

Championing Innovation and Leading Change

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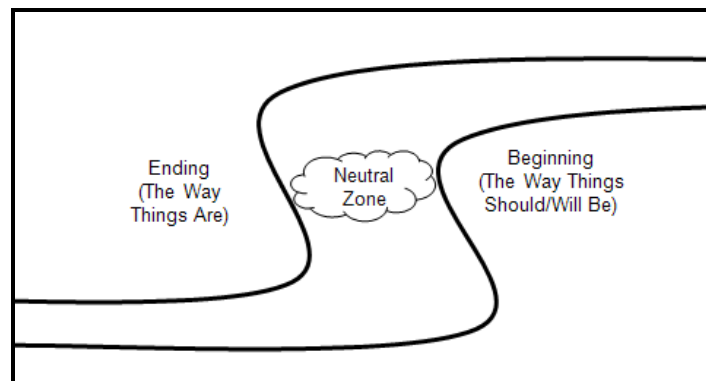
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Championing Innovation and Leading Change

It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent but the one most responsive to change.
– Charles Darwin

Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely.
– Karen Kaiser Clark

Change is an obvious and undeniable fact of life. Change simply means moving forward and not standing still. The most successful individuals and organizations are those that don't run from change, but turn it to their advantage. Changing, of course, is a matter of definition. It could mean opening your mind to a new concept or causing you to look at the commonplace from a different perspective or with new insight. It doesn't have to be revolutionary to be significant. Your goal is to help yourself and others, in some way, modify your perceptions, thinking and behaviors. One of the greatest gifts you can give yourself is the courage to meet change as a friend rather than as a feared enemy. If you try to ignore change, you'll likely get knocked off balance. Getting angry, running away or wishful thinking are a waste of time. This is the age where managing change is everyone's responsibility. Think of it as your personal challenge.



William Bridges model of transition is our favorite change model at Tero because it describes how change feels to those going through it. And with any challenge, a leader is going to have to propose some kind of change. In the Bridges model, the change is experienced first as an ending—a letting go of the way things were. Then, people go through what he calls “the Neutral Zone” where nothing is familiar anymore. After the dust settles and people begin to get used to the new way of doing things, they finally enter the new beginning.

Obviously, there are a lot of reasons changes fail. Each failed change has its own special blend of things gone wrong. However, the one common element to most failed change efforts is that people entered it without adequately understanding the process of change. For example, how long should change take? How does it affect people?

During change, people need someone to paint them the picture of what things will look like when they arrive. They need a leader to go first into the fog of the unknown and encourage everyone else that they too can make the journey. During change people need someone who isn't afraid of asking for help and/or helping others implement new ideas.

There are several predictable things you can expect to occur when you ask people to enter the neutral zone. They are likely to lose their focus (particularly if communication is unclear--which might mean that you haven't said in the way they needed to hear it or not often enough). Different people lose focus for different reasons and in different ways. Productivity is likely to drop as people struggle to let go of old ways of doing things and new tasks or processes.

Third and most predictably, you can expect people to overreact and even entrench. They will dig their heels in on issues (which at their root are generally symbolic of other issues and/or emotional in nature).

A lot of people stop as soon as they realize there might be a risk. Leaders continue on even when there is a risk. They know that they may fail if they try but they are guaranteed to fail if they don't try.

“Change can't be managed.

By definition, the work of change is an unpredictable, messy endeavor that involves trial, error, learning, and invention.

Hence, strategic leaders don't try to handcuff the initiative, innovation, and creativity of followers to a prearranged formula with a predictable and safe outcome.

Instead, the strategic leadership of change is about creating the conditions under which others will carry out the exciting and innovative task of discovering new ways to deal with a constantly evolving environment.

As emerging leader, Jay Marshall of Jay Alix & Associates explains; ‘In change management, success is defined as completing change initiatives on time, on budget, and with full capture of intended benefits.

In contrast, strategic leaders see themselves as successful when people change their behavior and do things differently in order to achieve important business objectives.’”

From James O'Toole's
Leadership A to Z: A Guide for the Appropriately Ambitious

Change and Risk

Every change is full of risks. They might be neatly bundled under the category of “What ifs?”

- What if it doesn't work?
- What if people are angry with me?
- What if it's worse than it was before?
- What if it's not worth it?
- What if I'm embarrassed?
- What if I can't do it?

