The creative tension exercise shows that when an organization strives to improve its leadership performance, there will be anxiety. High-performing leaders will move toward desired performance more quickly than everyone else. Others will stay where they are. And here’s where organizations often make a mistake. Instead of working to move their middle performers to the new, higher level, they get hung up on focusing the majority of their time on the lower performers.

When working with an organization, Studer Group coaches spend most of their time working with the people in the middle-performer area. Middle performers are more likely to be coachable and to appreciate the development. This also takes care of most of the people, which lowers the tension.

Attempting to move the skill or will of only the low performers will take quite awhile. And if the middle performers are not moving up, too much of the critical mass is too far away from the desired goal, and this wears down the organization.

What Happens During Creative Tension?

- Increase in anxiety
- People who thought they had made enough changes realize they need to improve more
- Natural desire by many to lower the bar
- Feeling of “too much on plate”