At each phase of the adaptive cycle, there’s a particular psych-social space, and system entrepreneurship traits and roles. These are described for each phase, below.

The psych-social space called release or creative destruction.

Key pressures here are sense-making and reconfiguration of resources.

Associated changes can include:

- Breakdown of trust, networks, and meanings.
- Confusion, lack of clarity, and lack of direction.
- Pirating of ideas and resources; introduction of novelty.

People who are most comfortable and happy here are those who thrive on crisis and new beginnings. Others may be depressed or even in mourning.

System entrepreneurship at this phase is about sense-making. This includes activities like:

- Branding, mapping, surveying, sharing narratives, and vision-building.
- Non-directed convening such as open door town hall meetings and establishing connections between previously separate groups.
- Directed convening such as future search, scenario planning, or other whole-system approaches.

Facilitating conditions here include some crisis or collapse, and having a diversity of groups willing to engage.

The psych-social space called reorganization or exploration.

Key pressures here are the availability of resources (funds, time, energy, and skill), low connectivity, and time pressures.

Associated changes can include:

- Multiple “random walks” experiments.
- Initiatives which lead to little in the way of measurable outcomes.

System entrepreneurship at this phase is about brokering. This includes activities like:

- Entrepreneurial proposal of novel solutions and ideas.
- Brokering partnerships.
- Building umbrella strategies to link competing solutions.
- Deal-making between parties in order to achieve consensus or to link novel ideas.
- Finding capital for new ideas.
- Shedding ideas without legs.

Facilitating conditions here include the presence of innovative thinkers and ideas.
The psych-social space called exploitation.

**Key pressures** here are the demand for delivery and productivity.

**Associated changes** can include:
- The dynamic of start-up—high excitement as the initiative takes form.
- Communication is still highly personal and roles flexible, with integration through mutual adjustment.
- With success and time, there is increasing need for organizing systems (communications, control, accounting), job definitions, and regulation.

**Team builders** and the action-oriented come into their own here. Conceptualizers may feel a little uncomfortable.

**System entrepreneurship** at this phase is about **selling**. This includes activities like:
- Deliberate and strategic marshalling of resources in support of a winning idea set.
- Building broader commitment through storytelling and marketing.
- Leveraging political support for policy change.

**Facilitating conditions** here include the availability of social finance and the availability of vertical social capital.

The psych-social space called conservation.

**Key pressures** here are the standardization of rules and procedures, and the demand for products.

**Associated changes** can include:
- A time of measurable returns and performance.
- Increased demands for reliability and productivity.
- Increased reliance on systems for monitoring and rewarding efficiency.

**Good management** prevails. Visionaries step aside and move—or may be moved—on.

**System entrepreneurship** at this phase is about **disturbing/dissemination**. This includes activities like:
- Questioning the broader strategic context in order to understand the reasons for decisions.
- Framing these for front line folks where innovation continues to occur.
- Recognizing innovations of interest to policy makers and ...
- Selling those up to the decision makers.
- Introducing disturbances to precipitate a release phase.

**Facilitating conditions** here include have a porous institutional system.