The “What ifs” are usually scariest when they are not unlikely—in fact, when they are frighteningly real possibilities. There is also the risk of failing to take action or letting things remain as they are.

What if I don't do anything at all?

The key is not to avoid all risks or to take every risk. The key is to assess which risks are worth it. We call these “smart risks.” A smart risk is one in which the pros outweigh the cons on both an immediate and a strategic (long-term) basis. In other words, a smart risk is one that is thought through at length and still deemed to be worth the potential threats.

Consider this example:

Your boss and mentor have asked you to give a presentation to the executive committee. You are incredibly nervous about speaking publicly—in fact it usually makes you ill. However, your boss has told you that it would not only help your department, it would be a good chance to get your name and face in front of people in charge of promoting emerging talent.

You weigh the pros and cons with an eye for short and long-term effects.

Immediate & Strategic Cons	Immediate & Strategic Pros
<p>You won't sleep for days 2 You will be nervous/ill 3 You could embarrass yourself 5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10</p>	<p>You will help your boss/dept 4 You will gain exposure with upper management 6 New connections 6 You've received presentation skills training 5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">21</p>

When you assign a numeric value to weight each of the pros and cons in terms of importance, you can see that even though it will be nerve-wracking and you risk the possibility of embarrassing yourself, the risk is a good one. If you do a good job, you will have helped your department, your boss/mentor and yourself.

With Risk Comes Stress

Let's be honest. Change is scary. Risk is scary. The whole thing is just plain stressful at times. Leaders aren't unrealistic about the stress that comes with risk. They just don't see it as the end of the world.

As it turns out, neuroscientists have found that a little bit of stress is necessary in order to keep us sharp. A lot of stress can be overwhelming. However, studies have also shown that those who have developed what we'll call "stress-strength" are not overcome by it.

When the telecommunications industry was deregulated, researchers Salvatore Maddi and Suzanne Kobasa did a study on stress (Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 1981). They noted that all of the executives in the telecommunications industry were (understandably) under the same high levels of stress as the world they had known came apart at the seams. However, while some of the stressed-out executives experienced the negative effects of stress (sickness, weight-gain or loss, high blood pressure, etc.), other equally stressed out executives did not experience the same symptoms.

What was the difference?

The high-stress, high-illness group did not have stress-strength. They saw the changes as a threat. They felt out of control and felt no personal commitment to the situation. They saw themselves as victims.

The other group, the high-stress, low-illness executives had stress-strength. They saw the changes as an opportunity and were excited about the possibilities. They felt and took control over the areas they could influence and, as a result, felt committed to them. They did not see themselves as victims.

The key to developing stress-strength (for those of us who don't come with it naturally), is to choose to develop it.

- Remind yourself of all that is under your control (particularly your attitude and your freedom to stay or leave).

- Look for the good in the situation. What are the hidden possibilities? How have the gods smiled upon you by giving you this particular opportunity?
- Don't fake it—if you're stressed, admit it and take care of yourself by doing whatever you do to calm yourself down (hot baths? (one ☺) nice glass of wine? exercise? dancing? art? petting your pet? watching your kids play? playing with them? taking time to serve others?)

With Stress Comes Creativity

The stress of the unknown is, as you've probably noted, stressful. It is also an excellent time to exercise creativity. Just think of it, the unknown of the neutral zone is an excellent time to try something new! If you can't do it the old way anymore, you will have to think of a new way to do it. Sometimes, we need just such a push out of our old systems, practices and methods to tap into the creativity that was there all along.

But how?!

Creativity is not a magical power than some possess and most despair of ever understanding. Creativity is simply the process of seeing things in a new way. There are a few things you can do to help yourself tap your own creativity.

- **Look at things in a new way.** Sometimes borrowing someone else's perspective is all it takes to break you out of your own (which you're already familiar with). Try looking at the situation the way a teen boy might see it, or a retired fisherman, or an African Pygmy.
- **Try combining things in different ways.** The weed eater was created when someone thought to combine a small engine with ordinary (heavy-gauge) fishing line. Poof! Trimming our yards has never been easier. Take yourself on a trip of streaming associations.

