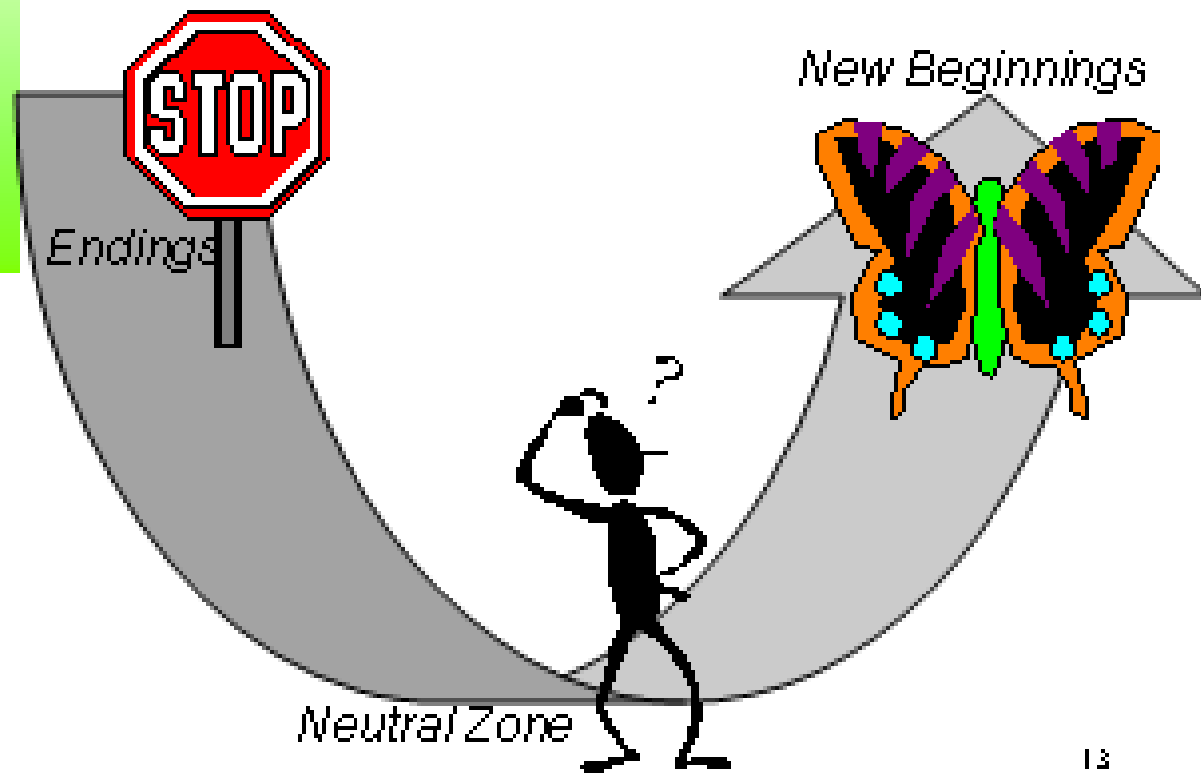


Being a Change Agent

This module was created by ICA colleagues Karen Snyder and Jim Troxel for use in their consulting practice at Millennia Consulting and in their adjunct teaching roles at DePaul University. Circa 2002.

An ending no longer; a beginning not yet.

Model of Change



Being a Change Agent

Most change programs don't work because they are guided by a theory of change that is fundamentally flawed. The common belief is that the place to begin is with the knowledge and attitudes of individuals. Changes in attitudes, the theory goes, lead to change in individual behavior. And changes in individual behavior, repeated by many people, will result in organizational change. According to this model, change is like a conversion experience. Once people "get religion," changes in their behavior will surely follow.

This theory gets the change process exactly backward. In fact, individual behavior is powerfully shaped by the organizational roles that people play. The most effective way to change behavior, therefore, is to put people into a new organizational context, which imposes new roles, responsibilities, and relationships on them. This creates a situation, that in a sense, "forces" new attitudes and behaviors on people.¹

¹ Excerpt from... "Why Change Programs Don't Produce Change," by Michael Beer, Russell A. Eisenstat, and Bert Spector, in *Harvard Business Review*, November-December, 1990.

