

The Experts Teach: Change Management

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The Experts Teach

Change Management

The Experts Teach: Change Management

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Preface

Introduction to “The Experts Teach: Change Management”

In each of “The Experts Teach” series, we’ve gathered together some of the world’s best thinkers to share their ideas with you. Their ideas offer new, refreshing, and insightful ways to look at old themes, allowing you to discover new perspectives, develop your understanding, and change the way you think.

Profile of Editor Eric Garner

Eric Garner is an experienced management trainer with a knack for bringing the best out of individuals and teams. Eric founded ManageTrainLearn in 1995 as a corporate training company in the UK specialising in the 20 skills that people need for professional and personal success today. Since 2002, as part of KSA Training Ltd, ManageTrainLearn has been a major player in the e-learning market. Eric has a simple mission: to turn ManageTrainLearn into the best company in the world for producing and delivering quality online management products.

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1 Create a Culture of Change by Linda Henman

People change when the pain of staying where they are overcomes the fear of change. Sometimes, however, people don't perceive the pain before significant damage has occurred.

Like insidious heart disease, symptoms of impending destruction may go unnoticed. As the senior leader, your job is to build a culture of change, one that supports the long-term strategy of your company.

One of the founders of organizational psychology, Edgar Schein, drew from a wide range of contemporary research to define corporate culture and to demonstrate the crucial role leaders play in successfully applying the principles of that culture to achieve their organizations' goals.

Schein defined culture as "A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems."

If an organization's culture, therefore, has stabilized because of a long history of success, leaders may discover that changing deeply embedded assumptions requires more than a change in the organization's goals; it necessitates a shift in the company's basic culture from one of traditional approaches to one that embraces innovation.

Truly great companies understand the difference between what should never change and what should be open to change-between what is sacrosanct and what is not. A well-conceived change effort, therefore, needs to protect core principles, the enduring character of an organization-the consistent identity that transcends trends, technology, product line, or services.

Core principles provide the glue that holds an organization together through time. Throughout history we can see examples of how people captured and exemplified their fundamental beliefs. The Declaration of Independence, the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and the Bible all offer examples of how people have written and adhered to their core creeds. Even when the organization grows, diversifies, or changes location, these beliefs provide enduring tenets and a set of timeless principles.

Successful leaders don't confuse, and don't let their direct reports confuse, a change in operating practices with a change in core ideology. The root of culture is "cult," a testament to the kind of thinking that can often guide decision makers to adhere to a mindset that no longer works. But just as senior leaders can encourage cult-like thinking, they can stimulate a culture of change. A change in operating practices or strategy does not constitute a desertion of all that is "holy," but only those organizations that create a true culture of change can help their people understand the difference.

Imagine if Walt Disney had limited his company's purpose to the creation of cartoons. The world would have been denied Disneyland, EPCOT Center, and countless hours of family film entertainment. By definition, culture is a stabilizer, a conformist force, a way of making things predictable. Therefore, only when leaders manage the contradictions and define the very culture of the organization as one of learning, adapting, and innovating, can they stabilize perpetual learning and change. These leaders serve up sound thinking, optimism, and a future that is malleable-never Kool Aid. One of the ways they accomplish this involves removing the barriers to the transformation they espouse.

There are two kinds of organizations: those with a strong strategy and culture of change and those going out of business. In other words, what got you here won't necessarily get you to the next level. The Pony Express did not become the railroad, and the railroad did not become the airlines. Vanguards in their days, both the railroad and airline industries thrived. Today, however, both industries suffer from decades of bad management.

Unlike the leaders in these two industries, you will need to excel at reading the tea leaves. What opportunities and threats loom on your horizon? How can you leverage your strengths and mitigate your weaknesses to ready yourself for them?

You can start by replacing large-scale, amorphous objectives with results-driven goals that focus on quick, measurable gains. After all, as former British Prime Minister Harold Wilson once said, "The only human institution which rejects progress is the cemetery." The formula is simple: reinvent, re-engineer, and become the architect of your organization's future.

About the author

Linda holds a Bachelor of Science in communication, two Master of Arts degrees in both interpersonal communication and organization development, and a Ph.D. in organizational systems. By combining her experience as an organizational psychologist with her education in business, she offers her clients assessment, coaching, consulting, and training solutions that are pragmatic in their approach and sound in their foundation. Specializing in assessment for selection, promotion, and development, Linda helps organizations improve their succession and retention initiatives.

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2 Scrooged – A Dickens of a Way to Manage Change! by Martin Haworth

Managing change in our lives and in our businesses is vital in the modern environments in which we live. There is much to learn from that old and cantankerous Dickens character, Mr Ebenezer Scrooge himself...

The truth is, although he had an outward persona of grumpiness, deep down somewhere there was a man with a heart, seeing his life drift away from him.

We all do this to some extent – to hide away our true selves behind a veil of something we are more comfortable with. Sometimes we appear intimidating, cruel or even harsh. We avoid the intimacy we really seek, because of past experiences.

For old Scrooge, this became clear with the visit of the three ghosts, as well as what I find the most scary of all, the visit of Jacob Marley, his former partner, who seemed doomed to be stuck in that no-mans-land world between life and the ultimate infinity.

So, what happened then?

Firstly, Scrooge was reminded of who he might become if he carried on as he was. Marley gave him the example of the outcome of carrying on with his current behaviours.

Secondly, the Ghost of Christmas Past happened by. Showing Scrooge his almost forgotten past, where often he had experienced the fun that truly is possible, yet for so many of us is lost and overwritten by the experiences we have, as we grow through childhood and adult life.

Thirdly comes along the Ghost of Christmas Present, where Scrooge becomes aware of opportunities every day, perhaps even every hour, that we all have, yet our frame of mind causes us to miss them. Awareness of these possibilities is quite a step, yet when we start to take the time to notice, we can easily change our behaviours for the better, not just for ourselves, but by others too.

Finally, the ambiguous Ghost of Christmas Future. Will it happen, or is there a choice? Where Scrooge will end up if he doesn't make some changes. Interestingly, whilst Scrooge laughs along with the Ghost of Christmas Past and gets into those wonderful experiences of his youth, he's not smiling anymore when it comes to the future. And, even more oddly, it seems that the impact on others, what might happen to Tiny Tim, hurts and frightens him the most.

What can we learn from this? Quite a lot actually...

Our past holds the clues to who we might be.

We get stuck into one way of thinking and that does us no favours.

Focusing on money (remember he's a miser!), is an escape many of us choose.

There are possibilities every single day to get more from our lives – to be authentic with ourselves.

The future is impacted on by our behaviours and actions – we can make a difference.

There is much pleasure for ourselves in helping others – it is not an action that causes us pain!

We have choices to make and they are entirely in our hands. These are decisions we are making every day of our lives.

Managing change becomes all the easier when we realise what we had, where we are now and what might become of us in the future, unless we choose differently. It really is up to us – and that is the challenging part.

Above all, this enchanting story is well worth the read at this time of year – there are many more interesting lessons to learn.

As well as a delightful Christmassy story too!

About the author:

Copyright 2006 Martin Haworth is a Business and Management Coach. He works worldwide, mainly by phone, with small business owners, managers and corporate leaders. He has hundreds of hints, tips and ideas at his website, www.coaching-businesses-to-success.com.

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3 There Is No Such Thing as Organizational Change by Kevin Eikenberry

Organizations can't change; only individuals can. If you want to bring about change in your organization, you must begin with people. This article from Kevin Eikenberry outlines five ways you can influence change in others.

There's No Such Thing as Organizational Change

It is everywhere...

...Political leaders promoting changing policies.

...Organizational leadership touting new products or strategies.

...Team leaders outlining a process improvement.

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Leaders everywhere think their job is to create change across their team, organization or industry.

And they are all wrong.

You can create broad change across people and distance, but you can't do it by changing the organization.

You can only achieve by helping individuals make the choice to change.

In other words, organizations don't change, people do.

In the political arena, you've heard the phrase, "all politics is local." For our purposes today let me modify it to say "All change is individual."

So, if you agree with my assertion, how can you use that insight to get to your desired end goal of new processes, projects, products and behaviors?

Here are five things you can do.

Start with yourself

How easily are you influenced to change by someone who isn't changing themselves? An Android user isn't likely to convince you to buy an iPhone and a couch potato won't be a compelling advocate for reading more. If you want to influence others to change, you must begin with yourself – your level of belief is critical to your success.

Open conversation

Too many changes are introduced with PowerPoint and polished, practiced presentations. Stop that approach! Introduce the situation and the need for change as you see it and have a conversation with people about their concerns, fears and ideas. Recognize their initial resistance not as threat but as energy to be used. Telling won't work. Selling is limited in application. But a conversation that allows people to understand and express themselves moves people more quickly towards a change.

Pick the easy fruit first

If you have ever needed to pick the apples off of a tree, you probably started with the fruit closest to the ground. Picking all the apples doesn't mean you have to start at the top of the tree! In order to influence the entire group, start with individuals most likely to be open to the change. Notice those who seem most receptive. Think about who has been open to similar changes in the past. Going to these people first will help you build your confidence, and build a cadre of people to help influence others.

Engage their help

Politicians do this well. Once they begin to build support they enlist the help of early supporters to help the influence others. They know they can't do it alone and they understand the power of momentum. You don't have to, and if you are trying to change a group of any size, you can't, do it yourself. Engage those who are excited about the change. Support them with the same approaches you are using; encourage them to influence change on person at a time. The power of the extra help, plus the emotion of the momentum, will move you closer to your goal quicker.

Be patient

Have you been influenced to change quickly in every past situation? Have you ever seen an entire group of people all ready to change at the same moment? Change isn't always easy. Just because you have some early adopters on board today doesn't mean everyone else will jump on the bandwagon tomorrow. When you realize that all change is individual, you see that it will take some time. Remember that if your change is important, your patience will be rewarded.

There is lots more to creating change for individuals (and certainly how that ripples to organizational change) than can be shared in one brief article. But if you combine these five strategies with what you already know, and let all of your change leadership be guided by the premise that all change is individual, you will be on a path to more successful and more lasting change.

About the author

Kevin Eikenberry is a leadership expert and the Chief Potential Officer of The Kevin Eikenberry Group, a learning consulting company that helps Clients reach their potential through a variety of training, consulting and speaking services. You can learn more about him and a special offer on his newest book, Remarkable Leadership: Unleashing Your Leadership Potential One Skill at <http://RemarkableLeadershipBook.com/bonuses.asp>.

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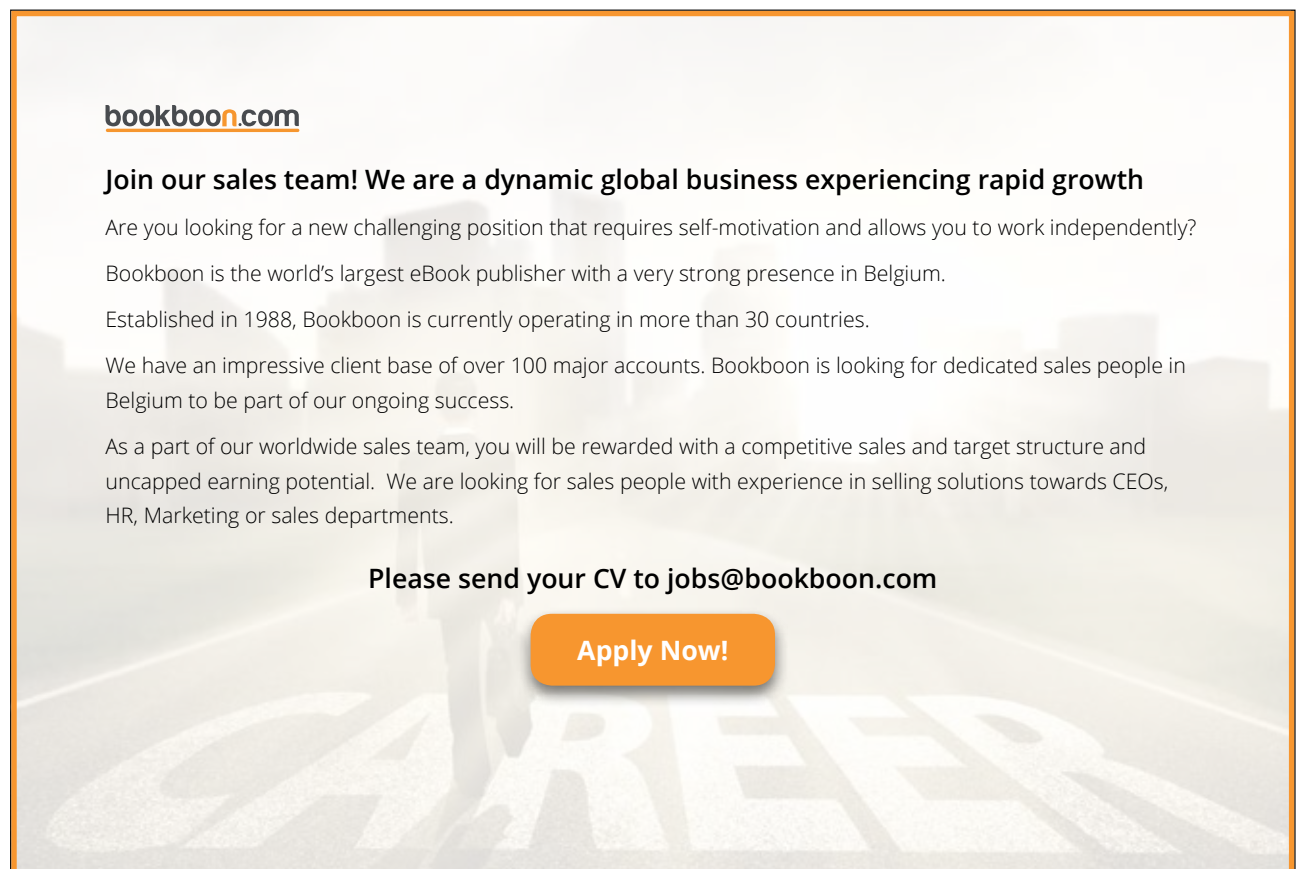
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4 Life As an Active Science by Steve Goodier

That tireless inventor Thomas Edison famously said of his various experiments, “I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.” Murphy’s Law is much less sanguine about it: “If you never try anything new, you’ll miss out on many of life’s great disappointments.”

