

The Agony and Ecstasy of Change

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Healthy routines are a part of a resilient constitution but so is flexibility to the changes of season, address, gas prices, government, heart and mind. When it comes to change we tend to sit somewhere on a continuum from innovator to stuck in a comfort, sometimes fearful, rut. People let us know how open or closed they are to change:

1. **The Innovator:** “I have an idea of what would work better. I can hardly wait to try it.”
2. **The Quick Adapter:** “Great idea. How can I help?”
3. **The Doubter:** “I’m not sure. You’ll have to prove it to me.”
4. **The Resister:** “What’s wrong with the way we’ve always done it? This is my comfort zone.”
5. **The No Wayer:** “It will never work. You won’t budge me so forget it.”

The answer to creating a workable negotiation between maintaining comfortable routines and making way for improvements lies in motivation. Change happens when we are drawn to a rewarding payoff or we are repelled by pain or dissatisfaction. *The Formula for Change* was created by Beckhard and Gleicher. They describe three factors that motivate change—dissatisfaction with the present, a vision of possibilities and an understanding of what to do to move towards a vision. They also make it clear *that these three factors need to be greater than resistance.*

In *The Heart of Change*, John Kotter explains that to influence others’ behaviour we need to offer people fewer logical reasons for change and focus on influencing *their feelings*. Kotter writes, “Both thinking and feeling are essential and both are found in successful organizations, but the heart of change is in the emotions.”

Hints for opening up to change:

- Do a risk analysis. Ask yourself “What do I have to gain or lose if I keep this habit active?” and “What do I have to gain or lose from doing this a different way?”
- Take a calculated risk now and then for the sheer joy or excitement (sometimes misinterpreted as fear) it. Bungee jumping or visiting a nude beach comes to mind.
- Take a risk in the name of self-care. Take a small step towards a long held dream or say “No” to a meaningless activity.

- Make a list of what you want To Be (E.g.: more patient), To Do (E.g.: exercise for 15 minutes each morning) and To Have (E.g.: a red Mi).
- Notice when you are critical of others' behaviors. Identify what behavior change you could make to meet your own needs.
- Notice when you whine or grumble. Identify what you could do to fill your own whole or hole.
- When disagreeable change is forced upon you use the Serenity Prayer for support—
“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

Hints for *influencing* others to change:

- Model the satisfaction of making positive change. As Mahatma Gandhi said, “You must be the change you want to see in the world.”
- Create urgency (pain). Physically show proof for needed change. There is nothing like a leaky ceiling to prove that the roof shingles need replacing.
- Ask, “That’s great and is there even a better idea?”
- Ask, “What would happen if we no longer did this? Would we do anything different or nothing at all?” “What would happen if we did this less often?” “What would happen if we did more of this?”
- Avoid nagging, criticizing or forcing change on others. They will either resent or avoid you.
- Decide on a cause or problem, the necessary change and benefit. Then invite others to “join in.”

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