Being a Change Agent

INFORMAL DIALOGUE ON CHANGE

Choose a partner - someone you have not met or worked with before - to engage in the following conversation. You have about 20 minutes to complete the conversation. Below are a variety of sentence stems. Each person responds to the same sentence stem, one at a time, but in random order if you wish. After you both have responded, you may wish to know more about your partner's answer. Take a moment to discuss a stem if it is of interest to you both. Do not bother to write down your responses if you don't want. After a while, we will reflect as a whole group on our conversations.

1. A major change that happened to me once was...
 2. A big change my family experienced once was...
 3. Not long ago we had a major change at work when...
 4. A time I felt good about a change was...
 5. A time I felt bad about a change was...
 6. One of the best outcomes of change is...
 7. I have difficulty with change when...
 8. I welcome change when...
 9. I resent change when...
 10. One of my strengths in dealing with change is...
 11. One of my weaknesses in dealing with change is...
 12. Change causes me to...
 13. I often see change as a gain when...
 14. I often see change as a loss when...
 15. I can handle change easier when...
 16. Change impacts me most when...
 17. When there is no choice but to change I...
 18. When I am responsible for leading change, I have learned...
-

DRIVING AND RESTRAINING FORCES²

Borrowing a concept from physics, Kurt Lewin “noted that the perceived status quo in life is just that – a *perception*. In reality, ... a given situation is a result of a dynamic process and is not static. The process flows from one moment to the next, with ups and downs, and over time gives the impression of a static situation, but there actually are some forces pushing in one direction and other, counterbalancing forces that restrain movement. The level of productivity in an organization may appear static, but sometimes it is being pushed higher – by the force of supervisory pressure, for example – and sometimes it is being restrained or even decreased by a counterforce, such as a norm of the work group. There are many different counterbalancing forces in any given situation, and what is called a force-field analysis is used to identify the two sets of forces.

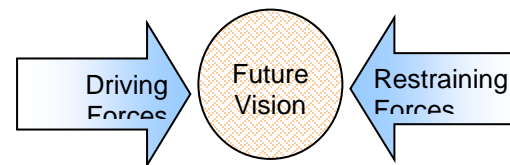
“Change from the status quo is therefore a two-step process. First, a force-field analysis is conducted, and then the intensity of a force or set of forces is either increased or decreased. Change can be fostered by adding to or increasing the intensity of the ... *driving forces* – that is, forces that push in the desired direction for change. Or change can be fostered by diminishing the opposing or restraining forces. Lewin’s theory predicts that the better of these two choices is to reduce the intensity of the restraining forces. By adding forces or increasing the intensity on the driving side, a simultaneous increase would occur on the restraining side, and the overall tension for the system – whether it is a person, a group, or an organization – would intensify. The better choice, then, is to reduce the restraining forces.”

This facet of Lewin’s field theory helps us to determine not only the nature of change but also how to accomplish it more effectively. Lewinian theory argues that it is more efficacious to direct change at the group level than at the individual level.

If one attempts to change an attitude or the behavior of an individual without attempting to change the same behavior or attitude in the group to which the individual belongs, then the individual will be a deviate and either will come under pressure from the group to get back into line or will be rejected entirely. Thus, the major leverage point for change is at the group level – for example, by modifying a group norm or standard. According to Lewin (1958):

As long as group standards are unchanged, the individual will resist change more strongly the farther he is to depart from group standards. If the group standard itself is changed, the resistance, which is due to the relation between individual and group standard, is eliminated.

Adherence to Lewinian theory from the standpoint of application involves viewing the organization as a social system, with many and varied subsystems, primarily groups.”



² Excerpt from *Organization Development: A Normative View*, W. Warner Burke, 1987, Addison-Wesley OD Series.