As one idea occurs to you, relate it to whatever comes to mind, see where it takes you. For example: What do you think of when you think of summer? Ice cream. What do you think of when you think of ice cream? Chocolate malts. What do you think of when...? You get the idea. Also try forcing associations of dissimilar things by looking around the room and asking yourself, "How is this problem like that phone? Or the stapler? Or, the cold cup of coffee?" (Better yet, get out of the office or conference room and try doing this somewhere with more scope for the imagination such as the outdoors.)

- **Refuse to believe there isn't a solution.** Stubborn people get things done by refusing to believe it can't be done. An excellent way to force your own creativity is to refuse to believe that you cannot come up with some kind of solution—even if it's crazy. Continue to work on the problem from all angles until you come up with something (the key thing to remember is not to shoot down your own (or others') ideas—just go with it until you find one you like).

Think about your underlying interests and write them down in the chart provided. Ask the question “why?” five times to get to your underlying interests. Consider both short- and long-term interests and tangible and intangible interests.

Your Underlying Interests	
Tangible	Intangible
Short-Term	
Tangible	Intangible
Long-Term	

What are the underlying interests of the other party? Consider both short- and long-term interests and tangible and intangible interests. What underlying values influence these interests?

Their Underlying Interests	
Tangible	Intangible
Short-Term	
Tangible	Intangible
Long-Term	

Take Action!

It doesn't take a leader to notice a problem. It doesn't take a leader to have ideas about how to solve the problem. It takes a leader to mobilize people around solving the problem.

Leaders not only look for opportunities to make things better; they take action. Leaders take action—but they don't do it half-cocked. They assess the situation, they learn as much as they can about it (yes, research), they create a strategic plan, and then they begin working toward their goal by building momentum with small wins.

The four following steps are not a formula for success, but they will help increase your odds as you plan to take action and make a difference.

Do Your Research

The first is to find out what's going on. This means you'll probably have to do some research on the issue: what's it been like in the past? Who was involved? What's been attempted? What worked? What didn't work? Etc. This is an important step because without it, you may be taking action on the wrong issue.

Figure Out What You're Up Against and What You Have to Work With

Step two is to identify your resources and challenges. You'll want to know what you have to work with and which challenges or obstacles you can reasonably expect to encounter. If you skip this step, you may become overwhelmed by challenges you hadn't anticipated. You may spend all of your time attacking something that is a symptom of the problem and not the root cause of the problem. Or, you may also be tempted to settle for easy answers and solutions to complicated problems.

Plan Your Strategy

The third step is to begin to strategize by identifying where you want to go compared to where you are now and what and who you'll need to do to get to the final goal. You can use the Action Path to help you visualize your strategy.

Plan for Small Wins

Change is scary. It is easy to make excuses that the risks of failure are too high and reconcile ourselves to the comfort of the familiar (even if we don't particularly like the familiar and don't find it all that comfortable.) Wise leaders know this and know that they will need to start small with recognizable, feasible steps toward the larger goal. Tackling the whole thing at once would be too overwhelming. The small, doable steps are called "small wins" and they are imperative for fueling the positive momentum toward the final goal.