I have to say, though, that I like to experiment – especially with my life. I believe in self-transformation and try to challenge myself regularly to adopt new attitudes and behaviors. I realize that I can be a little excessive with self-change (you may know that already), but I am drawn to the exciting idea that my life is an “active science.”

I think changes in wrist watches over the past 50 years beautifully illustrate how important it is to experiment. Do you know who set the standard for fine watch-making for most of the 20th Century? If you answered, “The Swiss,” you are correct. Swiss wrist watches dominated world markets for at least 60 years and Swiss companies were committed to constant refinement of their craft.

It was the Swiss who came forward with the minute hand and the second hand. They led the world in discovering better ways to manufacture gears, bearings, and main-springs of watches. They even led the way in waterproofing techniques and self-winding models. By 1968 the Swiss made 65 percent of all watches sold in the world and laid claim to as much as 90 percent of the profits.

Now...which country sold the most wrist watches in the 1980s? The answer is Japan. By 1980 Swiss companies had laid off thousands of watch-makers and controlled less than 10 percent of the world market. Between 1979 and 1981, eighty percent of Swiss watchmakers lost their jobs.

Why? One reason is the advent of Japanese digital watches. Another major reason is that the Swiss were reluctant to change the way they traditionally designed wrist watches. Like the fact that for too long they refused to utilize the less expensive and more accurate Quartz crystal. In short, they kept doing what they always did. Because they did not seriously experiment with radical new ways of designing timepieces, most Swiss watchmakers found themselves doing something else for a living.

Our lives are not so different. Of course we need to accept ourselves as we are, but we can’t stop there. We also need to value ourselves enough make needed changes. It’s a simple formula: If we want to live fully we have to keep growing. If we want to keep growing we have to adapt. And if we want to adapt we have to try on new ways of thinking and new ways of doing. For me it’s about making my life an active science.

I appreciate Mark Twain's encouragement. "Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do," he points out. "So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

Sounds like fun to me.

About the author

Steve Goodier holds a B.A. in anthropology and sociology (New Mexico State University) and an M.Div. degree from Emory University. He is an ordained United Methodist minister, district superintendent in the Rocky Mountain Conference UMC, and the author of numerous books about personal development, motivation, inspiration, and making needed life changes.

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5 Turn the Lights Off When You Leave by Eric Garner

There's an old saying in self-development training that says, "Winners never quit; and quitters never win".

OK, but what if you're in a situation that sucks? One that you've been beating your head over for what seems like ages and just isn't getting any better. Do you quit? Do you fear that quitting will make you a loser?

All of us go through such situations at various times in our lives and many of us don't change for fear of quitting and fear of losing. We often weigh up the risks of staying the same against the risks of change and lack the courage or support to let go and move on.

If you're currently in such a situation, there are different ways you can sense the need for change.

One of my favourite writers is Danielle LaPorte. She says that giving up on what's not working doesn't mean failure; it means you make way for success. I like that. Danielle adds that there are 8 indicators that tell you when things are not working:

1. You use "it sucks" in a sentence to describe any aspect of your situation.
2. You "drag your ass" to it.
3. Sunday night anxiety (dreading Monday.)
4. Dismal sales (yes, the universe speaks to us through cash flow.)
5. The bleak absence of synchronicity.
6. Not a whole lot of thanks coming your way.
7. Your mother is your best customer.
8. Seething resentment.

Another indicator that I use is to get in touch with that "pit-of-the-stomach" feeling. If it feels bad down there, then something's not right. You have a block that you've got to remove.

So what can you do?

In any situation that just isn't working, you always have three choices:

1. leave the situation alone but change your attitude to it. This suggests that you are blocking out the inherent benefits in the situation and you need to do some work on you, your attitudes, and your way of behaving.
2. change the situation. This works if you think the blocks are external to you, for example with other people's attitudes and behaviour. If you have great assertiveness, influencing and negotiating skills, this might be your best option. In reality, of course, the changes in the situation result in a change in your attitude to the situation, so we're really back to point one.
3. leave the situation. This is the route that many of us want to take but feel guilty about taking. It implies that the problem is all your own fault and that, somehow, you have failed. However, when routes 1 and 2 are not possible, this option is always better than doing nothing at all.

Danielle LaPorte says that when you've been through this list and know that you've got to leave a situation that's not working, you shouldn't worry about how you're going to manage the next steps. Once the decision is taken, you'll probably feel a sense of elation. You now have a new vantage point on where to go next.

Letting go of a bad situation gracefully and moving on without regret is the sign of a winner, not a loser. As Danielle, says, look forward, don't look back. Just turn the lights off when you leave and announce your new destination.

About the author

Eric Garner is Managing Director of ManageTrainLearn, the site that will change the way you learn forever. Download free samples of the biggest range of management and personal development materials anywhere and experience learning like you always dreamed possible; <http://www.managetrainlearn.com>

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6 Signs Of Stagnation by Jim Clemmer

“The most fatal illusion is the settled point of view. Since life is growth and motion, a fixed point of view kills anybody who has one.” – Brooks Atkinson, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist for the New York Times and drama critic

Isidor Isaac Rabi was an Austrian born, American physicist who won a Nobel Prize in physics for his work in nuclear science. He was once asked how he became a scientist. Rabi explained that each day after school his mother would discuss his school day with him. She was less interested in what he had learned than in whether he had “asked a good question today.” She encouraged inquiry and curiosity in all that young Isidor did. “Asking good questions,” Rabi explained, “made me become a scientist.”

Personal growth, continuous improvement, lifelong learning...these are mantras for many people today. But good intentions often don't become action. Recognizing when we've slipped into the stagnant waters of stability and certainty isn't easy. Like putting on weight, it happens so gradually until one day we notice how out of shape we've become. Here are a few Stagnation Signs:



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“We’ve always done it that way” – we don’t challenge our assumptions and frequently reflect on how we should do things now.

“I am too old to change” – in *The Dog Ate My Homework*, philosophy professor, Vincent Barry, calls this learning cope-out “some senior’s socially sanctioned refusal to acknowledge and take responsibility for attitudes, actions, and circumstances well within his or her power to influence.” He goes on to write, “It’s also about dying before one’s time by living halfheartedly the time one has left. In this respect, ‘I’m too old to change’ is about all of us who refuse to live by refusing to change; for ‘to change is to mature, [and] to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly.’”

Losing our child-like curiosity – our sense of wonder and discovery is replaced with cynicism and apathy – “been there, done that, what else is new?” One of the most prolific artists in history (he created more than 20,000 works) the Spanish painter and sculptor, Pablo Picasso, has been called the greatest artist of the 20th century. He once observed, “Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.”

Learning strictly through our own experience – it’s often better to borrow experience than to just learn from our own. Not only can that be less painful, it’s much faster. Books, seminars, mentoring, networking, group problem solving and the like are some of the ways we can learn from other people’s experience.

Creatures of habit – it’s so easy to slip into routines that close us off from new approaches and learning. Even our thinking can fall victim to repeating worn out clichés, platitudes, and dogma. In *The Tragic Sense of Life*, the Spanish philosophical writer, Miguel de Unamuno writes, “To fall into habit is to begin to cease to be.”

Having all the answers – in his personal journal, the French artist Eugene Delacroix made this entry on February 25, 1852, “Mediocre people have an answer for everything and are astonished at nothing. They always want to have the air of knowing better than you what you are going to tell them...a capable and superior look is the natural accompaniment of this type of character.”

Satisfied and complacent – only a mediocre person is always at his or her best. If I am getting very comfortable with my expertise and skill levels, my learning has leveled out. I am not stretching and challenging myself enough. My comfort zone is fossilizing into a complacency zone.

Fearing to attempt – we know that the turtle only makes progress by sticking his head out. Yet we sit and dream about what we’re going to do someday. If we don’t take steady steps toward our dreams, the walls around our complacency zone get ever higher and thicker.

Fuzzy focus – our growth and development should be taking us somewhere. If we don't know where we want to go, what we stand for, or why we're here, any experience and learning path will do. We just wander around and hope for the best.

There's a world of difference between getting old and growing old. With age can come wisdom, but too often age comes alone. Age to the stagnant is winter, but to a leader on the grow it is harvest time. Not all experience is equal. Experience isn't what happens to us, it's what we do with what happens to us. There's a major difference between growth experiences and stagnating experiences. Just because we've shown up year after year and put in the time, doesn't mean we've gained by the experience. We may just be going through the motions, like taking the same route day after day; soon we're numbed to the passing landscape. We're in a rut.

When we see learning as a phase of life rather than a way of life, it's easy to become set in our point of view. As our personal growth rate slows and time goes by, we can become one of those boors that have many answers and few questions – a know-it-all. By the time we reach middle age we can end up with our broad mind trading places with our narrow waist. We can represent decades of history unimpeded by growth and development. We could become so narrow minded we have to stack our ideas vertically.

About the author

Jim Clemmer has been writing and speaking about leadership, change, team, and organization effectiveness for over 30 years. His extensive research, broad experience with hundreds of organizations and thousands of people, and deep understanding of these topics makes him an internationally recognized leader in the field. Beyond his seven books, he's written hundreds of columns and articles for newspapers and magazines.

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7 The Thrill of the New by Erica Rowntree

Two news stories struck me this week.

The first was the announcement that last December's jobless increase in the USA, at 693,000, was the biggest rise in a single month since October 1949.

The second was the news that February was the 200th anniversary of the birth in Shrewsbury, England of the naturalist Charles Darwin.

Now, what, you might think, could possibly connect the two?

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Those newly-jobless workers in the USA, together with the 12 million already out of work, plus others in similar positions all around the world, meant huge numbers of people facing major changes in their lives. Each of these individuals will have to face the loss of a daily routine, the loss of friends and co-workers, and the loss of material things such as money, possessions, and possibly even their homes.

On our Change Management courses at ManageTrainLearn, we often quote the researcher Charles Garfield. Garfield studied 500 peak performers in different industries to discover why they were so successful. His conclusion was that they were not necessarily the most talented or the most able or even the most lucky. The one thing they had in common was their ability to respond to change in their lives.

Garfield discovered that, for these people, change isn't something to be avoided, feared or resisted but an exciting opportunity to grow. For them, change doesn't mean "more"; it means "new". New learning, new skills, new attitudes. And, yes, new routines, new friends, and new lifestyles.

Which leads us to Darwin.

Like Garfield, Darwin came to the exact same conclusion about the success (ie survival) of the natural species of the world, ie that, when faced with changes in their environment, the species that survive and thrive do one thing that the unsuccessful and doomed don't do. They adapt.

Darwin's remarkable achievement, of course, was that he proposed it at a time when the idea was completely unacceptable, almost as heretical as Galileo's proposition, 300 years earlier, that the Earth revolved around the Sun. And probably his most heretical proposition was that it is not only the plants, the birds, and the animals of the earth that survive by embracing change and as a result change themselves. It is also people.

If you are one of the many who are facing huge life changes right now, the first thing we should offer you is the compassion that comes from understanding that loss of what you are attached to can come as a major shock. But following that, I hope you will understand that the loss of the known is an opportunity to discover the thrill of the new. For with the new, comes the chance to adapt, learn and change.

Little wonder that on our Change Management courses, we love to inspire people facing change in their lives and work with this quote attributed to Charles Darwin himself: "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones most responsive to change."

About the author

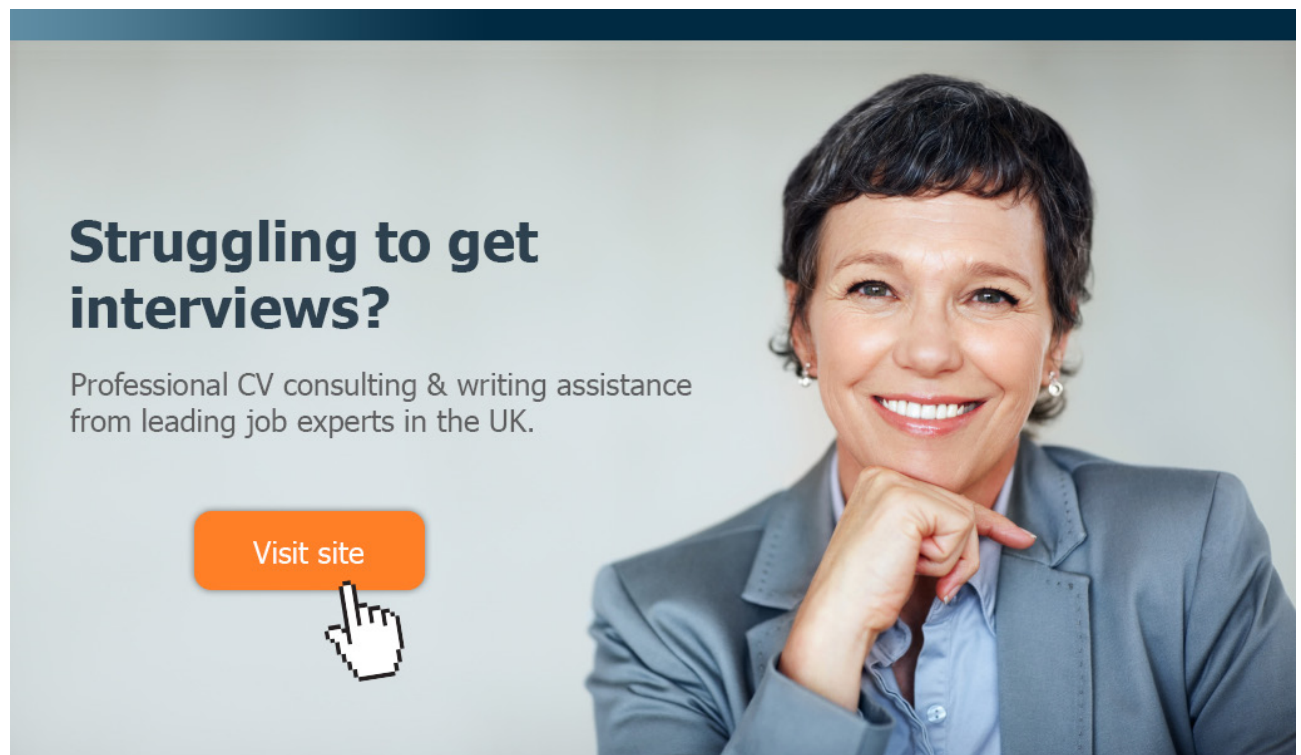
Erica Rowntree is a contributing author for ManageTrainLearn, the site that will change the way you learn forever. Download free samples of the biggest range of management and personal development materials anywhere and experience learning like you always dreamed possible; <http://www.managetrainlearn.com>

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8 A Lesson in Change Management from the Two Presidents by Bob Selden

Why do many change management initiatives fail? The recent US presidential election gives some clues for success.

