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ANETARY PATTERNS



What Affects Our Ability to Change?



What Affects Our Ability to Change?

It's not so much that we're afraid of change or so in love with the old ways, but it's that place in between that we fear...It's like being between trapezes.

It's Linus when his blanket is in the dryer. There's nothing to hold on to.

MARILYN FERGUSON

ACCORD (Association for Creative Change in Organization Renewal and Development) is a not-for-profit organization, concerned with building increased personal and collective capacity for positive action and social change. In a recent plenary meeting, members broke up into fourteen groups to respond to the question of "What affects people's capacity to change? The product was fourteen mindmaps on butcher paper holding the responses of each group to the question. A gestalt of the data on the mindmaps yielded ten influences on change - five negative and five positive. First, we will describe the negative:

1. The Bugaboo of Fear

When organizations change, fear is rampant. People fear uncertainty, loss of their jobs, loss of status, loss of control. Men and women question whether they are competent to do what a changing world requires. Women and men fear additional work, and the impact of so much change on their families and health. Managing change means managing people's fear. Change is natural

and good, but people's reaction to change is unpredictable and irrational. At the heart of the irrationality is fear. But fear can be managed if done right.

By far the most overpowering negative energy holding people back from change is fear - naked fear in all its appearances, varieties and effects. First there is a generalized fear of the unknown. Who knows what the committee for organizational change may dream up? Then, there is fear of failure in the new jobs, roles, and expertise that change may demand. When we have spent a long time working ourselves into a job slot, learning the skills and the boundaries, we are loath to move into something that changes all that. With all this, there is fear of the criticism failure will bring. Why humans so often assume they will fail before they have tried something out is a mystery. Ah, but there is also its opposite fear — fear of success! When sheer possibility looms in the midst of change, one begins to fear what may happen if success comes. For success causes one to be noticed, and this, in

turn, may lead to greater responsibility, more demanding jobs, the challenge of more difficult skills.

Next comes fear of loss — loss of a job, loss of some very useful perks, loss of a favourite cubicle —everyone loves the familiar. Loss of power is feared, as symbolized by a corner office, or a managerial title, or a special parking spot. When the change is considerable, people fear the loss of emotional stability, especially when shifts in organizational beliefs and values start ripping into their very personal values.

When the change is different, unusual, scary, for example when someone is asked to move from one department to another, there is fear of incompetence in a new role. With that, add a fear of having to do real work. Building a whole new set of relations creates fear, as also the memory of past negative experiences. One kind of person will feel extremely vulnerable in an environment where other people thrive on risk. And where peer pressure to change styles is pronounced, the newcomer may feel extreme vulnerability.

When change is in the air, and there is a paucity of information and context, these kinds of fear are the inevitable result. As Greg Brodsky put it in a poem,

What is it you fear?
That you will change?
That you will lose something precious you have fought hard to gain?
Something you cherish that you must keep or know pain?

2. The Ogre of the Oppressive Organization

CEOs make more in a day than many of us make in a year and
Sweatshops are here again and
We're being downsized and out-sourced and off-loaded and

Where corporations get most of the welfare and

We're working longer hours with fewer benefits and

We don't have time for our children

Hierarchical organizations easily become oppressive today, when hierarchical rule turns authoritarian and overdemanding. Managements of such organizations tend to have a desperate need for perfectionism and control that destroys participation and creativity in the employee. Structures that run on power and are riddled with territorialism are the enemies of any meaningful change. Multiple demands from all quarters create cognitive dissonance. When loaded onto too few staff, such demands fatigue the employees and collapse their spirit. Such an oppressive organization, where too many musical notes are played at once, and policy or value shifts follow in rapid succession, leave the employee of good will despairing in a corner.

When the organization is on the back of the workforce, creativity suffers, as does the free sharing of ideas. Overwork becomes normal, which produces stress and problems in the home. The organization becomes riddled with unhappy campers. The final result is burn out. These employees need to get the organization off their back before they will change anything.

3. The Iceberg of Negative Energies

When negative energies prevail, people come home from work feeling drained

— emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Here we have a virtual museum display of all the subterranean rationalizations, addictions, suspicions, sacred cows and negative values that can act as an internal brake on change.