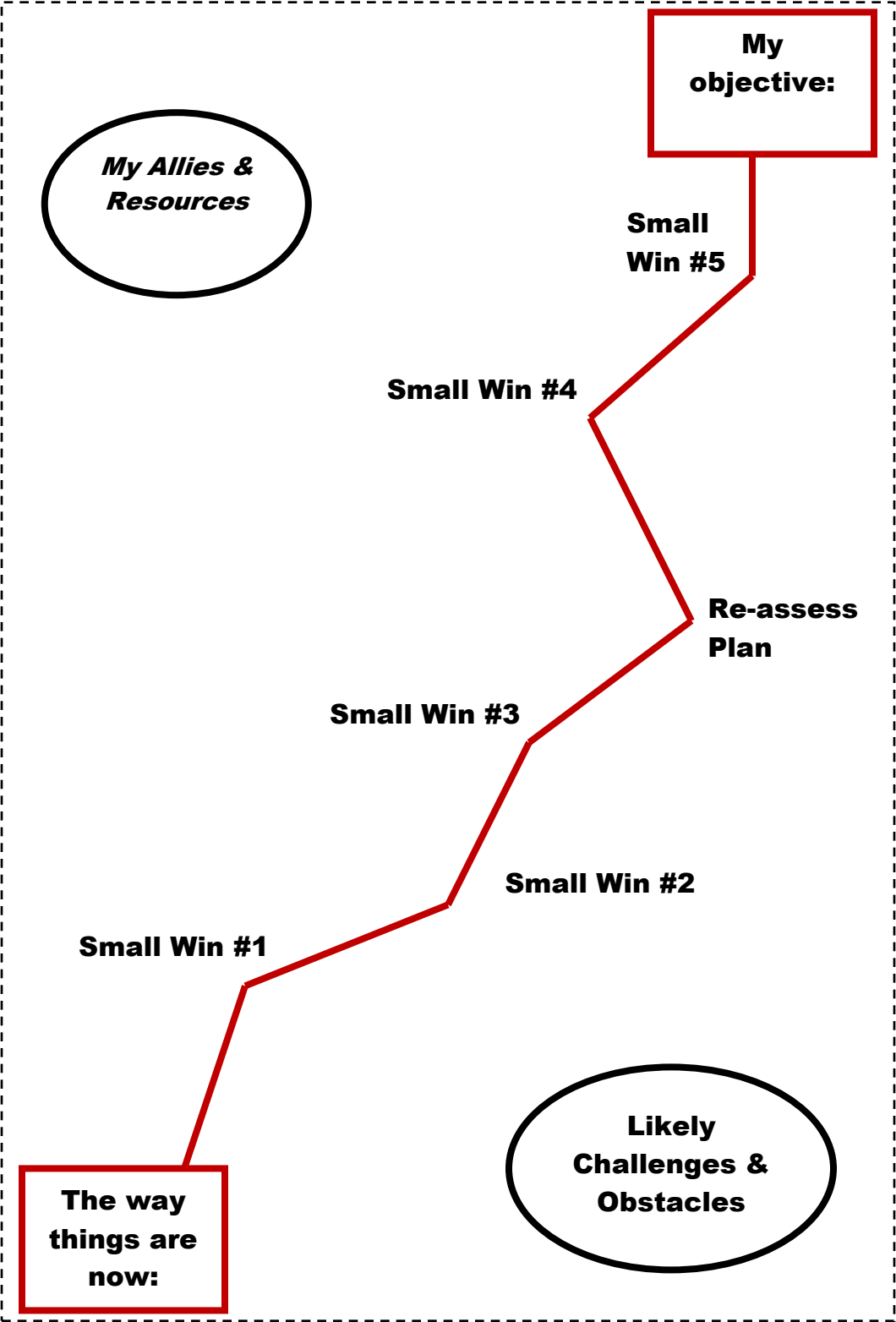
A good example of a leader who knew about how to use small wins was Charlie Mae Knight, the new superintendent of a dying school district in California. Fifty percent of the schools in the district were closed. Those that weren't closed were run-down with broken windows, graffiti on the walls and rats running all over the yard. Worse yet, the teachers were demoralized, the dropout rate was really high and 98% of the children that remained in school were performing in the lowest percentile for academic achievement in California.

Rather than marching in and suggesting that she was going to improve test scores and reduce dropout rates, the principle started with small, observable wins. She recruited volunteers to help her repaint the walls and got pellet guns to kill the rats. Soon people started noticing that the place looked nice and they began to believe that a change was taking place. Eventually, test scores did improve and dropout rates were reduced. Ms. Knight knew that to bring out positive change, she would have to start with small wins that would give people the hope and encouragement to keep going.*

A small win is something that you can do right away that will represent a baby step in the direction you want to go. Once you have several small wins, momentum picks up and the ball starts to roll faster and momentum is a leader's secret weapon!

*[Case study quoted in The Leadership Challenge by James Kouzes and Barry Posner]

Strategic Action Path



Common Misconceptions about Change

There are a lot of misconceptions about change; perhaps that's why so many change efforts fail. Some of the primary misconceptions are listed below:

Misconception #1: People Hate Change

This isn't true. Not everyone hates change. Some people actively seek out changes when they feel things have gotten too routine (read: boring). Most of us will happily engage in a change process when it's our idea. In fact, to state simply that "people hate change" is not only to assume that all people are alike, it's nigh unto suggesting that they are still infants. Simply growing up requires many changes that most of us have gotten through with reasonable success.

The problem is not that people hate change. Marketing expert Geoffrey Moore described the ways in which populations of people tend to respond to discontinuous changes. His research indicates that the average population breaks down into a normal bell curve—people within the first two standard deviations of the norm don't only appreciate changes, they seek them out; they create them.