Much of the press focus over the election of Barack Obama to US president, has rightly, been the “hope for change” that his new policies will bring. But for managers, there has also been a great lesson in the lead up to the inauguration – the smooth transition of power from the outgoing to the incoming president.

This is a change management process that seems to have succeeded where many change management initiatives fail.

For example, Peter Senge in “The Dance Of Change” (1999) reported that “Two-thirds of Total Quality Management programs fail, and reengineering initiatives fail 70% of the time.” Again in 2002 David Miller writing in the Journal of Change Management posited that “Change initiatives crucial to organizational success fail 70% of the time.”

Why, then has this change worked so smoothly?

There are two reasons. Firstly, both men have been willing and open to share information and engage in meaningful dialogue about the transition of power and the transition phase.

But over and above that, there has been a “Transition Management Plan” in place by both parties.

“It isn’t the changes that do you in, it’s the transitions.” This opening line in William Bridges’ best-selling “Managing Transitions” (Nicholas Brealey Publishing 1997), sums up the root cause of most change management failures. As Bridges suggests, change is external, whereas transition is internal and is more of a psychological state.

Bush and Obama must be complemented for their management of this transition process.

It could have been so different.

For example, it could be natural for the outgoing president to perhaps feel some resentment or apprehension about the changes the new man will bring. And so, he may not be as forthcoming as he ought to be. For the new man, who perhaps sees many of the old policies as inept, there could be the unwillingness to discuss new policy implementation issues. And of course, there's always the bogies of past loyalties and egos that may get in the way of effective transition management.

What did they do?

Bush should be given a lot of kudos for his transition initiative. Long before the election was over, he formed a "transition council" headed by his chief of staff Josh Bolten. Their aim was to remove many of the usual obstacles and foster cooperation and harmony.

Of course, we are all probably more familiar with the workings of Obama's transition team and their ability to manage the challenges over this three-month transition period.

Although Bush and Obama differ on many policy and philosophical issues, it was particularly evident that they had a good working relationship over the transition period. And the success of this can be put down to their willingness to be open and their excellent transition management.

The message from this experience for managers faced with implementing change?

Make sure you have both a change management plan (i.e. how the new policies, systems, structures etc.) will work once the change is implemented, and a transition management plan to manage the interim or lead-up period between the old and the new. This transition plan must address:

How are we going to get from where we are now, to where we want to be (the transition period)?

A schedule of who (and when) people will receive information; what training and support they will need to make the transition

The nature and timing of key events that mark the transition

The personal changes that will occur with the people (e.g. who will lose/gain what and how these will be managed)

This transition plan must be laid out in great detail, with timings, events, people, and places that will be involved in moving from the old to the new.

When developing your transition plan, keep in mind one of the key points Bridges made – that there is a major difference between a change management plan and a transition management plan.

“A change management plan starts with the outcome and then works backward, step by step... A transition management plan... starts with where people are now and then works forward, step by step, through the process of leaving the past behind, getting through the wilderness and profiting from it, and emerging with new attitudes, behaviors and identity.”

And also keep in mind one of the most important parts of the transition – the celebration of moving from the old to the new. Who will forget the pageantry and hype of Obama’s inauguration?

As a change management aficionado, I will also have long memories of Obama, Biden and their wives waving a fond farewell to the outgoing president as he was flown away by helicopter. Transition complete. Now for the change.

About the author

Bob Selden is the author of the best-selling “What To Do When You Become The Boss” – a self-help book for new managers – see details at <http://www.whenyoubecometheboss.com/>. He’s also coached at one of the world’s premier business schools, the Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland and regularly advises managers around the globe on their current challenges.

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9 Paradoxical Balancing Acts in Organization Improvement by Jim Clemmer

“Fine art is that in which the hand, the head, and the heart go together.” – John Ruskin, 19th century English critic, artist and social reformer

Too often, we see the world in narrow binary, either/or terms. Odd or even, closed or open, introverted or extroverted, individual or group, profitable or unprofitable, rational or irrational, right or wrong, real or imagined, hard or soft, emotional or dispassionate, and vertical or horizontal are common examples of how we try to neatly pair contradictory opposites.

But top performers look beyond either/or, to and/also. Instead of seeing just polarization, they see beyond the contradictions that limit most people. They are able to manage the third position that emerges from balancing the two opposites. As professor, consultant, and author, Charles Handy, points out in his book, *The Age of Paradox*, “paradox does not have to be resolved, only managed.”

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Five thousand years ago in ancient China, Fu Hsi developed an “and/also philosophy” that is still with us today. His concept of ying and yang taught that much of life consists of two opposite and sometimes opposing forces. As with male and female, the very existence of each may depend on its opposite. In other cases, one may transform or kill the other, such as fire and water, darkness and light, or cold and hot.

Samuel Johnson, the 18th century, poet, essayist, and journalist captured this interdependence of contrasting forces when he wrote, “the lustre of diamonds is invigorated by the interposition of darker bodies; the lights of a picture are created by the shades; the highest pleasure which nature has indulged to sensitive perception, is that of rest after fatigue.”

Finding the Right Balance

Improvement Efforts Must...

- Produce quick, short-term results and change long-term personal habits and organization culture
- Expect the best but be prepared for the worst
- Build consistency, discipline, and a systematic approach and constantly change, experiment, and learn by “mucking around”
- Respond to and serve existing customers and develop new customers and markets by uncovering unmet needs
- Amplify the potential pain and focus on the gain
- Continuously improve in small increments wherever possible and make breakthrough changes

The key lessons of the yin and yang philosophy or of managing paradox, is finding a balance that’s right for the conditions and circumstances. That means we need to learn how to deal with the ambiguity and uncertainty of and/also. While many of those balances have always been dynamic and changing, today’s hyper speed of change makes them all the more so. The words of Voltaire, the French philosopher and dramatist, ring even truer today than they did in the 16th century, “Doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is an absurd one.”

About the author

Jim Clemmer has been writing and speaking about leadership, change, team, and organization effectiveness for over 30 years. His extensive research, broad experience with hundreds of organizations and thousands of people, and deep understanding of these topics makes him an internationally recognized leader in the field. Beyond his seven books, he’s written hundreds of columns and articles for newspapers and magazines.

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10 Tools for Driving Change with Tom Devane by Thomas Cox

One of the most promising and fastest growing areas of management science is the area of organizational change. “Organizational change” is the fancy way of saying, we often know what we should do – we just don’t do it. Like diet, go to the gym, and so on. Turns out there’s a science for making that jump – from knowing we should do something, to actually doing it.

Tom Devane is an internationally known management consultant, author, and leadership development coach. He specializes in building client capabilities in the areas of large-scale change, high-performance teams, and the strategy-through-execution cycle. He has consulted for a wide variety of organizations including Microsoft, Johnson & Johnson, the US Federal Judicial Court System, and the government of South Africa.

I asked Tom to share some high-leverage tools that can fit on any leader’s tool belt. Tom’s the perfect expert for this because he’s the co-author of an outstanding book, *The Change Handbook: The Definitive Resource on Today’s Best Methods for Engaging Whole Systems* – it gives details on over 60 simple methods that CEOs can use to engage their people, and drive successful change.

“Successful change” means staff don’t give it lip service and go back to doing the old way, they actually do embrace the new way. “Engage their people” means you get, not passive compliance or secret resistance, but enthusiastic help.

Tom Devane learned about the importance of Change Management the hard way. While at Accenture, the biggest variable controlling the success or failure of projects was, whether the users wanted the new project or not. In fact the failure rate of change projects is near 75% – 3 out of 4 projects do not meet their agreed objectives on time and on budget.

Even simple changes can fail. Once when I worked at Oracle, the VP of Operations announced that the entire company was going to switch to a “manufacturing calendar” – sometimes called a “4-4-5 calendar” – which would have provided some benefits, and which he certainly had the power to do. Yet within a month the decree was rescinded, due to foot-dragging and grass roots resistance.

And when we hit resistance we too often think we have to explain. We try to give reasons. We try to use logic. Yet logic and reasons and explanations are not enough. I could give you 10 powerful and compelling reasons why I ought to exercise more – yet I still don’t go to the gym.

Behavior change requires more than logic and reasons. Behavior change requires a level of emotional buy-in.

In other words, we need to figure out how to get employee engagement.

So Tom Devane set out to document the best ways to create engagement. The result is a collection of 61 different techniques that allow people to reach engagement by taking part in the creation of the plan. This has the advantage of also tapping the knowledge of those people – so we get a smarter plan that’s also more popular and has greater buy-in from the staff.

No Charisma Required

One wrong way to try to get buy in is to rely on motivational speakers, or the charisma of the CEO (if the CEO has any). Why wrong? Because the outside motivation is, as Devane puts it, “buy-in for a day” – it’s temporary because it’s external.

A problem with charismatic CEOs is, the other people start to rely on the CEO to provide a motivation that truly needs to come from the inside.

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Fortunately, CEOs can instead use one of the semi-structured methods in the book for bringing people together and getting the peers to motivate each other. No special training or outside consultants required.

In fact it's often more effective for internal people – the CEO or some other inside person – to facilitate, because the other people in the company will cut one of their peers a lot more slack.

Example: Integrated Planning via the Search Conference

Microsoft had a division that wanted to go after a new market. They used the “Search Conference” – a roughly two day effort that alternates between large group meetings and small group analysis. Each small group cycle ends by reporting back out to the whole group. The whole group tackles all the major issues.

The crucial element so many folks miss is, to turn the resulting strategy into action plans for the people in the room.

Example: World Cafe

Start with some small questions that feed each other. And set the room with round tables. At each table, there is a different question being asked and answered. One person “hosts” the table and provides continuity. After each round of discussion, people move to another table, changing who they are with, and take on the next question. Again, you end the day with action plans.

Keeping the Process Safe

Sometimes CEOs worry the group will take the company into a wrong direction. That's not a problem – just set up the boundaries in advance of the meeting, directing the group up front as to which areas are open for innovation – maybe new markets are okay – and which areas are not open – maybe new products are off the table. Try to keep it at 4–6 boundaries or less.

Competitive Advantage

Organizational change is tremendously difficult. The firm that masters this will profoundly out-perform the competition who have not.

Tom Devane strongly believes that any CEO can easily become good enough at a few of these group techniques (and a few is all you'll need) to make organizational change far more likely to succeed.

About the author

Tom Cox is CEO at B-Studio Business Videos, Managing Consultant at Cox Business Consulting, Inc., and CEO at GrowthMaps

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11 Five Ways to Get Change Right by Linda Henman

Most people prefer an IRS audit or root canal to a change in their software. Some of these same people like change when they choose it. In fact, they see excitement in the challenges and opportunities that come with a change they select.

Sometimes, however, according to author, Kelly Standing, “we like change better when it comes to us by invitation instead of imposition.” When the change imposes itself on us, it becomes a nuisance, and we resist it.

Why? Fear. We don’t know what lies ahead and how our lives will be affected. If the change surprises us, that further exacerbates the fear. We can’t steel ourselves to consequences we don’t anticipate. Unexpected and unwanted—two of the most onerous characteristics of change.

Add the element of “unnecessary,” at least in the eyes of some, and you have a recipe for opposition. Most of us resent decision makers rearranging our lives, but we don’t resist so much when we can see that the change improves our condition. Initially, however, either this evidence doesn’t show itself, or it doesn’t exist. When we see only the burdens of the change and none of the benefits, we tend to lose confidence in the new approach.

How can anyone expect us to champion a change that we don’t want? They can’t automatically cast us in the role of change agent when we feel threatened or annoyed. Hope does spring eternal, however, for the savvy leader who learns ways to get change right. Here are five things you can do to help yourself and others adjust when things seem to spiral out of control. I call them The Five E’s for Change:

1. Serve as an exemplar and identify others who can too.

In addition to championing the change yourself, you will do well to identify those among you who will also embrace the new. But what if you don’t want the change yourself? Pretend. As a leader, you may have to act as though you approve of the change when you really would have preferred the traditional approach. Your direct reports depend on you to shine the light into the darkness for them. If you don’t, both you and they will suffer from lost momentum, low morale, or even the departure of some of your key talent.

2. Engage champions of the change and the change agents among you. Talk to them about what they see as the most pressing issues and the needs they have, but don't let your conversations turn to gripe sessions. Instead, take a positive approach. Ask them what they aspire to achieve during the transition and how they will measure their success. Reward the change efforts, not just results, and let them experience the excitement of the change.

In addition to offering explanations, you can help them discover their own answers. For instance, you can ask, "What does this future state look like? Describe it in detail. What will be different? What new capacity will emerge?" Talk about past successes that changes have engendered and innovations that have proved profitable.

3. Empower. One of the most disturbing aspects of change is people start to feel victimized. No one asked them about the change, so they feel a profound loss of control. They won't hold sway over many things, but if you empower them to take control of the things they can control, talk about potential problems, and then communicate your faith in them to address the roadblocks as they appear, you'll notice that those who might have resisted the change start looking for the opportunities in it. Give them the authority to practice and master experimentation.
4. Elevate. When change occurs, often emotions reign. Logic may make us think, but emotion makes us act. If you allow discussion and decisions to remain in the arena of emotion, however, you and those who count on you will end up frustrated but no better off.

Elevating the discussion to one that addresses problem-solving and decision-making puts the focus where it needs to be: on those things they can control. It also helps to concentrate efforts on things that will improve conditions, not on the problem or change itself.

Talk about the links between their efforts and the best possible outcome. What improvements and benefits will be possible going forward? Exude optimism as you draw attention to past successes.

5. Educate; don't just train. Of course, people may need some training to adjust to the new situation. They will have to know how to use codes, how to comply with mandates, etc. But you can go beyond training to educate people about the thinking behind the mandates. They may not agree with the reasons for the change, but they should at least understand them.

Most of us wish unplanned, unexpected, and unpleasant change would bother someone else, but as a leader, you can't stay in this mindset and hope to help those in your chain of command. Instead, when you focus on long-term benefits to both the individual and the organization, you take important steps to ensure your people have what they need and zero in on ways you can combine efforts to ensure you get the change right.

About the author

Linda holds a Bachelor of Science in communication, two Master of Arts degrees in both interpersonal communication and organization development, and a Ph.D. in organizational systems. By combining her experience as an organizational psychologist with her education in business, she offers her clients assessment, coaching, consulting, and training solutions that are pragmatic in their approach and sound in their foundation. Specializing in assessment for selection, promotion, and development, Linda helps organizations improve their succession and retention initiatives.