Denial of the very need for change excuses one from making any effort at all. Some employees assume a victim role, giving up their responsibility and any desire to change. These people see movements for change in overly personal terms — "They are doing it to me." Others argue, "Why should I change? What's wrong with me? There's nothing in it for me. The glass ceiling will make sure I don't get anywhere in this organization. Anyway, I like myself the way I am. I don't want to change my habits and routines; I'm very comfortable with them. And, what the heck, all of this hullabaloo about change will pass. And I can relax again into my old ways. The status quo has always worked for me."

All this merges into the cynicism of "been there, done that". "After all," we often hear, "how much change does a person need? I can smell 'flavour of the month' in this latest change project. We'll probably get a mug at the end of it, and it'll be all over". Proponents of constructive change find this depth of cynicism a hard nut to crack.

Then there is the demon of blame. With negative morale, people often develop a culture of blaming; they even make it into a fine art. The more things they can blame, the more they think they are off the hook. Aware of the energy involved in change, they find it much easier to criticize what change agents are attempting to bring about - "It's irrelevant. It's a big sacred cow. It's a rationalization they use to draw the boss's attention to themselves". These voices foster an attitude of resistance and rebellion, and finally carry out guerilla moves against the forces of change. Faced with this kind of resistance, innovative people are often tempted to up-anchor and move on to another organization.

4. The Limbo of Inertia

Guilt, depression, and anxiety are usually associated with the rapid onset of change in an organization. This stage is characterized by obsessive thinking, sleep disturbances and anxiety, as memories of the crisis become

Book Review

The Gardens of Their Dreams: Desertification and Culture in World History

by Brian Griffith

Fernwood Publishing, Halifax, and Zed Books, London, 2001; paperback, 368 pages, Can\$29.95

The musings that launched Brian Griffith's research on *The Gardens of Their Dreams* began with his experiences with the dry environments of India and Kenya as a village developer with the ICA. Since then his research has birthed this extraordinary book on the growing deserts of the world, and their impact on human civilizations over the past 7,000 years.

When I read the description of the Sahara Desert, I kept wanting to visit the fridge for a cold beer — so graphic was his description of the climate and landscape. But Gardens is more about social change than the topography of deserts where "the web of life is stripped to the bone". It is a thoroughly interdisciplinary work that brings in history, ecology, politics, psychology, and religion. The book is marvelously well researched and scholarly in its descriptions and explanations. Griffith is equally at home describing the early matrilineal cultures of China, the waves of warlord migrants out of Inner Asia, or the desert saints of North Africa.

The Gardens of Their Dreams is the story of people who have faced the expanding wasteland, and endured to become either its agents, or its healers. It is fascinating to know that North Africa was not always a desert; there were forests there in the past. But as the partly human-made deserts grew, people saw the death of their homelands and were cut off from their legendary ancestral gardens. The author also paints a picture of a future world economy, changing from one that depletes nature, to one that enriches nature as it grows - the true green revolution. This work is as fascinating and hopeful as it is ambitions in scope and accessible in writing style.

-Brian Stanfield

You can purchase The Gardens of Their Dreams at Chapters/Indigo, Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble in the U.S. or Amazon.co.uk in England.

overwhelming. For some individuals, these symptoms result in inertia and lethargy.

When inertia overtakes an organization, it can be as if an alien power is sucking every bit of forward-moving energy out of employees, leaving a terrible stasis. The effects are laziness, boredom, a lack of urgency, interest, or motivation. Staff go through the motions of sorting mail, writing memos, typing reports, going out for coffee — but there is a lack of control and direction. The buzz within such an organization goes like this: "Well, they say there's a clear need for change, and the boss is supposed to have a clear vision, but you can take it from me - I've been here twenty years, and this organization in the past has been quite unable to deal with change. We may as well forget about it". When this kind of lethargy settles over an individual or organization, only a great shock will dispel it.

5. Clogged Communication Channels

To expedite the change process gracefully, the skillful manager will be meticulous about good communication throughout this process. When people are uncertain about the changes they are experiencing, poor communication allows fears to grow and sends the wrong message. Support and full, honest disclosure is important and can speed the change process. New personnel or projects create continued challenges to the process of good communication.