The rest of the population tends to respond to change with a little more reserve. They will embrace the discontinuous change after they have seen other people try it first and after they have become suitably convinced that the solutions they have available to them at the time are no longer good enough. Moore called the two distinct populations of people the "Visionaries" and the "Pragmatists" and noted that although they may reside next to each other on the bell curve, they operate out of very different values and as a result, tend to be easily frustrated and skeptical of one another.

Misconception #2: Change Starts with Beginning Something New

It's tempting to think of change as the beginning of something new. Indeed, given the energy it takes to make a change, it's imperative to be excited about and inspired by the new thing—whatever it is. In reality, however, or at least in our *emotional* realities (which tends to take precedence over "objective reality"); change begins with an ending. Before we can move into the new, we must first leave the old.

William Bridges wrote about this intuitively logical notion in his book *Managing Transitions*. As Bridges describes it, *transition* is the emotional process we go through to get from something old to something new. Before you arrive at the new location, you must leave home, travel through what Bridges calls the "Neutral Zone" which is neither home nor the intended destination.

The process of breaking away from the ending, getting used to the idea of what you've lost as well as that with which you're not yet comfortable and slowly warming up to the idea of the new situation takes time, patience and understanding.

Misconception #3: Good Leaders Separate Facts from Emotions

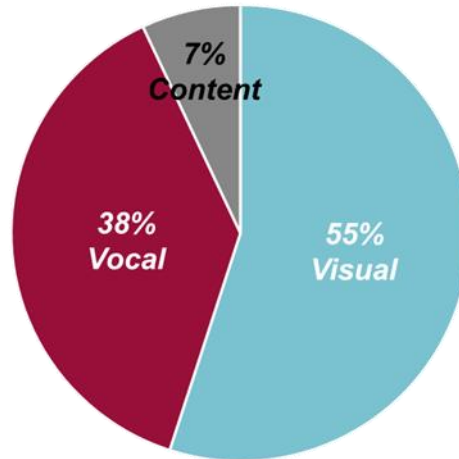
You've probably heard the saying; "Leave your emotions at the door." The saying implies an obvious hierarchy of fact over emotion and further implies that the workplace is no place for emotions. Although it's difficult to trace the exact roots of the saying, it's certainly possible that it arose during the Post-Enlightenment period of Taylorism—a time when theorist Frederick Taylor viewed employees as machines that could be studied for time and motion efficiency and tweaked or tuned to maximize output. The view at the time in history was that the scientific method was absolute and would eventually perfect a process if applied consistently.

Since that time, management and leadership theory has evolved to incorporate the humanity of humans, yet some residual strains of the theory continue to prevail. "Leaving ones emotions at the door" is one such strain. The truth is that the more we know about the science of the human brain, the more we've learned that it's not only impossible to separate a human from his or her emotions, it's not even desirable. In fact, eliminating the capacity for emotion "...destroys the capacities for creative play, imagination, key decision making, and the nuances of emotion that drive the arts, humor, imagination, love, music and altruism." Research has also shown that entire sections of the "higher order" portions of the brain can be removed and the performance on standardized tests of intelligence usually drops very little. On the practical side, the idea of asking people to leave their emotions behind is a recipe for a bunch of unmotivated, uninspired drones and who wants that? As brain researcher Eric Jensen said, "...Our logical side says, 'Set a goal.' But only our emotions get us passionate enough even to care enough to act on that goal."

In the mid-sixties, researchers Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe concluded that all change—good and bad—takes an emotional toll due to the transition it requires. They found that even when the change is a good thing (like the birth of a child or a promotion), letting go of old expectations, habits and patterns and moving through the uncertainty of transition can be frightening, confusing, and ultimately correlated to higher risk of illness.

Communicating During Change

The impression you make is far more important than the words you actually say. Dr. Albert Mehrabian, professor and researcher at the University of California, Los Angeles showed that 55 percent of the impact made on others is communicated through non-verbal body language (including eye movement, posture, body movement, gestures and facial expression). 38 percent comes from what the listener hears, not the words, but the vocal quality, volume, pace and expression. The remaining 7 percent come from the content or the words.



55 Percent

By speaking to your listeners' eyes, you convey honesty, sincerity, confidence, and credibility while helping to control nervousness. Since people see you before they hear you, supportive gestures, body movement, facial expression and posture are critical.