Force Field Analysis

Goal or Vision:

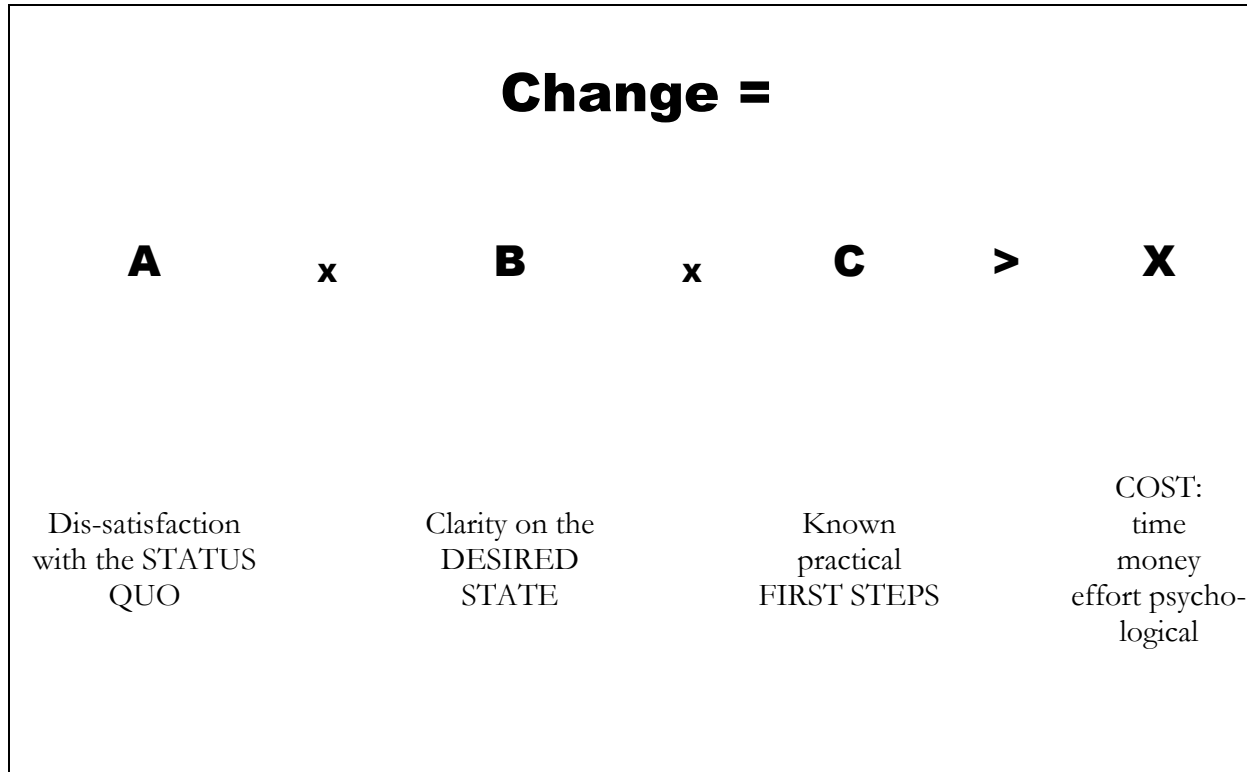
Driving Forces



Restraining Forces



THE CHANGE FORMULA

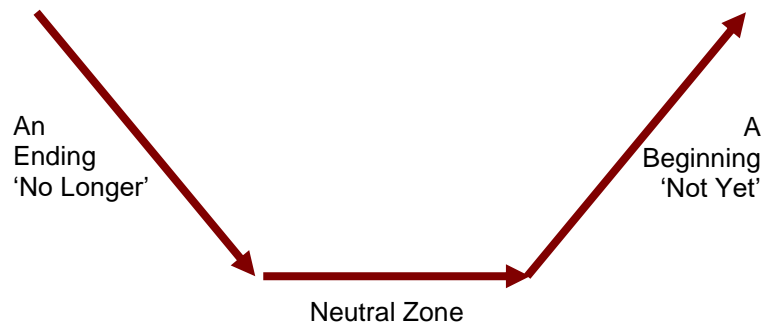


Being a Change Agent

TRANSITIONS:

Making Sense of Life's Changes³

Strategies for coping with the difficult, painful, and confusing times in your life



ENDINGS

An ending involves a symbolic death.

Disengagement

Dis-identification

Disenchantment

Disorientation

THE NEUTRAL ZONE

The first neutral-zone activity is surrender – person must give in to emptiness and stop struggling to escape it.