In ACCORD discussions, "communication" was mentioned almost as often as "fear". One aspect of this is seen when people are working on the periphery of the office or organization. Even with internet access, they may feel isolated. They experience disconnectedness with the rest of the people; they lack the confidence to create channels and connections for themselves. Some experience themselves on a kind of desert island within the organization, nearly devoid of human contact.

Lack of communication evidences itself in unclear expectations. Managers give people jobs to do, but neglect to clarify each person's role, the task parameters, or the appropriate standards and values that go with the task. The employees find themselves tripping over others' "territories" and assignments. Too fearful to take initiative, employees may experience themselves

hemmed in, anxious, and holding back from all they could give.

When forms of communication do exist, management communiqués often lack clarity, or they do not say enough. A common complaint is that communication goes only one way - top-down, or through the filter of managers or superintendents. "Why wasn't I consulted on this?" is a frequently asked question. And so change is experienced as "imposed". The management seems to be innocent of participation processes, indeed of any processes at all. All this breeds a victim image in the workforce. Where there is no history of participation in decision-making, the organization desperately needs facilitation skills.

These are the five great barriers standing in the way of every effort at positive change. Fortunately there are five great forces on the side of change, ready to aid and abet it at every opportunity. Corporations and businesses large and small — are coming to realize the advantages of creating a positive environment for their employees. When people work in a place that feels good; they are more productive. Fewer errors occur, and morale is high. This is obviously a benefit for the corporation or business, but it is also a benefit for the employees. Innovative leaders understand the need for such change. They have taken the time and trouble to develop the skills and learnings to deal with it. They engage motivated people, and belong to that part of the workforce that is passionate about its tasks. Such leaders know of systems and forces for reinforcing change. According to the ACCORD workshop, these five positive forces are:

1. An Alliance for Change

At the core of successful organizational change is an alliance is of people who believe in their own excellence as workers, and have a receptive, positive attitude to change. These people have confidence in their own selfhood. They know who they are, and with some fascination wonder who else they could become. They subscribe to an "I can, and I will" philosophy. Their stance is: "I'm willing, I'm available, I'm ready to take some risks. I see where we are at a fork in the road where one route takes us to great possibility".

Such "change agents" (in Rosabeth Kanter's phrase) form a kind of a mastermind cadre, which harnesses the collective power of those who want forward-thinking and creative change. They recruit qualified people to join their persuasion, and become catalysts for the change wherever they operate. When these people are around, others take notice. The attitude of the change agents is infectious, and the wheels of change begin to move.

2. Inspired, Visionary Leadership

Companies that wish to retain their competitive edge cannot continue to rely on doing the same things that made them successful yesterday. Transformational structures need to be created in the organization, where everyone is challenged to seek creative and improved ways of doing business. This

Interim Coordinator wanted for ICA: International, Brussels

Strategic reorganization has created an opportunity for a volunteer to maintain and build operations in the areas of fund resource development, public relations, and global NGO alliance networking for the ICA: International. This role at the Secretariat office in Brussels, Belgium is to enable and promote work of the ICA: International, a federated global network of member organizations, currently operating in 27 countries and on every continent. The Institute of Cultural Affairs International was founded in 1977. It is a non-profit organization which holds consultative status II with the United Nations, with a mission to facilitate sustainable community and organizational development.

Requirements for this position are experience or talent in fund resource development in the public or private sectors, and an aptitude for collaborative leadership. Location: Brussels. Terms: 6 to 10 months contract, room and board, basic expense allowance, and facilitation training.

Interested candidates reply with a resume and letter supporting your interest to: Judy Harvie, c/o ICA Canada, 579 Kingston Rd, Toronto, Ontario, M4E 1R3, Canada, or e-mail to jharvie@sympatico.ca by May 31st, 2003.

Successful replies will be acknow-ledged and interviews held locally.

may refer to the leadership of the organization, but also to leadership among the staff. Leading today's organizations into tomorrow's challenges requires visionary leadership.

Visionary leaders are those who impart an inspirational image of future possibilities. Not only do they have their own dreams, but also they engage those around them in collective dreaming. From that dreaming they create a clear vision, and a directional path to get there. These leaders work with innovation, insight and courage, developing novel structures to bring their vision to life. They build a mandate that inspires the best in people, and aligns them around a shared sense of purpose. Their vision must be motivating, and it must be communicated. It must be both social and cultural, both organizational and personal. It has to overcome the distrust and fear stemming from failures of the past. The change agent needs to invite participation and contribution from the team, leading to a "buy-in" for visionary change. When the leader is equipped with the tools of facilitation, the leadership factor really takes off v-v-r-r-r- o-o-o-m!

