problems with getting them on board.



**Idealists** - Idealists naturally share their ideas on how to move towards an ideal organization. To lead them, use their insight. Get their input before the change is designed, if possible. Acknowledge their ideas even if you can't use them. Resist your temptation to get defensive and argue with them. They are excellent debaters. Since they are also idealists, they may be offering ideas and suggestions for a perfect solution. You need to find ways to acknowledge their concerns, let them know you see their point, and show them how you are pragmatically moving forward towards their ideals.



**Make it Workers**- To lead Make it Workers, put their detail oriented implementation focus to work. Make it Workers want to support the change: that is the essence of their energy. To do this, you need to take the time to answer their questions about the details. Give them as much detail as possible. Put them in charge of working out the details with the right resources/people. They will figure it out, without much fanfare. Once the details are worked out, they will work diligently to support the implementation the change.



**Creators** - To lead Creators, find ways to use their ideas. Creators will have a lot of questions. These questions are based on ideas they have. Ask them questions to dig into their ideas. Find ways to give them assignments where they can use their creativity such as designing change communication materials or coming up with new processes or procedures.

## **Benefits of the ChangeNRG Model**

We believe that by categorizing the patterns we have observed into 4 energies of leading change, leaders and organizations will gain the following benefits:

- A tool to more easily lead through the turbulence of change.
- By learning their teams energy profile, leaders can better handle the resistance to change
- By knowing each energy and its' strengths, one can be more conscious of their behavioral choices during change. This awareness can expand a leader's repertoire to choose the appropriate style based on the situation, rather than always choosing the one that is most comfortable.
- By knowing the negative side of each ChangeNRG, leaders can better manage themselves during change.
- Organizations can more effectively assign leaders to change leadership roles.

## **About the Authors**

**Lawrence Polsky** and **Antoine Gerschel** are Managing Partners at PeopleNRG. They have lived organizational change in many shapes and forms over the past 20 years as leaders, employees and consultants. PeopleNRG is a change catalyst, facilitator and sounding board. Through interaction with you and your executive team, we stay close to the daily business challenges and structure our solutions and recommendations around them. Our innovative yet practical services enable leaders to overcome challenges they face when leading a team, division, or company in new directions.