

Managing Change & Technology

The Light Version... Vol 3, #4
January 2002

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*To Embrace the Future,
Let go of the Past
PdJ*

SMALL CHANGE

A short look at a collection of hand-me-down wisdom

Surrounded by Hard earned lessons

Pick up any book of quotes and you'll find several pages dedicated to quotes on Change. There are two reasons for this. First, Change is an issue we all have to deal with... and secondly, despite all the confusion surrounding Change, we really do know a lot about it.... if only we'd pay attention to existing wisdom.

With these observations in mind I thought it would be useful to select a handful of the better quotes and restate the sometimes not so obvious.

1. There is nothing permanent except change.

Heraclitus (540-475? B.C)

Clocks tick, sand falls, the shadows move, and in response... we grow older. If nothing else changed, this by itself would bring about adventure enough for a lifetime.

Knowing and accepting that change inevitably happens is enough to make us more accepting of the Change around us. This is not to say that just because things Change we must accept every Change foisted upon us. There is such a thing as 'Bad' Change. Most Change is ill-considered, and ill-advised.

Many possible Changes exist in the world. Our task is to sift amongst what is available and select the Change appropriate to this time, this place, this situation.

2. The more the Change, the more it is the same thing.

Alphonse Karr (1808-1890)

A contradiction with the quote above? Or just a different focus from a different perspective? Either way it also contains an important truth. Some things never Change.

People will generally try to protect what they value, love their children, hate their enemies. The way we interact with each other changes little in a lifetime, if ever.

People are born, grow old, die. It's not the specific instances that stay the same, it's the human patterns of life that are fairly immutable. Know the patterns of life, understand what motivates us, what we fear, what we love, and the above quote becomes more complementary, rather than contradictory, to the first.

3. I reject get-it-done, make-it-happen thinking. I want to slow things down so I understand them better.

Governor Jerry Brown

Change, without thought, is the thinking of a pendulum. First this way, then that, with no goal in mind. Movement for the sake of movement, action without progress.

Each day offers a million opportunities for Change. We suffer a surfeit of excuses for random movement. The mother of invention is no longer necessity. Today we invent solutions to problems which don't exist as yet. The challenge is no longer to 'Change', it's to select a specific Change out of the myriad of possible Changes. How better to do this than to slow down just a little bit, and think?

4. The art of progress is to preserve order amid Change, and to preserve Change amid order.

Alfred North Whitehead

Anyone responsible for Change has two totally separate tasks to accomplish.

They must bring Change about with as little chaos as possible.

And when everyone is comfortable with the existing Status Quo, they must do their best to keep us moving forward. They must inject Change, and hence temporary Chaos, into the calm of an established process. The alternative is stagnation.

5. Man has a limited capacity for Change.

Alvin Toffler

We travel our lives upon the paths of known Status Quo. Small erosions of the ground beneath our feet, we handle in our stride. Larger gaps require greater leaps of faith. But when the chasm is so wide we cannot see the other side, then we lose hope and are lost.

When bringing Change about, we're well advised to protect something of the Status Quo we've come to depend upon, and to make the gap surmountable, at least with the help of a support team.

6. Every new adjustment is a crisis in self esteem

Eric Hoffer

Any change of significance requires us to learn something new. When learning something new, we all share a common fear... can we learn this? What if we fail?

To ignore this common thought, whether by ignorance or arrogance, is to deny the reality of a simple human truth. The result is a management style at odds with the laws of human nature.

7. If you try to measure the future you will never risk the present. Playing it safe. A ghastly game.

Catherine Deneuve

All the planning in the world will never remove all the risk from a future endeavor. There will always remain an element of the unknown, a 'what-if' question with no final answer.

There are no guarantees that the Change we're contemplating will turn out as expected. Any claim otherwise is a lie. Any demand for certainty isn't the demand of an adult.

Change by its nature, involves risk which by itself is insufficient reason to remain locked in place.

8. Adapt or perish, now as ever, is Nature's inexorable imperative.

H. G. Wells

There comes a time in every endeavor when we have absolutely no choice, but to Change, when to stand firm in what we've done before, will bring ruin. This should be obvious to anyone who keeps an eye on world affairs. There is no shortage of evidence that sometimes Change is an imperative.

Of course, this does not mean we can forgo making sure that everyone who must Change, has been given the opportunity to understand why the Change is necessary. It is NEVER good enough to say 'Change because I said so'.

9. Ancient laws remain in force long after the people have the power to change them.

Aristotle

'Now', is always the appropriate time to ask, "Why are we doing it this way?" And 'Now' is always the right time to Change, if there's no good answer to the question.