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12 Make Change Easy – Get Involved! by Martin Haworth

The level and intimacy of involvement in change makes a big difference to how people are able to respond. Taking ‘control’ of change can be fruitful, enlightening and, yes, enjoyable. If you are undergoing change, think it through, and then think how you can enable your people to get involved too...

There are wild variances in how much involvement organisations are brave enough to offer their people in change. From those organisations where they just tell? (sometimes by text message even!), to the most enlightened extreme, where they enable wholesale contribution to the change process.

Such organisations actually create the time and space to involve as many people as possible, in the issues surrounding the need for change.

This organism of change, where the organisation fully respects (an important word in this context), the ability of individuals to contribute, not in a patronising way, but more in a synergistic and fully contributory way, enables two significant and positive steps.

Firstly, involvement in the creation of change solutions, empowers people in what can be a very disempowering situation. They begin to have a role in their own and their organisation’s future.

This leads to a second significant point. The ownership of the solution shifts, so that individuals get really bought into the need for change and that they can contribute, sometimes much more than can be expected. Their empowerment values them as never before.

This can, with acute awareness on the part of senior managements, move the organisation from fire-fighting when things go wrong, to an ongoing search for quality, review and questioning of assumptions. This becomes as Ricardo Semler found in his wonderful book, ?Maverick?, rewarding holistically, for the organisation, the employees and also the locality as a whole.

A marvellous example of embracing change, freeing a business owner and exemplar leader, and his team to realise their true potential.

An exercise to consider...

Think about changes where you have been involved.

How were the changes launched to you?

What were your feelings at the time?

What are your feelings now, in retrospect?

What might have made the experience better, in light of the information above?

How might you have done it differently??

In your own organisations, what opportunities do you have for involving your people in change?

How could you explore this further?

What could you do in the next month?

What will you do?

Change is an opportunity which can grab you any way you choose – or you can take the lead and choose your own path...

About the author:

Copyright 2006 Martin Haworth is a Business and Management Coach. He works worldwide, mainly by phone, with small business owners, managers and corporate leaders. He has hundreds of hints, tips and ideas at his website, www.coaching-businesses-to-success.com.

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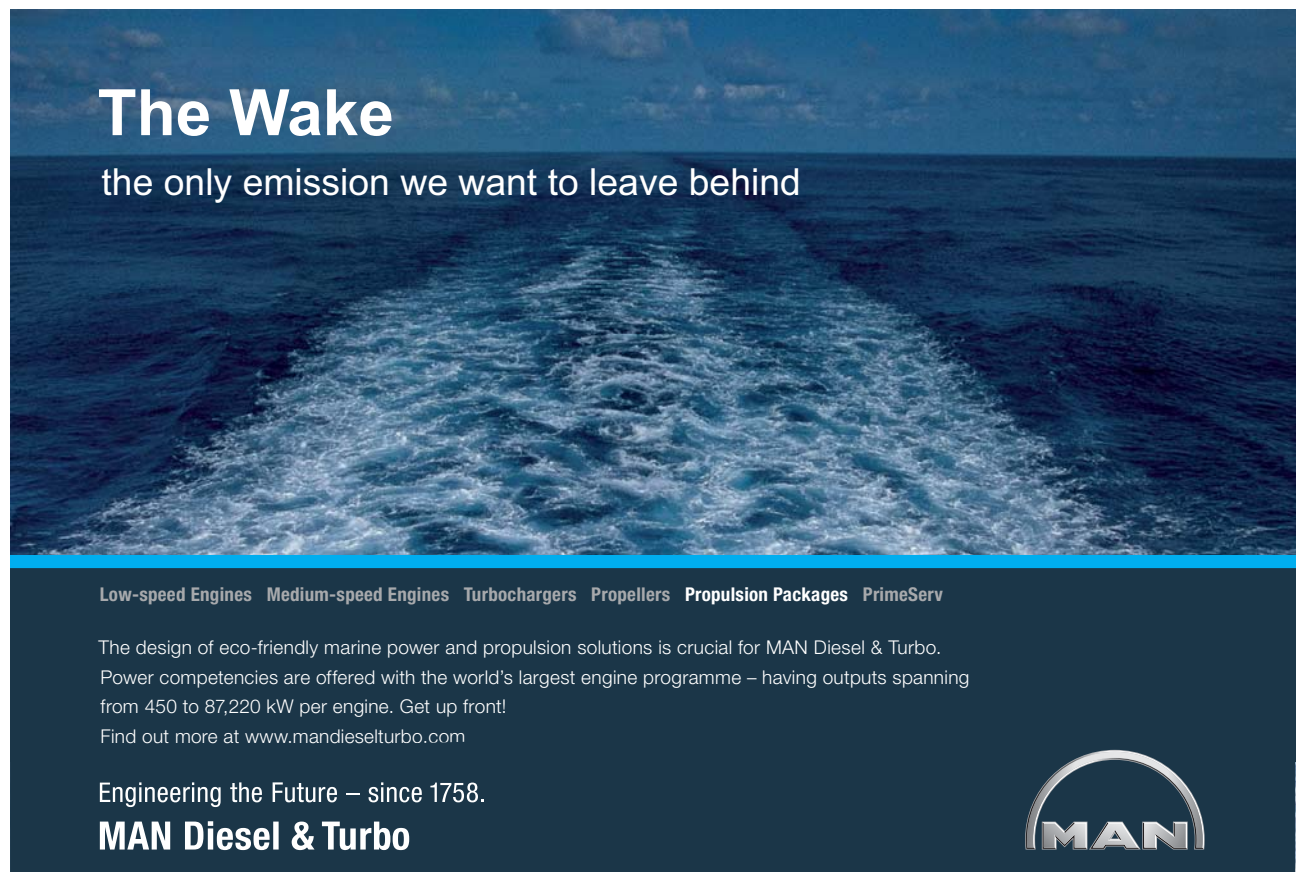
13 Hardwired Humans...and Change by Andrew O'Keefe

Mostly from painful experience, business leaders learn that change management is a critical skill. The fact that 70% of change initiatives fail indicates that change is complex and risky. But it doesn't have to be that way-if we manage change in the fresh light of hardwired human behaviour.

A current situation facing an organisation I know raises the issues that occur in most change situations. What would you do to manage the human dimension of the business change outlined below? And how can the knowledge of human instincts help you predict the human response and manage the change successfully?

The situation

Chris (not the person's real name) runs a small financial planning firm. The business is family-owned and employs five staff. Chris's dad, Alan started the firm many years ago and Alan now wants to retire. Chris and Alan are concerned that Chris is not yet ready to run the business alone as Chris do not have the breadth of experience to advise and protect clients in their financial affairs.




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As a solution to the problem, Chris and Alan have been invited to merge their business with another firm slightly larger than their own. They have known the principal of this other firm for many years and the conservative style of financial planning of both firms appears compatible. They decide to go ahead and integrate their firms.

The change challenge is this: how do you manage the client dimension (the people dimension in this case)? How will the clients feel about the merger, what will be on the clients' minds, and how do you avoid losing the goodwill and the business of your clients?

The risks

There's a lot riding on your management of this change. If you don't get it right, you might lose your key clients. If you don't get it right, the business that your family has built over your father's lifetime might quickly erode. If you don't get it right, you will get half-way through the change wishing you could start again.

What normally happens?

In the absence of applying knowledge of human instincts, we can predict a number of common mistakes that will most likely be made by the person managing such a change:

The change will primarily be managed from the firm's point of view, not the clients'.

The emotional reaction of clients will be underestimated and will take Chris and Alan by surprise.

The complexity associated with the change will be underestimated.

The change will be managed as a rational process, whereas its success or failure is driven primarily by emotion.

The change will be rushed to meet other deadlines and not driven by the client (people) dimension.

The first communication to clients will be by letter.

The letter will be mainly "spin" and disguise the real reasons for the merger (the colloquial term is "bullshit" but I promised my mum that I won't swear in my newsletters).

Chris and Alan won't want to reveal that they are concerned about the firm's capability. So the letter will be worded primarily to protect the image and social standing of the firm rather than being frank and open. Concealing the truth will tend to make clients suspicious.

Upon receiving the letter, clients will try to make sense of the situation and first and foremost wonder what the change means to them and their retirement nest egg.

The most negative clients will be in contact, which will cause Chris and Alan to feel under siege. Chris and Alan's mood will drop, so that when clients visit the new premises there will be an air of despondency.

We can predict that managed this way, Chris and Alan would regret the way they managed the change and that they wish they could have their time over to get it right.

We can predict that there is a bunch of annoyed and concerned clients, some of whom in protest will move their business to other firms.

Human instincts to the rescue

Insight into human instincts helps manage such a change-it provides a concrete approach to predict and manage the human response. It helps to avoid the change being derailed or failing.

Loss aversion

When a client first learns about the change they will instantly screen for what the change means to them. This instant screening is primarily to determine the likelihood of loss to the person. They will be most worried whether the change has negative implications for their investment portfolio and in deed their whole-of-life financial wellbeing. If taken by surprise, a client's loss anxiety increases.

Given that the merger is taking place in the current financial environment and people are already twitchy about the state of their investments, their emotional sensitivity and loss concern is heightened.

Emotion

The meaning clients attribute to the change is primarily driven by how they feel at the moment they learn about the change. Here is a subtle yet critical point. Communicating by letter is not only impersonal, it leaves the emotional reaction to chance. Through a letter, the communicator is not influencing the emotional response of the person. Further, a client might even be in a bad mood when they open the letter-that's how random it can be.

The best way to break the news, if not face-to-face, is to phone the clients. If staffing capacity means that there are just too many clients to be able to call them all, then the firm should at least call the top 20% who most likely represent 80% of the firm's work.

First impressions to classify

As soon as the clients answer the phone (and those who still receive a letter) they will be trying to make sense of what's going on (what it means to "me"). If there is spin, then clients are hampered in their sense-making and the speaker reduces their ability to influence the client's instant classification ("good" or "bad").

The test of the success of the phone call, and whether the change is classified as “good”, is how the client feels as they hang up the phone. The objective is that the positive classification is reflected in the client’s happy farewell, “Okay, sounds good. Thanks for letting me know.”

The narrative

It’s vital that the explanation, or the story, be clear. The explanation should be based on the truth. It’s amazing how liberating the truth can be, how it instantly makes sense to people, and how saves you digging a deeper hole for yourself. The truth allows the story to be consistent.

When Chris or Alan calls the client, they need to have the single clear message crystallised in a single statement. With the merger most driven by Alan’s retirement, this should comprise the key message and not concealed by other peripheral reasons or factors. Nor should Alan’s retirement be downplayed to protect Chris’s image.

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Seven words

The story should start with no more than seven words-the seven words help the listener classify the message at the speed with which the human brain works. If Chris and Alan use more than seven words to nail the message, then the listener has raced ahead and made their own sense of what it's all about, which may or may not be the message that Chris and Alan intend.

The story in this case is likely to be, "I'm calling to let you know that (seven words begin) after many years Alan is retiring! Of course we're happy for him. He and I are conscious that he leaves a large gap for us and that we need to be able to manage without him in providing the best advice and support to you. We've decided the best way to do this is to merge with another firm. I obviously wanted to call to let you know."

Gossip

The gossip test applies when the client hangs up the phone. If the client lives with another person, we know that the client will immediately share the story (gossip) with their partner. The gossip starts with, "That was Chris our financial planner on the phone..." In using the gossip test in their planning, Chris and Alan have articulated what they want the client to then say. They planned that the client will say, "After all these years, Alan is finally retiring! Good on him. He and Chris have taken steps to make sure they have the capability to manage our financials. What's for dinner, honey?"

Contest and Display

The most important clients (in terms of the firm's business) will be the ones most at risk of feeling let down if the change is not well managed and if they are not contacted personally. The high-wealth individuals will consider it a personal affront if they are not treated as special.

Social Belonging

The bonding dynamics need to be managed. Clients have been happily interacting with Alan and his firm for many years as if they are family. Alan and Chris have been to clients' homes and clients have visited the firm's offices. That homely feeling is about to change.

The best way to manage this transition is through a ritual. One ritual is to invite clients to welcome drinks at the new premises. As well as creating a sense of connection, the mood will be important-it's a celebratory one. The clients can see the new office, meet Chris and Alan's new business partners and see that Chris and Alan are happy.

Even if invited clients are unable to attend the function, they know that there has been a celebration and they know that they were invited to be part of it.

Physical orientation

When clients first visit the new premises (either at the welcome drinks or for their first meeting) the clients will feel like strangers this first time. Alan and Chris will make sure they show them around the new premises. This breaks the ice and gives the client their physical bearings (it's like when friends visit your new house the first time). Clients will also have a chance to meet the new faces, even if it's just a brief hello and handshake.

Conclusion

By managing the predictable human response to change, Chris and Alan as the change managers will have managed the human response well. The transition has been smooth and made sense to people. It's amongst the 30% of successful change initiatives. The positive long-term relationships continue. It turned out to be no big deal.

About the author

Andrew O'Keeffe is the Principal of Hardwired Humans which assists business leaders design and implement people strategies based on human instincts. Through understanding human instincts leaders can predict what will work and can avoid the predictable mistakes if instincts are ignored. You can subscribe to Andrew's monthly newsletter at www.hardwiredhumans.com. He is contactable at andrewo@hardwiredhumans.com

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14 Change Management is an Oxymoron by Jim Clemmer

A dubious consulting industry and “profession” has developed, claiming to provide “change management” services. Those two words make about as much sense together as “holy war”, “non-working mother”, “mandatory option”, and “political principles”. Many of the books, models, theories, and “processes” on change have come from staff support people, consultants, or academics who’ve never built a business or led an organization. “Change management” comes from the same dangerously seductive reasoning as strategic planning. They’re both based on the shaky assumption that there’s an orderly thinking and implementation process which can objectively plot a course of action like Jean Luc Piccard on the starship Enterprise and then ‘make it so’. But if that ever was possible, it certainly isn’t in today’s world of high velocity change.



Successful Change Flows from Learning, Growth, and Development

Change can't be managed. Change can be ignored, resisted, responded to, capitalized upon, and created. But it can't be managed and made to march to some orderly step-by-step process. However, whether change is a threat or an opportunity depends on how prepared we are. Whether we become change victims or victors depends on our readiness for change. One of the inspiring quotations I've used for my ongoing personal improvement quest came from Abraham Lincoln (his decades long string of failures in business and politics before becoming one of America's greatest presidents is inspiring itself). He once said, "I will prepare myself and my time must come." That's how change is managed.