Three reasons why emptiness is essential:

1. **Process of Transformation is a death and rebirth process**
2. **The Process of Disintegration and Reintegration is the source of renewal**
3. **Perspective Provides on the Stages**

“What to do” consists not of ways out but of ways in – practical suggestions of how to find meaning in the experience of the neutral zone – and thus how to shorten it:

1. **Find a time and a regular place to be alone**
2. **Begin a log of neutral zone experiences**
3. **Write an autobiography**
4. **Discover what you really want**
5. **Think about what would be unlived if your life ended today. Write an obituary.**
6. **Take a few days to go on a passage journey.**

³ TRANSITIONS: *Making Sense of Life's Changes* by William Bridges, 1980.

Being a Change Agent

STARTING NEW BEGINNINGS

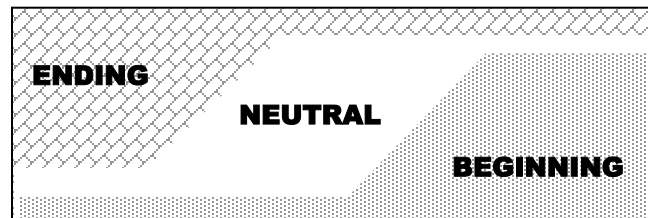
- ♦ When ready to make a beginning, we will shortly find an opportunity. Transition involves an inner realignment and a renewal of energy – subtle inner signals alert us to the proximity of new beginnings (an idea, impression, image, daydream, dreams – imaging some activity and feeling attracted to it).
 - ♦ Genuine beginnings depend upon inner realignment rather than external shifts, for when we are aligned with deep longings, we become powerfully motivated. When comes down to time and money, people say they can't launch the new beginning they dream of.
 - ♦ Anxieties and confusions arise from fear that change destroys the old ways in which we established our security. Assert we are on our own in a much deeper sense than we ever imagined originally (independence vs. autonomy).
 - ♦ Need to understand what undermines our resolve and casts doubt on our plans (upsets a long-standing arrangement with inner figure protecting us from change or external relationships).
 - ♦ Distinguish between real new beginning and defensive reaction to an ending (honor new; defensive is new way of perpetuating the old situation)
 - ♦ Several things that must be done:
 1. Stop getting ready and act.
 2. Begin to identify yourself with the final result of the new beginning. What going to feel like when you've actually done what set out to do? (You are the person that does that sort of thing!)
3. Take things step by step and resist siren song that says another route is more exciting and meaningful (preoccupation with results damaging).
-

Being a Change Agent

THREE PHASES OF TRANSITION

Excerpted from *Managing Transition: Making the Most of Change*,
by William Bridges

As a manager of an organization that is undergoing change, many of facets that individuals experience are also experienced by the organization. It is the task of the manager of change to assist the members of the organization to deal with both the individual and organizational components of the parallel change processes. Here are some things you can do:



Help People “Let Go” of what is Ending

1. Identify who is losing what.
 2. Accept reality/importance of subjective losses.
 3. Don't be surprised at “overreaction.”
 4. Acknowledge losses openly and sympathetically.
 5. Expect and accept signs of grieving.
 6. Compensate for losses.
 7. Give people information over and over.
 8. Define what is over and what isn't.
 9. Mark the endings.
 10. Treat the past with respect.
 11. Let people take a piece of the old away with them.
12. Show how endings ensure continuity of what really matters.
 13. Don't drag endings out; plan for them carefully.
-

Being a Change Agent

Help People Experiment in the Neutral Zone

1. Normalize “neutral zone.”
2. Redefine “neutral zone.”
3. Create temporary systems for neutral zone.
4. Strengthen intra-group communications.
5. Use a transition monitoring team.
6. Use the neutral zone creatively:
 - a. Establish by word and example a time to question the “usual”
 - b. Provide opportunities for others to do the same
 - c. Train in techniques of discovery and innovation
 - d. Encourage experiments
 - e. Embrace setbacks as entry points for new solutions
 - f. Look for opportunities to brainstorm new solutions to old problems
 - g. Restrain natural impulse in times of ambiguity and disorganization to push for certainty and closure

Celebrate New Beginnings

1. Ambivalence toward beginnings
 - a. beginnings reactivate old anxieties
 - b. the new represents a gamble
 - c. the way it relates to the past
 - d. it destroys the pleasant parts of the neutral zone
 2. Timing – the four “P’s”:
-