3. A Passionate, Proactive Workforce

According to David Whyte, too many people leave their hearts at the workplace door. Yet their organizations need each person's spirit to be creatively engaged, to successfully cope with escalating demands of innovation, creativity, and adaptability. The best response to the current call for creativity in organizational life, is to overcome habitual fear and reticence - to bring full, passionate, creative human souls, with all their urgencies and unnamed longings, right inside the office. In Whyte's understanding, the bottom line is: Has compassion grown with the business? Has wisdom expanded with the budget? And has laughter increased with the staff?

A passionate workforce has a core of people at its heart who understand that the power is in the center of the table. and can be picked up by anyone. It is a proactive group of people: its values are hope, love, trust, and self-confidence. Such a group has an insatiable desire to follow its own dream, to experiment, to network with colleagues outside the organization, and to have fun in its work. These workers believe that creativity comes out of intuition — a lack of knowing, and willingness to think outside the box. They are able to trust in creative intuition. Such a team knows the joy of curiosity and creation in its work. It has trained itself to see the plus side of every "lack of", and has an unshakeable belief that the change can be made into something good. The people follow after a different kind of fulfillment, that comes from the work itself rather than its evasion. When the rest of the staff sees these people coming, they move out of the way.

4. Change-Reinforcing Support Systems

Once enough brave souls have crossed over to be on the side of change, support systems are needed to reinforce the patterns of change. As Calhoun Wick & Roy Pollock explain,

Both organizations and individuals exhibit significant inertia. In physical systems, energy must be expended to overcome an object's inertia and accelerate it, or change its trajectory. Likewise, energy must be expended

An Important Announcement About *Edges*

Edges is now available to members and subscribers on our web site and as an email. If you wish to receive Edges electronically, please ensure that you fill in the form on the back of the accompanying letter, or contact us at ica@icacan.ca.

ICA Canada's web site address is http://icacan.ca/institute.

ICA Associates Inc. is pleased to announce the translation of its book, *The Art of Focused Conversation: 100 Ways to Access Group Wisdom in the Workplace*

L'Art de la Discussion Structurée will be available this fall through ICA Associates Inc. The book has gone to press, and our French team of Renaud and Marie-Noëlle are anxiously awaiting its arrival. The text includes a new forward specific to the French edition. This book will have a special introductory price from June through to August, and will be available on our web site as well. Keep watching the ICA Associates Inc. web site for further details. WEB SITE. HTTP://ICACAN.CA

to put an organization on a new path or to change personal habits and managerial capability. The critical period for effecting change begins immediately after training. If a participant does not act on what they learn within a week, our experience says there is less than 25% chance they will subsequently apply what they had learned. If new habits are not established during the six to eight weeks of critical follow-through, the recidivism rate is virtually 100 per cent, with both the individual and organization falling back into old patterns of behaviour.

For those still wrestling with giving up the old ways and habits, help is needed to break their attachment to the past. All kinds of resources are needed to buttress the change that has begun. Management must conspire and take measures to reinforce the change. Sufficient dollars must be expended for training and retraining programs, newsletters, and the new physical environment. To aid the process of positive reinforcement, mentor support and coaching are needed to assist those with "change problems", and to clear up issues people may have. Some will

Volunteer Opportunities

Be an active participant in ICA Canada's future

If you like to learn, make a difference, contribute actively to positive social change, consider donating a few hours of your time, and meet other like-minded people.

There are volunteer opportunities on the following committees:

- Online programs
- Publications
- Public Relations
- Web Development
- Fund Raising

Call or email now for an information form.

Duncan Holmes
ICA Canada
579 Kingston Rd.
Toronto Ont. M4E 1R3
E-mail: dholmes@icacan.ca
Web site: http://icacan.ca

need coaching in order to catch up with what has happened.