We can't crash-cram in a few days or weeks for a critical meeting or presentation that our key program, project, or even career depends upon. We can't quickly win back customers who've quietly slipped away because of neglect and poor service. We can't suddenly turn our organization into an innovative powerhouse in six months because the market shifted. We can't radically and quickly reengineer years of sloppy habits and convoluted processes when revolutionary new technology appears. When cost pressures build, we can't dramatically flatten our organizations and suddenly empower everyone who've had years of traditional command and control conditioning. These are long-term culture, system, habit, and skill changes. They need to be improved before they're needed. In the words of an ancient Chinese proverb, "dig a well before you are thirsty."

Problems that you, your team, or your organization may be having with change aren't going to be improved by some "change management" theory. To effectively deal with change you don't focus on change as some kind of manageable force. You deal with change by improving you. And then your time must come.

Resistance to today's change comes from failing to make yesterday's preparations and improvements. When we, our teams, and our organizations fail to learn, grow, and develop at the speed of change (or faster), then change is a very real threat. If change finds us unprepared, it can be deadly.

Your Personal Change Process

Do you have the improvement habit? Are you a lazy learner? Do you act as if your formal education was an inoculation that's left you set for life? Are you a dedicated lifelong learner? Are you constantly on the grow? Do you devote at least ten percent of your time to improving yourself? Where is learning and personal development on your list of time priorities? Is it a luxury that you get to occasionally or is it a carefully scheduled and regularly planned activity?

These are critical performance questions. They are personal change management questions. Your answers determine your effectiveness in dealing with the fast changing threats and opportunities that are popping in and out of your life.

If you can't manage your time and discipline yourself to devote at least ten percent of your time to personal improvement, you don't deserve to be a leader. You deserve to become a victim of the changes swirling around us. Get control of your time, priorities, and destiny. But you better do it soon. Tomorrow is arriving much quicker than it used to.

About the author

Jim Clemmer has been writing and speaking about leadership, change, team, and organization effectiveness for over 30 years. His extensive research, broad experience with hundreds of organizations and thousands of people, and deep understanding of these topics makes him an internationally recognized leader in the field. Beyond his seven books, he's written hundreds of columns and articles for newspapers and magazines.

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15 Communicating Change – The Essentials for Change Management by Bob Selden

The path for organisations undergoing change is a lot smoother if they get their processes for internally communicating change right.

People become less motivated when they are faced with uncertainty – not knowing what is happening and why. In the extreme, a lack of information and feeling of insecurity can take away the natural energy and drive to succeed. This is why effectively communicating change is so important.

Communicating Change Case Study: James

Take the case of James, who became plant manager at a bio-tech factory, managing about 400 people. Before he arrived, there was an “Ask Gavin” column on the intranet site where employees could ask the previous manager questions, anonymously if preferred. It seemed like a good idea, although nothing can substitute for face-to-face communication, and people rarely use such vehicles to ask the difficult questions. If they do, they almost never give their names. From the style of the intranet site, James got the impression that his predecessor had ruled on a “my way is the only way” principle, and, consequently, the communication channel was rarely used. One of the first changes James made was to change its title to “Ask Management”.

Two weeks into the job, employees gathered in the cafeteria for the monthly site meeting and briefing by management. When the facilitator turned to James as the new head of the plant and asked if he'd like to do the usual thing and introduce himself, outlining his background, he stood up and said, “Would Francene Dante please stand up”. There was a hushed silence. Francene sank in her seat, but colleagues started urging her to respond, and eventually she did. “Francene,” said James, “I would like to thank you very much for giving your name when you asked a question on the intranet’s Ask Management. I know you didn’t have to, but I very much appreciate that you did. I value honesty, integrity and sincerity, and I like to be able to communicate freely with everyone on the site and personally, and they should feel the same about talking with me. So, thank you again.”

And James concluded: “That’s who I am.” Having immediately set himself apart as a leader and good communicator, and having stated and demonstrated his core values, he sat down again. He had made “actions speak louder than words” and emphasised that communication is a two-way process – he was effectively communicating change to his new team. Merely talking about the process of communication couldn’t have achieved the results of this one, simple action.

The Power of Effectively Communicating Change Internally

When people are faced with uncertainty about an organisation’s future and their own, communicating change internally is far more important than external – ven in times of merger or acquisition, and so effectively communicating change is extremely important. Of course, in addition to its motivational impact, communicating change has an important informing function. For example, when the strategies for communicating change have been effective, people know what’s happening with an organisation and are therefore able to answer customer’s questions honestly. If they are informed and feel secure, they are in a better position and frame of mind to provide feedback to management about the impact of strategies on clients.

When an organisation is in uncertain times, feedback to management is vital, and an effective strategy for communicating change comes into its own.



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In working with hundreds of organisations experiencing change, I have identified eight factors that help the more successful ones navigate the uncertainty – that is by effectively communicating change. They are principles for developing and implementing an effective strategy for internally communicating change.

Ensure the CEO is the champion of communicating change and the champion communicator.

Top management's attitude and behaviour influences the behaviour of other managers. Often top management, and particularly the CEO, is focused on achieving good financial results, which is important. But in many cases, while “communicating with the troops” is described as important, the reality doesn't match the rhetoric.

Can we justify communication as a return on investment? When asked about this, one senior executive said: “Enormous! We can move faster, jump higher, dive deeper and come up drier than anybody else in the business. When we hang a left, everyone goes left. It gives us an enormous ability to work as a team. Other companies in our industry are yet to work that out.”

The rules for the CEO:

Communicate change frequently and in person.

Be willing to address challenging questions.

Listen carefully and deal with the concerns.

Respond quickly to sensitive topics.

If you are a CEO, do you have a vision for your organisation that is easily explained? Do you regularly talk to staff about it?

People need to feel they belong. They need an icon. The CEO should fill this role.

Match actions and words.

People judge the performance of CEOs not on what they say, but what they do. Organisations that spout values such as “our people are our greatest asset”, then lay-off staff at the first major downturn in the economy, are sending very mixed messages.

Ensure your communication is two-way.

If an organisation is serious about internal communication, it should devote as much time and resources to upward as it does to downward communication – including when communicating change. Staff opinion surveys are one form of upward feedback, but their effectiveness depends on how well the feedback is managed. The most common comment from employees about their lack of faith in surveys is that “nothing ever happens as a result”.

Place emphasis on face-to-face communication.

As they say, it's not what you say, but the way that you say it. An employee said recently, about a CEO's address to staff: "I didn't understand a lot of what he said, but it did give me the chance to take the measure of the man, to look him in the eye, ask some questions and see how he responded."

On the other hand, what you say is also important. A CEO addressing staff needs to talk about the big picture, the future and how the organisation is progressing in broad terms. Whereas the specifics of current and projected performance come into it when talking with senior managers.

One manager said of face-to-face communication: "You get to be seen as a person who understands what's happening, who is cognisant of other's feelings, who doesn't have all the answers but is willing to listen and learn. Someone who has a vision so that their people will say, 'I'll give this person a go. They seem to have an interest in me.'"

Face-to-face communication does not obviate the need for other forms of communication, but other forms can't substitute for face-to-face.

Ensure responsibility for communication is shared.

Communication – downward, horizontal and upward – must be the responsibility of all managers, not just the CEO. Staff need to be encouraged and supported to accept the responsibility for upward and horizontal communication.

For example, a manager's responsibility is not to be an expert in all aspects of every corporate issue, but to be able to explain why decisions have been made and how they will affect people.

To test the communication responsibility level in your organisation, can you answer the following questions positively?

Do all your position or role descriptions have 'communication' as a key responsibility?

Do your managerial performance agreements or contracts include 'communication' as a key result area?

Are managers recognised for communicating well and counselled or penalised for not communicating?

Are staff at all levels encouraged and supported to give critical upward feedback?

Does your organisation see training as one of your key communication channels?

Deal with the bad news as well as the good.

We often communicate only the good news in an organisation, but communicating the bad, or communicating change is equally important. Bad news comes in many forms – service or quality problems, delays, customer complaints, criticism from external sources and so on.

In a 1993 study of 10 organisations selected for survey because of their records of excellent internal communication, the one with the highest bad news/good news ratio also had the highest staff satisfaction levels and very good economic performance.

The results can be explained by two psychological phenomena: reciprocity and disclosure. Reciprocity suggests that if you do something for me, then I'll do something for you. Disclosure from one person encourages openness from the other – people are prepared to discuss both their successes and failures. Management being equally candid about good and bad news sets the example for staff to do likewise.

In the leading organisation, staff were held responsible for telling management about problems. Communicating change or bad news was culturally valued and institutionally supported. “When bad news is candidly reported, an environment is created in which good news is more believable,” added one manager.

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We often think of the message as “Now hear this! We want you to know...” From a sender’s perspective, this is important. However, if communication is to be effective, we also need to answer the receiver’s request, “This is what we need to know...”

Design your communication strategy to suit your organisation.

Communication is a process, not a product. Newsletters, memos, videos, publications, meetings, team briefings and the intranet may all have an important part to play in your organisation’s communication strategy. Be sure that you understand why each is being used?what it will cover and achieve.

In designing your strategy, apply these ground rules:

Ensure all communication includes not only what’s happening, but also why and how.

Be timely. Communicate what can be communicated immediately. Don’t wait to cross all the t’s and dot all the i’s.

Link the big picture with the little picture. Ensure that people understand how the big picture affects them and their jobs.

Don’t tell people how they should feel about the news. Avoid statements such as “This is exciting for us all.” Communicate the “who, what, when, why and how” and let people make up their own minds about how they feel.

Match the message to the medium. Face-to-face is good for people issues, for which the intranet and email are totally inappropriate. If the message is likely to affect people emotionally, the only medium should be face-to-face. If this is impossible, a fallback is the phone or a video-audio hook-up. Never email or intranet.

Build a feedback loop into your strategy. Actively encourage people to provide upward and horizontal feedback.

Effective communication practices should be consistent under all organisational circumstances. Every manager is a communicator. Every staff member is a communicator.

About the author

Bob Selden is the author of the best-selling “What To Do When You Become The Boss” – a self-help book for new managers – see details at <http://www.whenyoubecometheboss.com/>. He’s also coached at one of the world’s premier business schools, the Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland and regularly advises managers around the globe on their current challenges.

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16 7 Keys to Managing Change by David Diamond

While most of us know that change is inevitable, it is still something that we find discomfoting. Here are 7 ways that will help you to manage change more easily.

1. Manage Life Cycles

Change cycles, or life cycles, are the fundamental way things work. They describe how everything has a birth, periods of growth and peaking, and periods of decline and death. Such cycles include natural events such as the passing of the seasons, products, team growth and disbandment, and the rise and fall of organizations. If we do not manage them, these cycles can only lead to our demise. But if we work with them, we can manage them to survive and grow.

2. Manage Structures

The predominant structure of organizations in the Industrial age was the pyramidal shape of the hierarchy. These organizations divided power and influence according to position on the pyramid, with most power concentrated at the top. In times of rapid change, such as those we are experiencing today, the hierarchy doesn't work. It is too slow to respond to the need for change. Instead, organizations need structures that are flexible, adaptable, and quick to change.

3. Manage Chaos

In stable organizations, it is easy to establish a framework for working and stick to it. Because change comes slowly, these established procedures can last for what seems like a long time. But in times of constant change, finding one way to work and sticking to it is a recipe for extinction. Instead, you need to be ready to change plans, change procedures, and change goals. It's what some people call "managing chaos".

4. Manage Risk

We all like to feel safe. Whether physically or psychologically, a feeling of safety protects us from a potentially hostile world. But we do not grow if we stay inside our comfort zones. Instead of protecting us from the outside world, we become prisoners behind our own walls. When change is an ever-present, the key to survival is to take the risk of moving outside of our safety zones and grasping the opportunities which change presents.

5. Manage Learning

Learning is at the heart of managing change. Learning not only equips us with the skills to cope with new situations, it also creates the right mindset to approach change. In learning, we let go of old ways in favour of new. We adopt attitudes of curiosity, enquiry and experimentation in place of attitudes of complacency and “we know it all”. Learning teaches us how to be patient, how to work with the flow of things, and how to understand our world. And in continuous learning, we become masters of change.

6. Manage The Process

Every one of us goes through the process of change in our lives from birth to death and all other life changes in between. Sometimes these are natural processes, such as birth. Sometimes the change comes out of the blue such as an unexpected bereavement; and sometimes we initiate the change ourselves. In all cases, the stages of changing are the same and involve letting go of old identities and adopting new ones. Whether the change is successful or not depends on whether we see it as a painful process to be resisted, or an exciting opportunity for personal growth.



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7. Manage Uncertainty

In times of change, it is unlikely that the plans and goals we set ourselves will work out exactly as we expect. Few of us can predict with absolute confidence what will happen in the future. Even the information we base our plans on is likely to be out of date before we complete our work. This does not mean not having plans. The only difference is, that, in times of change, we must not be surprised if they don't remain the same and don't themselves change. In response, we must learn to accept and manage uncertainty.

When we respond to change with fear, idleness, insecurity, lack of awareness, or clinging to the past, we become casualties of change. When we respond with courage, a new sense of security, a desire to learn, and anticipation of the future, we can become champions of change.

About the author

David Diamond is a contributing author for ManageTrainLearn, the site that will change the way you learn forever. Download free samples of the biggest range of management and personal development materials anywhere and experience learning like you always dreamed possible; <http://www.managetrainlearn.com>

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17 Change is Life by Jim Clemmer

“Weep not that the world changes. Did it keep a stable, changeless state, it were cause indeed to weep.” – William Cullen Bryant, 19th century American poet, critic, and editor

“I hate all this change. Why can’t things just stay the same?” Dirk shouted angrily at the TV news anchor. He threw a pillow at the TV screen and clicked it off with a snort. Suddenly a hissing noise arose from the corner of the room and green, shimmering mist filled the air. Dirk stood in shock as a one-foot tall, wrinkled old man emerged from the glowing cloud. The tiny, grizzled fellow had a long flowing white beard and was dressed from head to toe in green. His eyes twinkled with mischief as he flashed a gap-toothed grin. “Hi, I am Mike. I can take you to a place where people don’t have to deal with change and things stay the same all the time.”