38 Percent

You convey weakness or conviction, nervousness or confidence, boredom or enthusiasm through your vocal quality. Through the use of appropriate volume, pace and vocal expression you add credibility to your communications.

7 Percent

The other 7 percent of the impact made relate to the actual content of the communication. By learning how to determine objectives, knowing the audience, and carefully organizing your content, you are better equipped to persuade your listeners to a specific course of action.

Why Is Change so Hard?

Cognitive dissonance is an emotional state when two simultaneously held beliefs are inconsistent.

When...

Reality \neq Vision

Cognitive Dissonance (Conflict)

A proposed change represents a difference from what currently exists in reality. As a result, cognitive dissonance or conflict occurs.

One of the functions of our subconscious mind is to solve conflicts as they arise. When a conflict (cognitive dissonance) exists, we become extremely creative and inventive to resolve the conflict.

If we allow our view of reality to be stronger than our vision, we begin to make excuses for why we can't accomplish our goals. When your environment doesn't match your picture, you must change the reality (the environment) or change your vision (your behavior). Once tension occurs, we always retreat to the strongest picture. For most people, changing behavior is to be avoided at all costs.

Then...

REALITY  **Vision**
Excuse-Making

Or...

Reality  **Vision**
Creative and Inventive Genius

In order to prevent excuse-making and going back to the old way, we must make our view of our vision stronger than current reality. We do this through a process called imprinting.

When championing and leading change, many leaders miss essential imprinting. They immediately jump from what they want to how do I get there? By missing the important step of imprinting, they are not taking advantage of the tremendous power of their own mind and the minds of others. Imprinting allows us to activate the rich resources of our subconscious mind.

Imprinting – A Strategy for Leading Change

When do you do your best thinking? In the shower? In the car? When you relax before you go to sleep? Do you ever wake up in the middle of the night with the solution to a problem? Wherever it is that you do your best thinking it is likely not in a meeting room.

The value of imprinting is that it opens us up to alternatives. Our subconscious records every experience we ever have. Every word of every book we have ever read. Every success. Every failure. The trick is to give yourself and others the proper conflicts (cognitive dissonance) to access the information database that you already have.

Beliefs that are imprinted into our subconscious mind are exceedingly resistant to extinction and reversal. They have a profound effect on all of our future behavior.

For example, when a foal (baby horse) is born, the breeder makes an effort to be present for the birth. If not, then very soon after. Then the breeder (or trainer) spends an enormous amount of time during a compressed time span (about three days) to imprint the new foal. This process involves helping the animal become comfortable with human touch and human presence. The breeder or trainer works with the animal's hooves, legs, body, ears, mouth, etc. to get the animal "used to" the touch. The result is a lasting effect on future behavior. Even in adulthood, the horse will exhibit positive behavior when the appropriate stimulus is present.

Like the horse, you and I have become "used to" reality as we know it. Reality has been imprinted in us. When we imprint a new vision or a goal for ourselves and others, we must lock onto the new vision. This causes us to experience discomfort and enables us to release the creative genius we all have within us to reach our goals.

We move toward that which we think about. So, what are you thinking about? If you don't imprint the way you want to be next week, next month, and next year, then you have not set up your goals. Once your goals are vividly imprinted then your subconscious system takes over. Your system is goal-oriented. When you get off target, stress sets in and adjustment takes place. High performance people are constantly proposing changes and thinking of goals. They think in terms of the change being successfully implemented.

Through the imprinting process, habits, values and beliefs can be changed. The more powerful the imprinting process you use, the more easy the transition you will have to your new habits, values and beliefs.

Let's compare your goal setting with the process of bringing a new human life into the world. Right after conception has occurred, there is no visual evidence of a new life yet. It takes several months before there is any visual evidence that a change has taken place. And several more months before birth. Isn't it wonderful that parents have been given nine months to plan for and get used to the idea of the change?

Your goals are much like pregnancy. First you decide what you want—give birth to the idea. Then you must go through a period of incubation. This is a period of time during which no conscious effort is made to solve problems but which terminates with a solution. This is the imprinting stage. Leading change is actually a very simple activity of helping others get used to the new vision instead of current reality.

Imprinting Techniques

There are a number of imprinting techniques. Below are fourteen methods for imprinting that leaders can use to help people get used to the idea of change.

Choose the strategies that work best for the changes you are leading.