After any major change is brought in, there will be disorientation, and a sense of unconscious incompetence. People who saw themselves as competent under the old regime may assume they must perform as before under the new. But they are existing in a new environment, and have to be coaxed out of the comfortable patterns. Some will find themselves totally unable to change — they experience themselves "totally out of it", and bedeviled by limiting assumptions about the world. They may need help from a mentor or consultant. Others need more practical support to develop new skills in methods and modes of operation. Others again, will need help in understanding the reasons for the change. By such constructive follow-up, more and more people come into the awareness of owning the change, and experience the relief of letting the past go.

5. An Environment of Depth Values

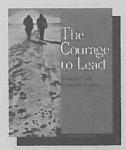
A truly innovative workforce involves people who have been through a major shift in values. For these people there is a recognition of each person's uniqueness, and the importance of spirit in relating to others. They have been through a spiritual crisis in the company and come out the other side, aware, inspired, and responsible. Through stillness and listening, the light has come on for these people. They are marked by care, and seek to build an environment that encapsulates their values. Operating out of heart energies rather than rationality alone, such individuals form a community of trust, connected together by their need to belong and contribute to a community of work. They operate out of a common context that supports change and banishes fear. They favour collaboration over competition, and a sense of community over individual charisma. With a phalanx of people like this, a climate is formed in the company that supports, aids and abets necessary change. At the same time, a culture is developed that respects diversity both within the organization and within society.

Courses have to be created that do all these things. Some courses will transfer skills and methods; others will deal with the change itself. These courses will specialize in transformational learning. On the other side of these courses, people will be different — more comfortable with the change and better equipped to handle it.

For more information on ACCORD please visit their web site at www.acccord.org.

The Courage to Lead Book Series

ICA Canada's powerful work on leadership, *The Courage to Lead*, is now available as a book, a daily journal, a study guide, and a seminar.

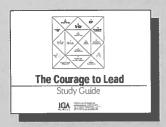


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— A great companion to *The Courage to Lead*, meant for those who are leading study groups based upon the book.

\$25.00 + Shipping and Handling + GST.

The Courage to Lead Study Group — There will be another study group starting in September, in Toronto. For more information please contact Duncan Holmes at dholmes@icacan.ca.

To order any of the above please contact Christine at:

Phone: 416.691.2316 Fax: 416.691.2491 E-mail: ica@icacan.ca Web site: http://icacan.ca

Mail: ICA Associates Inc., 579 Kingston Rd., Toronto ON, M4E 1R3.

We accept payment by Visa, MasterCard, Amex, or cheque.



The ICA: UK Volunteer Service Program

The Volunteer Service Program of the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA in the United Kingdom) is a highly participatory program for all those interested in volunteering overseas. The program has trained and placed over 300 UK volunteers since 1981.

It offers short courses for the orientation, training and preparation of volunteers, and a small number of placements each year with local development organizations worldwide. The focus is on projects that emphasize community participation and self-help initiatives. Everyone over 18 is welcome. There are no formal skills or experience requirements.

An entry program helps interested people in deciding whether this is for them. A second, longer program equips people with the how of volunteering abroad.

Here are some of the people who have come through the program.

John Cornwell

at Friends of the Nation, an NGO based in Takoradi in the Western Region of Ghana

ince my arrival, I have been thrown into work, which is more than fine for me. My role is "youth development worker". I'm also working on a number of projects within the organization with my co-workers, especially with Emmanuel, who is National Service Personnel. (In Ghana all graduates undertake one year's Community Work Service.)

One main focus is street work and informal education (HIV/AIDS, drugs, health, social & environmental issues) with young people in various local beach communities, and with homeless people in the city center market area. With these groups we are looking to encourage self-development so that young people will continue to do peer education work with each other on the issues and areas they choose to address. We are acting as facilitators in this process. The progress to date is both positive and fast. I have been delighted at the speed and quality of contacts which we have been able to initiate in a number of communities.

I'm loving so many things here — especially the people around me, and the food I eat. What are considered luxuries at home such as plantain and paw-paw have become everyday items here. I love the music I constantly hear (a mix of reggae, soul and highlife), which is as close to heaven as I can imagine!