Before Dirk could say a word, the little elf drew a handful of sparkling green dust from his vest pocket. With an impish smirk and a big wink, he threw the powder at Dirk. With the hissing sound filling his ears Dirk was engulfed in the green, twinkling fog. Still unable to see through the emerald haze, he heard Mike say, “Here we are. Here’s a place where things stay the same and people don’t have to deal with change.” The elf blew away the mist. They were standing on the lush green grass of a well-trimmed graveyard. Neat, polished gravestones stretched far out to the horizon.

“Life is change,” the aged elf said with a chuckle as he leapt to the top of a headstone. “It’s one of nature’s mighty laws. Eons ago, I had this conversation with my old buddy, Heraclitus, and told him that change is the only thing that’s permanent. Of course, he took the credit for saying that,” the elf playfully grimaced. “It’s a timeless principle. People who aren’t changing and growing aren’t living. Growth is one of nature’s vital signs. It shows you’re alive. Once you stop changing and growing, you’d better check your pulse.”

We can’t manage change. The single biggest “change management” failure of the 20th century was the old Soviet Union. With highly centralized planning, the politburo tried to tightly control the lives of an entire block of nations. There were to be few surprises and activities that weren’t in the official plan. Bureaucratic organizations often try to do the same thing. So do many static, low growth individuals. We need to be on guard against our own rigid thinking and “hardening of the attitudes.”

The faster the world changes around us, the further behind we fall by just standing still. If the rate of external change exceeds our rate of internal growth, just as the day follows night, we will surely be changed. To the change-blind with stunted growth, it will happen suddenly and seemingly “out of the blue.”

Change forces choices. If we're on the grow, we'll embrace many changes and find the positive in them. It's all in where we choose to put our focus. Even change that hits us in the side of the head as a major crisis can be full of growth opportunities – if we choose to look for them.

We don't always get to choose the changes that come into our lives. But we do get to choose how to respond. In my workshops and speaking engagements, when working with people who feel under siege by negative, unwanted change, I often show the Chinese symbol for crisis. It is a stark example of the timeless wisdom of choices. Apparently, the top character in the two-part symbol reads as darkness, disaster, and danger (it could be a lot of swearing for all I know. But I have had this interpretation confirmed by a few people who can read Chinese).

The bottom character reads as opportunity, renewal, and rebirth. Many people or organizations – who didn't give in to the dark forces of despair and Victimitis – and successfully weathered a serious crisis, look back years later and say that was a significant turning point. Most would rather not go through that pain again, but it was a key part of their growth. Crisis can be a danger that weakens or destroys us. Or crisis can be a growth opportunity. The choice is ours. Whichever we choose – we're right about that crisis. We make it our reality.

Change is life. Successfully dealing with change means choosing to continuously grow and develop. Failing to grow is failing to live.

About the author

Jim Clemmer has been writing and speaking about leadership, change, team, and organization effectiveness for over 30 years. His extensive research, broad experience with hundreds of organizations and thousands of people, and deep understanding of these topics makes him an internationally recognized leader in the field. Beyond his seven books, he's written hundreds of columns and articles for newspapers and magazines.

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18 About Conversion by Steve Goodier

It has been said, “Be contented with what you have, but never too contented with what you are.”

There is a story that comes out of Asia about a farmer who saw a tiger’s tail swishing between two large rocks. In a moment of haste, he grabbed the tail and pulled. All of a sudden he realized he had an angry tiger by the tail and only two rocks stood between him and the tiger’s teeth and claws! So there he remained, afraid to loosen his grip on the enraged animal’s tail lest he surely be killed.

A monk happened by and the farmer called out in desperation, “Come over here and help me kill this tiger.”

The holy man said, “Oh, no. I cannot do that. I cannot take the life of another.” Then he went on to deliver a homily against killing. All the while, the farmer was holding tightly to the tail of an angry tiger.

When the monk finally finished his sermon, the farmer pleaded, “If you won’t kill the tiger, then at least come hold its tail while I kill it.”

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The monk thought that perhaps it would be all right to simply hold the tiger's tail, so he grabbed hold and pulled. The farmer, however, turned and walked away down the road.

The monk shouted after him, "Come back here and kill the tiger!"

"Oh, no," the farmer replied. "You have converted me!"

What is conversion? It is change. With money, conversion can be the change of a bill into coin or the change of currency from one country into that of another. On the human level, conversion can be a change in beliefs, a change in ideas, a change in attitudes, a change in behaviors or even a change in priorities. To say, "I'm a changed person!" is to say you have somehow been converted.

There are two things I've learned about conversion and change. The first is that conversion is not a bad thing. To say you've been converted to something does not make you a fanatic. It means you've changed your mind or your outlook. If the largest room in the world is "room for improvement," then it is good to leave plenty of room for change.

And that's the second thing I've learned about conversion – it's an ongoing process. I always want to leave room for change, room to keep growing. To say, "I've been converted and that's that," is to say you have decided to quit growing. If life is about anything, it is about growing. The day I quit changing and learning is the day I die.

I like the old southern American slave's prayer: "I ain't what I ought to be and I ain't what I'm agoin' to be. But I give thanks that I ain't what I used to be." Change, for him, has been a good thing and it's not over yet. Here is a person whose life is like an on-going journey. He is always growing. Always changing. Always becoming. And always aware there's a little more room for improvement.

Is there a better way to live?

About the author

Steve Goodier holds a B.A. in anthropology and sociology (New Mexico State University) and an M.Div. degree from Emory University. He is an ordained United Methodist minister, district superintendent in the Rocky Mountain Conference UMC, and the author of numerous books about personal development, motivation, inspiration, and making needed life changes.

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19 Why Lean Fails – and How to Make it Succeed by Thomas Cox

The great business breakthrough of the 20th Century may be Lean (and Six Sigma) – techniques that cut waste and can dramatically boost productivity. Yet many firms can't make Lean work for them.

The big challenge for any company is “the ability to make things stick” – to be able to agree as a group to do things a new way, and then follow through and actually do it in that new way, consistently.

According to expert Rick Pay, known by his clients as “The Sherlock Holmes of Operations and Supply Chain,” the biggest enemy of Lean is Culture – specifically, Lean will fail if you attempt to introduce it into a hostile culture that resists change.

Recent MIT studies show that up to 70% of firms that institute Lean or Six Sigma, don't sustain the improvements. In five years, they are back where they started.

Rick believes the solution is to implement three things:

- Vision
- Change Management
- Culture Change

Vision provides the “why” that motivates action.

For change management, there must be strong vision at the top and leadership to require and remind and reinforce the new way of doing things.

In the weak firm, there are change meetings that generate brief excitement, and then people leave the meeting and go back to the real world.

Culture change can occur when senior leaders recruit middle managers to champion the change. Each middle manager needs to own their own vision. That will identify the 3 or 4 things that their workgroup needs to focus on to make the change really stick.

For example, Rick is working with a \$100 million wholesale distributor where nobody owned the inventory process. The branch managers were constantly frustrated because their client projects were always ham-strung by a lack of available inventory.

So Rick worked with them to create a task force of VPs plus three branch managers, reporting to and sponsored by the senior executives (CEO, CFO, an Executive VP and the company owner), who are also on this task force – and who all show up for all the meetings. They read their vision statement out loud at the start of every meeting. This keeps them focused on the vision and their role in making it happen. That vision includes metrics that will measure the change.

These task force members then drive sub-task-forces to take on subsets of the vision. These sub-task-forces also have metrics that define their focus areas and measure their success and progress.

All meetings use best-practice disciplines:

- meetings start on time
- meetings end on time
- teams use the meetings to make decisions
- teams publish minutes from each meeting
- in those minutes, people get clear assignments
- people are held accountable by their peers for following through

This approach has been very powerful. Within just three months, Rick's client has completely implemented their distribution center – a keystone to the new strategy.



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It was crucial that the owner started with a clear vision for customer service, and the entire project was built around that vision.

Mistakes and Safety

In the best companies, it's always safe to make a mistake, as long as you own the mistake and learn from it. Leadership needs to create that safety while requiring the learning – neither will happen on their own.

Metrics and Accountability

To maintain focus and accountability, Rick helped this client take the vision (which mentions four key metrics) and turn it into a dashboard. For them, the four “big dials” on the dashboard come straight out of the vision statement:

- Revenue
- Profit Margin
- Inventory Turns
- Obsolete Inventory

Other important metrics are also shown as “smaller dials” – this functions in a way that is similar to a Balanced Scorecard.

Metrics tell people what they should pay attention to. People become ineffective when they aren't sure what to focus on – the metrics clarify priorities.

And when the metrics reflect the vision, they become mutually reinforcing.

Blaming

But what do you do when people prefer to blame rather than change? You can set up a metric, and people will sit there, watch the metric not change, and then blame and finger-point. Now what?

The third leg of the Culture of Action is to replace “problem solving” (which implies you screwed up, and just takes you back to your prior level) with an innovation oriented culture of “continuous improvement” (which carries no stigma and makes things permanently better).

By allowing every worker to contribute to the continuous improvement, you're taking workers who might otherwise feel like robots, and you're turning them into programmers – they each day run a program they helped write, and they can feel the power that comes with making permanent changes and improvements.

Rick advocates using the classic PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle, starting not with an assumption that the current state is “broken” but rather starting with a desired future better state.

The team then compares the future state with the current state, finding the gap between the two, and brainstorms ways to close the gap. This creates the Plan.

The team then tries to Do the plan. Then they Check to see how it worked. Finally they Act as a group to refine and revise the Plan based on what they learned when they Checked. Then they take the revised Plan and Do it again.

Ricks says, “Once you have change management with leadership and vision, and you have continuous improvement where you are creating a better future state, you really can build it into the culture – the habits and values – and create a true Culture of Action.”

About the author

Tom Cox is CEO at B-Studio Business Videos, Managing Consultant at Cox Business Consulting, Inc., and CEO at GrowthMaps

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20 Change and (Positive) Emotions by Kevin Eikenberry

As leaders, we can use positive emotions to help people prepare for, recognize and even embrace change. And when we use them as an individual, we create more effective change, better relationships, less stress and much more.

For years in training around the world I've said – “There is always an emotional component to change.” And people have typically nodded in agreement. After all, personal experience will tell anyone this is true. There have been changes in your life you were excited about, and those where your emotions were, let's say, less positive.

Yet generally speaking, organizations act as if the data and facts will rule the day with any change.

There is no perfect PowerPoint deck to communicate, influence and champion change – it's not enough. And because the emotional piece of the puzzle is missing, ignored or denied, we aren't very good at creating organizational change (and it is one reason many view any organizational change with a wary eye from the start).



So what can you, as a leader do to reverse this trend, and get better results from your change efforts?

You can recognize, value and manage the emotions related to change. I'll talk about recognition of, and listening to people's initial emotions in a future post, but today I want to focus on how you as a leader can use positive emotions to help people prepare for, recognize and even embrace change.

While there are many positive emotions, Barbara Fredrickson, a renowned Positive Psychologist has listed what she calls the Ten Core Positive Emotions. These emotions can be explored more in Barbara's book, Positivity. For our purposes, I will list them and talk briefly about how you can apply and model them in an organizational change situation.

The Positive Emotions

Before you read on – here is the warning. What follows isn't for cynics and non-believers. And for each emotion that follows, you may be able to think of a change or situation where what I am suggesting won't work. Looking for reasons to not use this information will leave you with the rate of change success you already have. If you are happy with that, you have no reason to read on anyway. The point, the challenge and the opportunity is to look for ways you can use these emotions as an individual, creating more effective change, better relationships, less stress and much more.

Joy.

Help people see the big picture of the change – the purpose for it. Often people are unhappy with the specifics or the work required of them at the outset of the change. But when people see, understand and believe in the “big why” for the change, joy can truly become a shared emotion.

Gratitude.

Often times in the short term, changes look catastrophic and chaotic, but when viewed later with the perspective of time, the change was a positive. Remind people of those experiences. Get them thinking about how things will look later and it will be easier to feel gratitude.

Serenity.

The serenity prayer is the key concept here. Serenity comes when you know are able to accept change and take responsibility for the part that is yours. Help people see where they can make a difference and what is outside of their control – and recognize both.

Interest.

While the status quo is a powerful thing, when we discover something new we feel a sense of possibility. When you help people get interested in some component of, or outcome of the change; when you spur curiosity, you create the powerful emotion of interest.

Hope.

Hope comes into play when circumstances look bleak and things aren't going well for us. We have all been in those situations and probably felt it in the midst of an organizational change, yet hope is the belief that things can, and will, improve. Show your hope. Help people see past today and you will be stimulating this emotion.

Pride.

Pride grows when we have invested our time and effort in something that matters or makes a difference and succeeded. Pride in the right amounts can drive great performance. How can you help people see pride in the current work and in the results of the change they are in the midst of?

Amusement.

Amusement is a social emotion that not only makes us laugh, but drives us to share the source and positive emotion with others. Shared laughter can break stress, shift thinking and put challenges in the proper perspective. How can you make the serious work of change less serious?

Inspiration.

There are opportunities to find inspiration everywhere when we look. The very best leaders see these examples, share these examples and help others become inspired too. Look for, and help others around you see true human excellence and examples of actions that will make a difference. The best part of inspiration is that it pulls us out of ourselves and our situation, and urges us to improve ourselves from the inspiring situation or example.

Awe.

Awe is closely related to inspiration. When we help people see the grand vision for a change – how it will positively impact themselves, the organization, the customer or the world at large – we help people see the change as being a part of something noble or larger than ourselves.

Love.

Love and leadership definitely go together. I've written about it before, (here is one example) and it isn't a mistake that I included it on this list. Help people love their work, their mission, their purpose and each other. These feelings will help people move through the challenges and uncertainty of change more than any other single thing.

About the author

Kevin Eikenberry is a leadership expert and the Chief Potential Officer of The Kevin Eikenberry Group, a learning consulting company that helps Clients reach their potential through a variety of training, consulting and speaking services. You can learn more about him and a special offer on his newest book, Remarkable Leadership: Unleashing Your Leadership Potential One Skill at <http://RemarkableLeadershipBook.com/bonuses.asp>.

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21 The Right Path by Michael Beck

By taking the time to gain new insights into ourselves and our business, we create an opportunity to see things in a different light – to truly see things as they are. Once we do that, we can much better determine whether we need to take a new and better approach to building our business or instead, choose a new path for ourselves. You may find that you're running hard down the wrong path altogether...

