



## **The Role of Dissonance in Culture Change**

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To achieve culture change, leaders must introduce changes to behaviour, systems and/or symbols that create dissonance – i.e. to affect culture change you need to shake things up a bit, people need to know that things are going to be different. That means that the changes must introduce some contradiction between what people expect and what actually happens. If there is no dissonance, people will continue to believe what they already believe.

In other words, if people see it is same old thing, then the culture won't change. On the other hand, if they see something different, they must resolve this difference (i.e. make sense of it) and come up with a new mythology (assumption) to explain it. Changing behaviour in a team is the result of resolving dissonance.

To be effective as a leader, you need to understand (not argue with) the current mythologies or stories in your team – how your team members perceive themselves, each other, you, people in other teams, the site they work on, the organisation as a whole, etc – and intervene using behaviour, systems and symbols as needed to get a different result.