3. Purpose clarified and communicated
 - a. meaningful terms
 - b. communicate with understanding and truthfulness
4. Picture
 - a. imagine it
 - b. create it
5. Plan – watch out for
 - a. prematurity
 - b. being overwhelmed
6. Part to play
 - a. new insight into real problem faced
 - b. sharing problems
 - c. first hand knowledge shared
 - d. facts and self-interest
 - e. all participate in outcome
7. Reinforce new beginnings
 - a. be consistent
 - b. ensure quick successes
 - c. symbolize new identity
 - d. celebrate success

Being a Change Agent

MANAGING TRANSITIONS

Imagine that you have been hired as an outside change management consultant to help your organization manage the change it is going through. What would you do? Below is a list of actions that taken in similar situations that you can draw from. Scan them and see which sound like you. Then go back through the list slowly and put a number by each item, assigning it one of the five categories at the right. This is not a simple situation, and solving it is a complicated undertaking. There aren't any absolutely correct answers in this list.

- 1 = Very important. Do this at once.
- 2 = Worth doing but takes more time. Start planning it.
- 3 = Yes and no. Depends on how it's done.
- 4 = Not very important. May even be a waste of effort.
- 5 = No! Don't do this.

organization might be good ideas to of the five undertaking.

- _____ a. Explain the changes again in a carefully written memo.
- _____ b. Figure out exactly how individuals' behaviors and attitudes will have to change to make the new system work
- _____ c. Analyze who stands to lose something under the new system.
- _____ d. Redo the compensation system to reward compliance with the changes.
- _____ e. "Sell" the issue that led to the reason for the change.
- _____ f. Bring in a motivational speaker to give employees a powerful talk about the importance of change.
- _____ g. design temporary systems to contain the confusion during the cutover from the old way to the new.
- _____ h. Use the interim between the old system and the new to improve the way in which services are delivered by the agency – and, where appropriate, create new services.
- _____ i. Change the spatial arrangements so that the cubicles are separated, only by glass or low partitions.
- _____ j. Put everyone in contact with disgruntled clients, either by phone or in person. Let them see the problem first hand.
- _____ k. Appoint a "change manager" to be responsible for seeing that the changes to smoothly.
- _____ l. Give everyone a badge with a new "teamwork" logo on it.
- _____ m. Break the change into smaller stages. Combine the firsts and seconds, and then add the thirds later. Change the managers into coordinators last.
- _____ n. Talk to individuals. Ask what kinds of problems they have with the new system.
- _____ o. Change the spatial arrangements from individual cubicles to group spaces.
- _____ p. Pull the best people in the agency together as a model team to show everyone else how to do it.
- _____ q. Give everyone a training seminar on how to work as a team.
- _____ s. Reorganize the senior manager's staff as a team and re-conceive the senior executive's job as that of a coordinator.
- _____ t. Send agency representatives to visit other organizations where service teams operate successfully.
- _____ u. Turn the whole thing over to the individual contributors as a group and ask them to come up with a plan to change over to teams.
- _____ v. Scrap the plan and find one that is less disruptive.
- _____ w. Tell the old guard to stop dragging their feet or they'll face disciplinary actions.
- _____ x. Give bonuses to the first team to process 100 client service calls in the new way.
- _____ y. Give everyone a copy of the new organization chart.
- _____ z. Start holding regular team meetings.
- _____ aa. Change the annual individual targets to team targets, and adjust bonuses to reward team performance.
- _____ bb. Talk about transition and what it does to people. Give supervisors and managers a seminar on how to manage people in transition.

-- Stop here -- Fill in the numbers before going to the next page --

Being a Change Agent

While it is true there are not correct answers to the exercise above, over time some ideas have proven to be more effective than others. Here's the accumulated wisdom of leading change management experts, offered in reverse order, worst first.

Category 5: No! Don't do this.

u, m, p, v, w

Category 4: Not very important. May even be a waste of effort.

a, i, y

Category 3: Yes and no. Depends on how it's done.

f, k, l, q, x

Category 2: Worth doing but takes more time. Start planning it.

d, g, h, o, s, t, aa

Category 1: Very important. Do this at once.

b, c, e, j, n, bb, z

Adapted from *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*. William Bridges. 1991. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Role of the Change Agent