If you decide that you're on the wrong path, it's OK. It is VERY common for that to be the case. In truth, many people suspect they're on the wrong path but don't acknowledge it. They end up spending a lifetime being unhappy and/or dissatisfied with their life. Take stock of the things you enjoy doing and where your true talents lie, and then go about identifying new and different opportunities in which to apply them. Once you're in an occupation that you enjoy, life really becomes enjoyable and satisfying. You'll end up working less (mostly because what you'll be doing you won't consider to be work), and you'll achieve a much greater level of success.

If instead, you decide that you ARE on the right path, then good for you! But you have a different challenge ahead of you. Remember that old saying about the definition of "insanity"? It goes like this: "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results!"

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If you aren't at the level of success you want to be and you've determined that you ARE in the right kind of occupation, then it probably is time to do something different. Stop conducting "business as usual". You need to become more open-minded about how to get the job done. Here's how I see it: You can insist on doing things the way you've always done them, or you can choose to reinvent yourself and your business, and start doing things differently. Even if you've been in this business a while, be open to taking advice from others. Even newer people can have good, fresh ideas. Things that didn't work years ago may now be effective – given changes in society, and given your present level of expertise and experience. Commit to investing in yourself and your development. Start reading on a regular basis. Start attending or acquiring educational programs. Even ONE new idea can take your business to a whole new level.

One of the problems we have is that we often get completely caught up in our day-to-day routine. This prevents us from stepping back from our work, reflecting on our lives and our business, and reevaluating what we really want to do. My suggestion is to do just that. It is CRITICAL to your success and your happiness to take the time to reflect. When you get away from your office you gain new perspectives.

Re-evaluate yourself and your business. Gain clarity as to whether you should continue to build the business you're in or change occupations. If staying where you are is right, then commit to changing and growing. Be open to new ideas, even if the "new" ideas are ones you tried years ago without success. Remember, times have changed and you have changed. We are not the same people we were 10 or even 5 years ago. As our experience grows, so does our ability to succeed where we once faltered.

OK, now go get a cup of coffee...

About the author

Michael Beck, Executive Strategist, is president of Michael Beck International, Inc. – a firm specializing in executive development, leadership effectiveness, and executive strategy. Connect on LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/mjbeck and visit www.michaeljbeck.com to learn more. Permission to reprint with full attribution. © 2012 Michael Beck International, Inc.

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22 Why Problem Solving Doesn't Solve the Problem and the Real Solution to Permanent Change by Joshua Uebergang

Have a problem in life you cannot fix? The damn thing sticks around. You try hard to solve it, but make little progress.

Let's say the problem is being overweight. You have 20 pounds you want to drop. The extra weight makes you feel bad and not look your best. This motivates you to lose weight. You build the willpower and determination to drop a few pounds to feel good again and improve your looks.

Through determination to solve your weight problem, two weeks later you jump on the scales to discover you are nine pounds lighter. You are ecstatic! The mental tension about your weight eases. You feel more comfortable with your body. Your willpower drained a lot from you so you return to old habits.

One month passes since your weight loss accomplishment. The nine pounds finds itself back on your stomach. It feels too difficult to maintain a strict diet and exercise regime. You call yourself "weak" and "pathetic" and feel guilty about your inability to change. You feel helpless in forever creating a permanent solution to your weight loss problem.

Dynamics in the weight loss scenario are everywhere in your life. Common examples include: managing anger, but we still blow up; quitting smoking, but we still smoke; getting a new job, but we remain in the old one; starting a new healthy relationship, but we remain in a destructive relationship; communicating more effectively, but we don't communicate effectively and remain true to our ourselves. Why is this?

The Problem: The Tension-Resolution Model

Robert Fritz in his book *The Path of Least Resistance: Learning to Become the Creative Force in Your Own Life* says we fail to change ourselves when we problem solve. That's right! Problem solving is responsible for, well, not solving the problem.

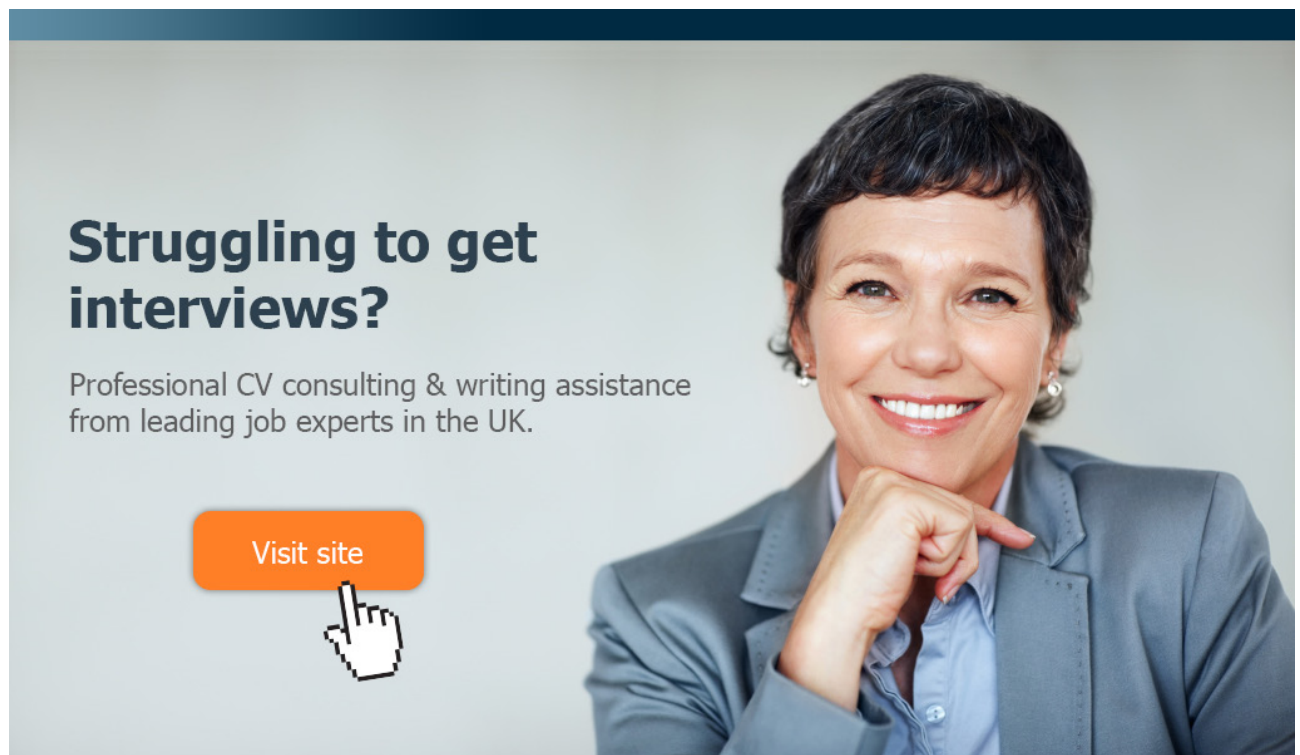
Problem solvers feel victimized for not receiving what they want. They feel miserable and depressed, blaming circumstances for their reality. Circumstances clinch them by the throat to direct what they do.

Fritz says we fail to change when we try to solve our problems because mental and emotional oscillation occurs between tension and resolution. One moment the pain creates tension. You could be sick of loneliness and really want a hot chick who has a great personality. The tension pushes you to improve your dating skills and better your life to attract such a girl. You may get a phone number or even a girlfriend. The tension dissipates – as does your efforts to improve your life. Eventually, you stop doing what worked to attract her. The attraction disappears and you fight with each other more, which causes the two of you to break up.

We try to make something go away rather than create what we want.

The tension-resolution model describes tension as the problem. As the tension builds, you feel compelled to solve the problem. The intensity of the problem lessens as does the tension when you problem solve. You have less motivation to keep the problem at bay. The end result: the unwanted behavior returns!

Old habits reenter our lives because we problem solve instead of changing the underlying structure. Fritz says to solve a problem means to remove something – the problem. We try to remove anger, smoking, swearing, complaining, blaming, loneliness, and laziness. Weight is regained because you did not want the 20 pounds. You lost your girlfriend because you feared loneliness. You try make something go away rather than create what you want. Your reactive nature to problems keeps you stuck in trouble. Problem solving can only make something go away – and it does a poor job at that.



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Problem Solving Hurts Your Relationships

Problem solving does not create what you want in relationship communication and persuasion. We try to change people by expressing our frustration or “having a talk” to build tension. They temporarily change to reduce the tension but quickly revert to old patterns. Sending people solutions makes them resist what you try to create!

One third of my Communication Secrets of Powerful People program is about effectively creating solutions in others. We desperately try to change people by criticizing, ordering, threatening, questioning, or advising, but this creates a tension-resolution dynamic to prevent change. You can pain someone into changing, but if they don't have the underlying structure to change, they will not change. (If you are interested in being a charismatic individual that changes people's minds, I encourage you to get the program by clicking here.)

The Path of Least Resistance

If you have visited Boston, the crazy road structure probably befuddled you. It appears Boston had no planning in their road infrastructure. Rumors say that Boston's road structure is based on seventeenth-century cow paths. When cows walked the land, they walked paths that provided the least resistance. Step-by-step the cows choose what was easiest to them.

Dirt paths developed overtime, reaffirming these paths to be the easiest direction of travel. When humans populated the lands and began constructing roads, they followed the cows. Settlers paved the dirt roads because it was easiest to work with paths created by cows. The problem though is the cows followed their path of least resistance rather than create paths optimal for human travel. Boston's roads are now meandering structures confusing to its travelers.

William Fowler, director of the Massachusetts Historical Society, says Boston's road paths were not founded on cow paths. The example, nonetheless, serves its purpose to explain human behavior: energy flows along the path of least resistance.

In physics, objects travel through a system following the path of least resistance. Like water in the Amazon river, our energy flows along the easiest path. Like wind blowing through the Grand Canyon, our energy flows along the easiest path. Like pedestrians walking along a busy New York street, our energy flows along the easiest path.

Energy flows along the path of least resistance.

Laziness is human nature. Our innate desire pushes for easier ways to do activities. Does this mean we secretly desire to sloth in front of the television while eating a bag of Doritos and sipping our favorite beer? Of course not. What it means is we take the easiest path to get where we want to go. Our energy flows along the path that provides minimal resistance. Fritz says, "You got to where you are in your life right now by moving along the path of least resistance."

Why Self-Help and the Law of Attraction Suck

We fight the path of least resistance by using techniques like willpower, affirmations, and positive-thinking. We use these self-help techniques to motivate change, but attempts to problem-solve fail to create a solution.

The problem with traditional self-help does not stop there. The messages sent through affirmations, willpower, and positive-thinking create the opposite effect to your desired outcome! The techniques create a paradoxical effect of no change. The subtle messages communicated from traditional self-help skills is that "I lie to myself because I find it difficult to change".

You can see this by analyzing intention manifestation, the law of attraction, metaphysics, and similar principles that publicly took off when *The Secret* hit Oprah. According to these areas of study, if you continually reaffirm what you want and stay true to the universe, the universe manifests your dreams.

The structure of new age fields of thought ironically cause people to not change. If you truly believe something, you do not reaffirm it to yourself. You do not rise in the morning to spend 15-minutes chanting affirmations that the universe will create what you want if you believe you'll get it. The unconscious messages sent through willpower and positive-thinking say you will not change or find it difficult to change because you need the techniques to manipulate your subconscious mind.

Dr. Maxwell Maltz in *The New Psycho-cybernetics* emphasizes that willpower does not create change. Techniques that consume willpower stem from internal friction burning limited energy on fruitless efforts. Energy that could get your goals is wasted. You need to channel valuable willpower and determination into choices and decisions that get your desired future.

How to Create a Permanent Solution – The Secret to Lasting Change

A radical shift in choice towards fulfilling what you want leads to permanent change. In terms of managing anger, for example, if you make the fundamental choice that governs your behavior to be a calm person by safely expressing anger, you do not fight your anger by trying to resolve it; rather, you change the structure of your anger to create a new behavior that brings what you want. Situations that test your anger lead you to create results and processes aligned with your fundamental choice and desired outcome.

People subject themselves to their circumstances by living in a respond-react environment. Fritz put it nicely when he said problem solving “subjects you to the whims of circumstances” (seen in situations where people expect things to be a certain way in order to make them happy). In problem solving, you wander (and wonder) through life’s maze where your environment is the walls. Your environment dictates where you go.

Permanent change in human behavior does not arise from problem solving where you rest at the helm of life’s circumstances. Lasting change comes from a new underlying structure of your being that guides life. Instead of fighting change, you become the change because it is your new path of least resistance. It becomes easier for you to do what you want and move towards your goals than doing otherwise.

Lasting change comes from a new underlying structure of your being that guides life.

Until a fundamental choice of good health is made, one cannot be truly healthy. Individuals in psychotherapy who fail to make an authentic fundamental choice of good health remain the way they are. They stick to old patterns of unhealthy behavior. Some are even addicted to their challenges – without their problems, their identity is void. They may say they want to change, but deep down they want their challenges because they fulfill a need. They fail to choose an empowering vision or try to solve a problem instead of changing the underlying structure of their life.

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Fritz emphasizes that the real solution to change is knowing your present reality and possessing a clear vision of what you want. This means knowing exactly where you are and where you want to go without delusion. Once you define what you want and understand your present reality, you feel freedom. You become at ease with yourself. A new structure directs your energy to effortlessly create what you want.

The greatest problem people have when defining what they want is they define what they do not want. “I don't want to be lonely”, “I don't want to blow up at my kids”, “I don't want to lose my temper”, “I don't want to be fat”, and “I don't want to be unhealthy”. Knowing you do not want to travel to New York for a holiday does not help you go on holidays. How are you supposed to arrive at your destination if it is unknown?

An awareness of what you want allows your creative mind to compose processes that manifest your desired solution.

Artists are excellent models to follow because they create a solution and know the end result. An artist stares at a blank canvas ready to start a new project. If he paints without a vision of the end result, he will not know when the painting is complete. He will feel unfilled and demotivated as the painting continues because he responds and reacts to the present moment of painting. If he knows what he wants, he will paint to achieve his vision. He will create a painting that fulfills his desires and know when the painting is complete. He does not seek external validation for his painting because the satisfaction is internal knowing the painting matches his vision.

Artists are not all spontaneous. Creativity is not always analogous with spontaneity. The best way to create comes through knowing what you want. An awareness of what you want allows your creative mind to compose processes that manifest your desired solution.