1. Communicate the ideal future state
2. Put it in writing
3. Visualize the future
4. Use affirmations
5. Borrow from the past
6. Go public – share your goals with others
7. Start with small wins
8. Assign deadlines
9. Providing training
10. Assign roles and responsibilities
11. Assume the best
12. Provide immediate feedback
13. Encourage laughter and have fun
14. Set another goal

3 Tips for Handling the Emotional Impact of Change

The important thing to remember is that change does exact a significant emotional toll which cannot be underestimated or ignored. The type of emotions can run the gamut from anger to sadness to confusion to denial and everything in between. As you build your skills for handling change or as you help others through change, it will be incumbent on you to do the following:

1. Give yourself and others grace for feeling overwhelmed. Validate the emotional process of change. Speak openly of the emotional element of change and reassure people that their emotions are normal. Look for ways to make people comfortable talking about their feelings. You may have to model this by talking about your own emotional reactions to the transitions. It will speak volumes when they see that you too struggle with the feelings of sadness and loss.

Pay attention to the ways individuals deal with their emotions. Some people will want to talk about them over and over and over. For those types of people, talking about their feelings helps make sense of them—as though getting them “out there in the open” provides for a type of verbal organization process. On the other hand, other people will need time to retreat into their own reverie of solitude to think things through and process their feelings internally. Just as you can’t expect everyone to hate or love change, you can’t expect everyone to respond to the emotional impact of change in the same way. Expect variety and provide opportunities for people to process their emotions in a variety of ways.

2. Recognize (and communicate to others) that energy and morale levels will be lower during the change process as people’s emotions get redirected toward assimilating the change. Energy and morale will return if you manage the process effectively, but you (and others) will have to be patient.
3. It is not uncommon for old habits to return during the in-between feeling of the Neutral Zone of transition. Do not be surprised if you find (yourself and/or others) struggling with vices or habits you thought had been mastered.

This might mean taking time to take care of yourself (and others) before you and/or they think it’s necessary. Often, competent professionals report that they feel “fine” (and therefore not in need of pampering, decompression or relaxation) until they reach maximum stress levels and precipitate a crisis.

12 Tips for Helping People Successfully Navigate Change

1. Brainstorm creative, symbolic ways to prepare people for the upcoming change challenge. If, for example, there is going to be a change in the team structure, can you revise the physical structure of the office to be symbolic of the upcoming change?
2. Remove barriers to change like fear. It almost doesn't matter how compelling your message is if people are afraid to engage it. Spend some time thinking through the possible sources of fear and do what you can to remove or reduce those barriers.
3. Create a safe change environment by assuring people that they will not be embarrassed or punished for their learning-curve mistakes. Also make an effort to make the change as collaborative as possible. People will be less likely to feel awkward about their attempts at learning if everyone is going through it at the same time.
4. Marketing research has found that it takes approximately seven times before people even tune in to an irrelevant message. This isn't a surprise when you consider the number of messages bombarding us all day every day. In order to avoid being overwhelmed, the brain just deletes the incoming message before it even reaches awareness. Your challenge will be to (a) make the message hit a relevant chord (answer the question: why should I care?) and (b) be consistent and repetitive enough in your messaging strategy that it will eventually sink in. In what ways can you communicate the new expectations so people will listen?
5. Communicate the problem underlying the need for change often and in a variety of ways. Remember that brains instinctively respond to novelty and emotionally relevant messages. An example of novelty is doing something people weren't expecting. If you find, for example, that people don't talk during brainstorming meetings, but they do talk in the break-room; hold the next meeting in the break-room. An example of an emotionally relevant message is a message that taps into something a person cares about or with which they feel a connection. For example, when you bought your first car, did you find yourself tuning in to car dealership advertising you'd previously ignored or notice that people seemed (all of a sudden) to be driving the car you liked best? The truth is that those advertisements and other people driving "your" car were there all along; your brain just tuned them out because it wasn't relevant at the time.
6. Be prepared for a little resistance to the notion that it's time to change and learn new skills. People not uncommonly react to the idea of learning new skills as a statement of personal deficiency. Be as sensitive to this as you can and reassure people that you expect the process to include time, practice and mistakes.
7. Give others responsibility for marshalling the change by assigning them to be "experts" of a given topic. Once you've modeled how effective the process can be and set some clear expectations and parameters, you can make each expert responsible for teaching the others his/her areas of expertise.
8. Make an effort to know others as people as well as employees. Can you schedule a bi-weekly brown bag lunch? Or one-on-one breakfasts where you simply get to know one another?
9. Others will need to know where you stand in order to be assured that you stand for what you believe. Talk often about your personal values and engage in regular discussions about the

team's values. Look for examples of the values in motion and make a point to demonstrate and celebrate these whenever possible.

