



THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE



Recently a group of Amish people pulled up stakes from their religious settlement in the Mid-West and moved to a remote area in Peru.

When asked their reason for doing so one of them responded, "We got tired of having to move our wagons to the side of the road to let the cars go by."

They were, of course, voicing the frustration from their resistance to change.

How many people today get tired of "moving their wagons to the side of the road to let the cars go by?"

How many are constantly being upset by the inconvenience of having to step aside as the world goes rushing by?

It's the "challenge of change" And it's a pretty good question for you to face and perhaps do something about.

* Humanity's greatest problem in the days ahead may not be environment pollution, population growth, or the hydrogen bomb. It may be the acceptance of change as a way of life. *

A Canadian neuro-surgeon discovered some truths about the human mind which revealed the intensity of this problem. He conducted some experiments which proved that when a person is forced to change a basic belief or viewpoint the brain undergoes a series of nervous sensations equivalent to the most agonizing torture.

People find it difficult to change. They fear the uncertainty of change. They often see it as a threat to their security. It upsets their established patterns of behaviour. So they resist change.

And what is a problem for the individual becomes a problem for the organization. We posed the question to several large companies: "What is the greatest problem you face today?" Without exception the answer came back, "The problem of change!"

As the Marketing Director of a new bio-medical company put it, "When we go to bed at night we face the fact that by morning our product knowledge, marketing programs and methods have become obsolete. Change is a daily thing with us."



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On the other hand the Training Director of an old established company countered by saying, "Change is not as difficult for the new company as the old one. We must change or go out of business. The drastic changes we have found necessary are almost impossible for many of our people, who have been doing things the same way for the last 10 or 15 years, to accept."

You, as an individual, must face change. As far as your company is concerned you can be a part of the problem or you can be a part of the answer. The choice is yours.

Perhaps the following suggestions on meeting the challenge of change will help you become a part of the answer. The choice is yours.

1. WHY FIGHT IT?

* Perhaps the individual who wrote the following paragraph was voicing the anxieties of most people living in an age of such rapid change:

"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 in spite of 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. Everything is high pressure. Human nature cannot endure much more." *

Seem familiar? Does that express some of your feelings? Does that sum up the unique psychological riddle that every individual is struggling with today?

Before you jump to conclusions, we should point out that those words were published in the Atlantic Journal in 1837.

Probably the same sentiments were expressed when the wheel was discovered and the sail was used to move a ship. Most certainly similar concerns were felt when dynamite, tin cans, and the flying machine were thrust upon mankind.

So what is new about how people feel today about the laser beam, the computer, and space stations?

Our point is this. There is nothing virgin or modern about this problem of change. It probably existed when man started cooking food with fire.

It is not change but a person's reaction to change that is the problem. And the answer is obvious by now.

Change is a fact of life. Learn to live with it. Your company is going to change; the people about you are going to change; your environment, your tools of living, your community is going to change. Society, culture, technology is going to change.

Why fight it? Why not accept it and learn to enjoy it as part of the adventure of life?

Why not be one of those rare, treasured individuals within a company who says, "Let's get behind these changes the company feels are necessary and see what we can do to make them work!"

Be part of the answer instead of part of the problem!



2. SEE THE BIGGER DIMENSION

Learn to look for the bigger picture, the significant, larger values gained by change. It is true that most change occurs through sacrifice and inconvenience but the ends usually justify the frustrations.

You'll be a happier individual if you train yourself to hold in your mind the ultimate benefit of change rather than the apprehensions, the fears, the hardships that change might temporarily impose.

And if you do find yourself longing for the "good old days" you might read over this list of rules for white-collar workers posted in 1872 by a carriage manufacturing company in New York:

1. Office employes each day will fill lamps, clean chimneys and trim wicks.
2. Each clerk will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's business.
3. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to your individual taste.
4. Men employes will be given an evening off each week for courting purposes, or two evenings if they go to church regularly.
5. After 13 hours of labor in the office, the employes should spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
6. Every employe should lay from each pay a goodly sum of his earnings for his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.
7. The employe who has performed his labors faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of \$.05 per day in his pay, providing profits from the business permit.

3. DEVELOP HABITS OF CHANGE

You live your life by habit. You've trained yourself from infancy to respond and behave as you do. Breaking habits can be mighty unpleasant.

Change is difficult because it means changing habits.

Why not make change a habit? Why not make your life a little more fun by learning to live with change instead of routine?

Take a different way to work tomorrow. Get up 15 minutes earlier. Walk around the block once before breakfast.

Do you always have fried eggs in the morning? Try some fried mush or chipped beef on toast or oatmeal or some chicken livers in scrambled eggs. You don't like these things? How do you know? How long has it been since you've tried them? Why don't you try some of those foods you didn't like as a child? You might discover that they're rather tasty now.

And how about having lunch with some different people? Loosen up and say a few kind words to a strange employee; smile and wave at the policeman on the corner or the truck driver; for just one day see how many people you can make feel a little better for having met you.



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Buy some little thing you don't need. You've spent a lifetime developing a resistance to spending money. Change just a bit for a day or two.

Learn to make little changes in your living patterns. Just to get out of the rut! Just for the fun of it!

Then big changes won't be so difficult. You won't be like the African bushman who was given the new boomerang and then spent the rest of his life trying to throw the old one away!

4. LOOK FOR THE BENEFIT

Out of every change comes some personal benefit to you if you look for it with enough faith and persistence.

We were reminded of this not long ago by an elderly gentleman we met.

He was describing the hardship imposed on him by change. "I had a little restaurant outside of Corbin, Kentucky," he said. "Ninety per cent of my business was to tourists. Then they built a new highway 7 miles away from my restaurant. I had to close down. I was 66 years old and the only money I had came from social security."

"My wife and I discussed our misfortune. I remember saying to her that out of every adversity comes a bigger and better opportunity if a person just looks hard enough. We decided to start looking. I took a \$105.00 Social Security check and hit the road in my old car trying to sell some of my recipes that my customers had enjoyed."

That was the beginning of a franchise empire that made the man a millionaire.

He was Colonel Harland Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame!

Look for the bigger and better opportunity rather than becoming mired in self-pity! Being transferred? Department closing down? Personnel changing? Job becoming obsolete? Unions getting in with some procedural changes? Spouse want to move from the old house?

It could mean something pretty important for you if you just look hard enough at the brighter side.

Perhaps that, after all, is the real "challenge of change!"