Putting It All Together

Here is an example of something I struggled with that touches on everything discussed. Though I learned communication skills for years and used bits here and there, I never fully changed my behavior. I tried so desperately to communicate well by using willpower, positive-thinking, and determination, yet I reverted to old habits. My energy flowed along the path of least resistance of poor communication. It was harder for me to effectively communicate than poorly communicate.

How to Create Good Tension

Tension will always exist as long a discrepancy resides between your present and what you want. Unmotivated persons feel no tension so they remain unchanged. Once tension dissipates, you no longer create. Your job as a creator is to uphold tension by following the tips below:

Write down 20 reasons your present is undesirable and 20 more reasons why you want your future.

Write down the future you want in clear detail. Think big.

Envision the future you want every day.

Sometimes I would solve the problem, but I was merely making something go away; I was not creating what I wanted. What I wanted was being ignored in favor of removing what I did not want. Other times, the “change” was temporary. I tried to solve my problem of poor communication instead of changing my underlying structure that would create permanent change.

As I discuss in my communication secrets program, I was resisting what I did not want, which created a persistent problem. There was the tension-resolution dynamic. Sometimes I changed. This decreased the intensity of the problem, but then so did the tension and my effort to communicate well. My willpower was burned so I let problems be – after all, interpersonal problems began to resolve. Tension would eventually increase again as the cycle started over.

I solved this by analyzing my current reality, where I was in my communication, and its effects on me. Next, I developed a crystal clear vision of what I wanted then made the choice to have it. When I made the fundamental choice to be true to myself, to communicate effectively (not “to avoid bad communication”), permanent change took place. My identity and life orientation changed to be one who uses effective communication.

Today I do not exert willpower to communicate effectively – though I need to remember my vision and remind myself what I want. I effectively communicate with minimal effort. My new structure has changed my life orientation.

You and I always gravitate to the processes aligned with our fundamental choices. You still need to learn the “how” of what you want, but that comes naturally once you follow this decision path.

Analyze your current reality. Next, think of what you exactly want. Have a pure vision of your desired reality. Write it down on several sheets of paper. You can make what you want clear by writing it in detail on several pages (I have a 10-page document that describes my perfect day). Lastly, make the fundamental choice to get what you want – and mean it. These are the foundations of lasting change.

When you follow this plan to change your structure, you create permanent change. People, information, and other processes seem to magically drop into place. It becomes easy for you to create what you want. Your energy flows along this new path of least resistance.

You are the creative force in your life. It's time to live how you want.

About the author

Joshua Uebergang, known as the “Tower of Power”, is a social skills coach, author, and owner of Australian company Tower of Power where shy guys discover how to win friends and influence people. Visit his blog and sign-up free to get conversation techniques, confidence-boosting strategies, and people-magnetic tips by email, along with blog updates, and more! Go now to TowerOfPower.com.au

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23 But We've Always Done it This Way: Top Ten List by George Torok

What does that really mean?

Perhaps you just asked a question at a committee meeting. The room went silent and at least one person pointedly explained to you that “We’ve always done it this way”. The rest of the group either chimed in or nodded their heads in arrogant approval. Some might even have glanced at you with that dismissive look of lost causes.

For many people change is painful. It doesn't matter how silly their current path or how promising the opportunity of other possibilities. Change hurts. It is also painful to admit that what you have been doing needs to be changed. Accepting change means accepting the possibility that you are not currently doing things the best way.

While you bite your tongue or fume at that response consider this Top Ten List of the Real Meanings of “But we’ve always done it this way”.

What might people be thinking as they state that lame defense?

10. I haven't got a clue why we do it this way and I never thought about it before. But I'm not going to admit that to you.
9. Your question is a good one. But I never asked it and wish that I had. As much as your question disturbs me I won't admit that out loud.
8. You're new aren't you? You new people just want to change our perfect little world. We like it the way it is. We can outlast you.
7. How dare you question the wisdom of your predecessors? It was good enough for them why isn't it good enough for you? Have you no blind respect and subservience to those who were here before you?
6. You clearly don't know how we do things around here. It has nothing to do with logic, fairness and openness.
5. If you are a team player you will go along with us without asking embarrassing questions like that.
4. We don't like questions like that. And right now I don't like you for asking it.

3. Perhaps you believe that you have the right to ask questions... but you're wrong. Shut up and go with the flow.
2. It's working the way it is. Leave it alone. Can we go now?
1. Despite what you were told, this is not a democracy. We don't care about your ideas. Just do what you are told to do. And do it the way that you are told to do it.

When you try to change things you will hear the response "But we've always done it this way." Don't hate people for that response. Consider the list above to understand what they might be feeling. Recognize that your questions might be disturbing them and they might not be ready to give you an honest and thoughtful answer.

"But we've always done it this way" is likely the response of a person who feels threatened.

When faced with this challenge you will need to find a less threatening way to make change. The other alternative is to expose the status quo as the bigger threat.

About the author

© George Torok offers training programs in Presentation skills, Creative Problem Solving and Personal Marketing. He delivers high-energy keynotes and practical seminars. You can reach him at 905-335-1995 or www.Torok.com

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24 This Crazy Period of Constant Change is Normal by Jim Clemmer

“Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely.”

In the middle of a meeting with a few colleagues I caught myself saying, “Once we get through this crazy period and things get back to normal...” Then it hit me. I had been saying something like that for at least a year or two. As we scrambled to move into a strong market leadership position we were initiating endless waves of changes and (we hoped) improvements throughout the organization. I interrupted myself with the question, “Do we seem to be consistently talking about change as if it’s a temporary condition to be endured until calmer times return?”

“Yeah, it’s as if we’re battening down the hatches and waiting out the storm.”

“But,” another colleague observed, “We’ve got to learn how to work in the driving rain and high seas because things aren’t going to slow down unless we scale back on our vision, goals, and rate of growth.”

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“And that could be deadly in today’s fast moving market.”

“We’d be following and trying to keep up rather than leading and setting the pace.”

The discussion went on to mark a turning point for many of us. We began to realize we needed to accept that our frenzied pace of change was the new “normal.” Then we had to do a better job of helping others in our company understand why that was the case and become energized by the exciting possibilities offered by the changes.

The Change Paradox: Same Tune, Frantic New Beat

“If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs, it’s just possible that you haven’t grasped the situation.” – Jean Kerr, American playwright

In what time periods do you think the following statements were made (extra bonus points if you can identify the speakers as well)?

“A new factor, that of rapid change, has come into the world. We have not yet learned how to adjust ourselves to its economic and social consequences.”

“The world is too big for us. There is too much doing, too many crimes, casualties, violence, and excitements. Try as you will, you get behind the race despite yourself. It is an incessant strain to keep pace and still you lose ground. Science empties its discoveries on you so fast that you stagger beneath them in hopeless bewilderment. The political world witnesses new scenes so rapidly that you are out of breath trying to keep up with them.”

“All is flux, nothing stays still.”

Sound familiar? These remarks could have been said last week couldn’t they? Certainly, they might have been uttered within the last decade. The first comment was written in the page of Harvard Business Review by Wallace Donham in 1932. The second one comes from the Atlantic Journal in 1837. The last remark was made by the Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, 500 years before the birth of Christ.

So down through the centuries many people believed they were living in times of rapid change. Speaking at a planning conference, author, researcher, and professor Warren Bennis said, “I can’t recall a period of time that was as volatile, complex, ambiguous and tumultuous.” He then quoted Jack Welch, CEO of General Electric, “If you’re not confused, you don’t know what’s going on.” See, you do know what’s going on!

Futurists like Alvin Toffler show that we're now in a period of unusually rapid, and significant change. In his book, Powershift, he provides powerful arguments to show that the period of time from the mid-fifties until about the year 2025 is one of those extremely rare pivotal moments in the centuries of earth's history where everything about the way our world works radically shifts. He calls it a "hinge of history." And, he's found, "What is emerging is a radical new economic system running at far faster speeds than any in history."

So things will settle into a more predictable and calm pace about the time most of us are long gone from our work...or long gone.

About the author

Jim Clemmer has been writing and speaking about leadership, change, team, and organization effectiveness for over 30 years. His extensive research, broad experience with hundreds of organizations and thousands of people, and deep understanding of these topics makes him an internationally recognized leader in the field. Beyond his seven books, he's written hundreds of columns and articles for newspapers and magazines.

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25 On Sharks and People by Steve Goodier

One man sat at a stop light. The woman in front of him was going through papers on the seat of her car, and when the light changed to green she didn't go. A green light is not a suggestion, you know, it is more of a commandment. But she didn't notice.

When the light turned red again, she still had not moved. The man in the car behind her now started screaming epithets and beating on his steering wheel.

A policeman tapped on his windshield. "You can't arrest me for hollering in my car," the man said. The cop asked for his license and registration, returned to his car, talked on the radio for a while and finally handed the papers back. The driver protested, "I knew you couldn't cite me for yelling in my own car!"

The officer replied, "I didn't want to cite you for shouting in your car. But I was behind you at the light and saw you screaming and beating your steering wheel. I said to myself, 'That guy is out of control. He's going to hurt someone.' Then I noticed your 'Love Is a Choice' and 'Give Peace a Chance' bumper stickers and I was sure you stole the car."

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What the signs on his vehicle said about him and the way he actually behaved looked like, well, two different people. But let's not be too critical. Are we always the people we want to be? I believe in love and justice, forgiveness and second chances and generosity – but I don't always live up to the ideals I profess.

It helps me to think of sharks. We're told that some kinds of sharks can't breathe unless they swim. They get oxygen from the movement of the sea over their gills and they can only make this happen by constantly moving through the water. In other words, they must keep moving forward to live.

Likewise, humans who want to live well must also keep moving forward. Forward toward the people we want to be. Forward toward our goals and ideals. Change is almost always incremental – a little bit each day. But we must keep moving forward.

As author Marianne Williamson says, “There is no passion to be found playing small – in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.” But I find great passion in stretching a little farther than I think I can. I hang on to the belief that it is better to reach too far and fall short than to settle for mediocrity and succeed.

Yes, I don't always give peace a chance and I don't always choose love first. And more often than I care to admit, the person I am today doesn't wholly resemble the one I hope to be tomorrow. But all of that is all right, so long as I keep moving forward, little by little, every day.

Life demands that sharks and people keep moving forward.

About the author

Steve Goodier holds a B.A. in anthropology and sociology (New Mexico State University) and an M.Div. degree from Emory University. He is an ordained United Methodist minister, district superintendent in the Rocky Mountain Conference UMC, and the author of numerous books about personal development, motivation, inspiration, and making needed life changes.

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26 Creating Breakthroughs by Paul Lemberg

Runaway success is never based on incremental improvement. Here is a reliable, repeatable “technology” for creating breakthroughs – unprecedented shifts in capability, performance and results.

How to engineer world-beating nonlinear, discontinuous, highly-profitable change into your company.

“The world we’ve made, as a result of the level of thinking we have done thus far, creates problems we cannot solve at the same level of thinking” – Albert Einstein

Runaway success is never based on incremental improvement. I know this is a very bold statement, but bold statements and even bolder results are what breakthroughs are all about. What about in your company – what would constitute a breakthrough? Would you like to increase overall productivity by 40%? Of course you would! But would you commit to it? What about expanding sales by 50% – in one quarter! Or cultivating a completely new distribution channel – in two months! Sound impossible? Breakthrough results always “seem” impossible at the time you commit to them. If they seemed reasonable, they wouldn’t qualify as breakthroughs.

Breakthroughs share the following characteristics:

The results are not predictable based on your past performance. If you routinely increase revenues a handsome 20% per year, a 50% increase would be a breakthrough. Developing a new product or service in 3 months would be a breakthrough if it normally takes you six. You commit to the results, in advance, without knowing how to accomplish them, and without a plan. This is the exact opposite of “let’s study this” syndrome.

And finally, they define outcomes which are concrete and measurable, and lead to a new level of performance. By virtue of its accomplishment, a breakthrough will stretch and grow the capabilities of your company.

Critical Success Tip

The “secret” to producing breakthrough results is putting the cart before the horse. Standard organizational decision making says “What do we need, what are we capable of, and how can we use our capabilities to produce what we need?” Breakthrough thinking says “What are we committed to, we believe in the possibility of that commitment, and what can we do next?”

Think for a moment about creating a breakthrough in how you respond to client requests. Instead of “going back and thinking about it”, breakthroughs require you to first commit to your client, then figure it out and take action. This may seem distasteful, even weird – our culture holds strong taboos against making promises we can’t keep. And if you couple this with a common fear of failure...you will resist making bold promises and you will not produce breakthroughs.

Critical Success Tip

Try anything and fail faster! Don’t worry about whether it’s going to work or not. If it seems like it can work, if it might produce the results you want, do it! In fact, the more things you implement, the more unworkable approaches you discover and get out of the way, the quicker you are likely to find a solution which yields the breakthrough. Also, a willingness to implement wild, even crazy, nontraditional approaches can produce results in record time. Remember, we are not talking about problems which need incremental solutions – you already know how to do these. Take the things you do that work, and make them better, or do more of them. But, as the author Rita Mae Brown wrote, “Insanity is when you keep doing the same things expecting different results”. By definition, you don’t know how to produce a breakthrough, so get busy and fail faster.



“I studied English for 16 years but...
...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons”
Jane, Chinese architect

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Bold Promises and Action

There are four steps to creating breakthroughs.

Ask yourself the question: “What important “thing” – which I currently think is impossible – would I commit to, right now, if I actually believed it would be possible to accomplish?”

Make a bold promise which commits you to the accomplishment of that “thing”. Make sure your promise (your commitment) is specific, measurable, and has a completion date. Also – this is critical – go public with your commitment. Tell concerned people, like your entire organization, your investors, or your customers.

Invent ways to deliver on your commitment, and spring into action.

Keep going until you’re done...a major breakthrough is just inches away.

Critical Success Tip

The magic to using the breakthrough technology is this: Make bold promises, publicly. Then, stay in action...do the next thing...find out if it worked...then do the next thing...find out if that worked, and so on. These steps are all driven by that crazy, breakthrough commitment you made. .

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About the author

Paul Lemberg is the president of Quantum Growth Coaching, the world’s only fully systemized business coaching program guaranteed to help entrepreneurs rapidly create More Profits and More Life™. To get your copy of our free special report with detailed steps on how to grow your business at least 40% faster, even when you aren’t sure what to do next, let Paul help you find your business development strategy.

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