10. Practice, practice, practice! The brain needs lots of practice in order to form new connections. Without the practice, it will go back to what is easier and you'll find that others are justifying their old behaviors and idealizing the past (which is normal in small doses but can be a signal of the need for more practice).
11. Encourage others to evaluate their own change process. Schedule time to talk about what's gone well so far and what isn't going so well. This will provide you with the double-whammy of checking in with their emotional reactions to the change and getting them involved in the process.
12. Even though it might seem demoralizing to arrive at the peak of performance and immediately begin looking for new ways to change and improve, it will only help your team in the future to begin to assimilate the idea that change is ongoing. Talk often about the importance of continuous improvement and set aside regular portions of staff meetings to solicit and talk about ideas for improving your processes and service.

Change Questionnaire

How well do you handle change? Complete the following questionnaire to measure your adaptability.

Assign points to each item as follows:

Almost never applies	0 points
Sometimes applies	1 point
Usually applies	2 points
Almost always applies	3 points

Item	Points
1. When I am first confronted with a problem and have no idea how it can be solved, I take the attitude that the right answer will emerge.	
2. Events in my life happen with their own right timing.	
3. I feel optimistic about my future.	
4. When someone rejects me, I feel hurt, but I accept that the decision was theirs to make.	
5. I feel the loss of family and friends who have died, but the grief resolves itself and I move on – I don't try to bring back what cannot be brought back.	
6. I feel committed to ideals larger than myself.	
7. When I'm arguing with someone, I defend my position, but I also find it easy to acknowledge the rightness in the other side.	
8. I vote for the person, not the party.	
9. I donate time to worthwhile causes, even if they are unpopular.	
10. I am considered a good listener, I don't interrupt others when they talk.	
11. If someone has a lot of emotion at stake in something, I will hear them out without expressing my views.	
12. Given a choice between a high-salaried job that is fairly boring and a job I like doing at half the pay, I'll take the job I love to do.	
13. My style of managing other people is to allow them to do what they want rather than try to control them. I interfere as little as possible.	
14. I find it easy to trust others.	
15. I am not prone to worry; the ups and downs of difficult situations affect me less than most other people.	
16. In a competitive situation, I am a good loser – I will say "Good game," not, "I wasn't at my best."	
17. Being right in every situation isn't all that important to me.	
18. I feel comfortable playing with young children; I enter their world easily.	
19. I don't think about my moods very much.	
20. I can easily feel what someone else is feeling.	
21. Quiet people make me feel comfortable. Nervous people don't make me nervous.	
Total Points	

Evaluating your score:

40 points or over:

You are an exceptionally adaptable person who has spent a long time on personal growth. Others seek you for guidance and advice. You place a high priority on your ability to remain comfortable under pressure and readily accept new challenges. You pride yourself on being able to resolve conflicts well.

30 – 40 points:

You are reasonably adaptable to everyday challenges, but the amount of work you have put into this area has probably been limited. You are the kind of person that others consider easygoing but you are likely to have more worries and regrets that you haven't faced up to. Conflicts upset you, and you tend to fall under the influence of people with stronger emotions than you.

20 – 30 points:

You have definite ideas of right and wrong behavior and put a high priority on defending your point of view. Working on personal growth has not been a high priority in your life so far. You are likely to be well organized and decidedly goal oriented. If you find yourself in a situation of conflict or competition, you really want to be on the winning side.

Under 20 points:

Your sense of self needs considerable work. You become upset or critical when others disagree with you. You have your way of doing things and do not like surprises. You are likely to be obsessively orderly, with lots of hidden worry, or else very disorganized, reacting strongly to one external event after another.

The purpose of this questionnaire is not to make anyone feel superior or inferior but to spur conscious growth. The common denominator of all adaptable people is that they work, on a daily basis, at keeping their awareness open.

Source: Ageless Body Timeless Mind by Deepak Chopra, M. D.