Hannah Warren

volunteered with ICA: Ghana

Then I was offered a year's placement with ICA: Ghana, they stated that as a new organization, they could only offer me a table, a chair, and a vague job description. Beyond this my work program would be, to a large extent, up to my creativity and would also depend on work, at the time in proposal stage, that may later be funded. True to their word, when I arrived I had a table and a chair. My official title was Research Assistant and I was in the Research and Policy Analysis Unit, which consisted of Frempong, the unit director, and myself. After a couple of days at ICA: Ghana, Frempong and I met to have the first of many unit meetings to draw up a work program. Although our work schedule was left to a large extent up to ourselves, we were required to work within ICA: Ghana's objectives and three-year strategic plan.

For the first few months of my stay, I focused on forestry in Ghana — a country that has a rich resource of tropical rainforests. However, these have been depleted due to a number of causes including poor management and illegal logging. ICA: Ghana follows and contributes to Ghana's forest policies, and is involved in international forestry discussions. My main roles were gathering information on the Ghanaian forest policy and developing a proposal for future research into this area. I was also involved in the development of training programs for other organizations and community development workers to attend — Participatory Rural Appraisal, Proposal Writing, and Participatory Monitoring and

During the Christmas and New Year period I took some time off work and used the opportunity to travel around and see some other areas of Ghana. The difference in climate and culture is quite significant. It was also a novel experience to spend my first ever Christmas on the beach, in the sun, with pizza for Christmas dinner. It was great to spend New Year's Eve reveling with friends at a street party in Accra.

John Donaghy

volunteered with Corporacion Norte Grande in Chile in 1998

rica is close to the border with Chile, and in the driest part of Chile. It is roasting hot. The summer here is just ending. It really is hot here and it has an effect on everything. The most notable difference from home is that we wear shorts and tee shirts to work. And in the afternoon we work from 3.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m.

I am really enjoying the work. Corporacion Norte Grande (CNG) is a not for profit NGO which provides consultancy to community groups in Arica and in the Andes. They are also doing some work in Bolivia, Peru, and Argentina. The funding for all this work comes from external funding bodies — national funding, or foundations.

I am currently working on business plans with young adults in the Andes who want to open an eco-tourism business. I am also trying to access funding for new projects from USA and Europe, and I am helping CNG with their internal finances and project management. The work in the neighbouring countries involves working with universities to start a PG course in social management and community development—so I am going to help to organize it, and maybe give some lectures. I am looking forward to that.

The people at work are great. They are really hospitable and fun to work with. They have a lot of experience working with indigenous peoples and I am learning from them. In general they have a more laid back attitude to life than we have, but that is essential when working in the heat and indeed in the mountains at this altitude.

For more information on ICA UK's Volunteer Service Program please contact Martin Gilbraith at martin@ica-uk.org.uk

Institute News

Departures and Arrivals

Jeanette and Brian Stanfield are thrilled to announce that they are moving to Australia this spring. Brian will continue to be the Chief Editor of *Edges* while enjoying a wonderful retirement with Jeanette in Australia. Both Jeanette and Brian will continue with their research dynamic on behalf of ICA Canada. We wish them both well.

ICA Canada is pleased to announce that Vera Colley has now joined our staff as the Director of Resource Development. As such, her primary responsibility is to build ICA Canada's connections, not only with the community, but also with our members. She is also responsible for building our capacity to obtain the financial resources needed to fulfill our mission and develop new programs. Vera comes to us from Dancemakers (a contemporary dance company), where she was Director of Development and Communications. You can contact Vera at (416) 691-2316 ext. 234 or vcolley@icacan.ca.

Organizational Changes

As ICA Canada continues to evolve from the spin-off of our consulting and training business, we have now reached a point of re-establishing the Executive Director position. Duncan Holmes had been splitting his time between ICA Associates Inc. as the President, and ICA Canada as the Executive Director. Shortly, the Board will be moving to hire a part-time Executive Director to help move the organization further down the road. If you know of anyone interested in the position or would like more information, please contact Duncan Holmes at dholmes@icacan.ca.

The Youth Facilitation Project

This project will train facilitators in youth organizations across the country, and help them train additional youth from more organizations through a series of regional training events. The plan involves building partnerships between corporations and youth organizations. For more information please contact us at (416) 691-2316.

ICA Canada would like to sincerely thank our supporters over this past year for helping us to fulfill our mission to empower positive social change. To correct any errors or omissions to this list, contact Vera at (416) 691-2316, ext. 234.

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