10. If you never change your mind, why have one?

Edward De Bono

Each day we're presented with new information. If, in spite of new information, our views stay the same, then we might as well die the day we form an opinion.

New information is Change. If assimilated without prejudice it Changes our view of the world.

Summary?

I've found quotes to be perfect distillations of someone else's thoughts. I don't always agree with the expressed sentiment, but they provide concise insights into someone else's thinking.

A good quote resonates in the mind with things we already know. When it comes to the issue of Change, quote after quote focus on very similar themes. Where they contradict with each other, I know there's something special to be learned.

Peter de Jager
January 2002

REFINEMENT ON "THE ESSENCE OF CHANGE"

by Dan Gautreau

Change is a process whereby people move towards what they love and/or away from what they fear

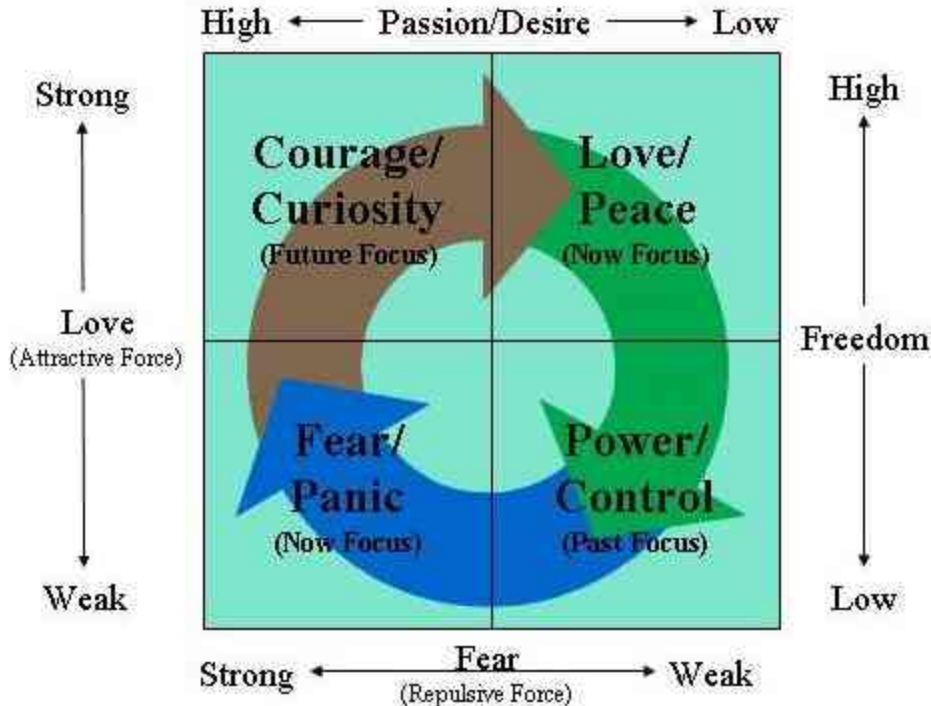
Dan Gautreau

Hi Peter:

I liked your attempt to distill a definition of change into "People move towards what they desire and away from what they fear." However, I think your definition could be a little misleading to some in the way you formulated it. For what it's worth, here is my crack at a slightly different explanation.

A more accurate statement on the nature of change would be that "Change is a process whereby people move towards what they love and/or away from what they fear". Next, it is important to understand that Love is an "attractive force" while Fear is a "repulsive force". And finally, it is necessary to understand that Love and Fear typically exist simultaneously, in strong and/or weak forms relative to each other, thus producing the four basic motivational states you described in Vol 3, #3. These are:

Love Strong, Fear Weak.....**Love/Peace**
 Fear Strong, Love Weak.....**Fear/Panic**
 Fear Strong, Love Strong....**Curiosity/Courage**
 Fear Weak, Love Weak.....**Power/Control**



For the vast majority of us, these four basic motivational states emerge and fade in standard sequence, but can be experienced in two different directions (a.k.a paths). When courage/curiosity leads to love/peace which leads to power/control which leads to fear/panic which leads to courage/curiosity, this is the path of the hero. When courage/curiosity leads to fear/panic which leads to power/control which leads to love/peace, this is the path of the coward.

The trick is to understand that it is up to each of us to choose which direction (path) we take. And we make this choice by declaring which force will "energize" our day to day lives.

If we choose the repulsive force (fear), we will have selected the path of the coward and our fate will be a life of low passion (a.k.a boring) where we often experience temporary freedom from fear.

If we choose the attractive force (love), we will have selected the path of the hero and our fate will be a life of high passion where we often experience the freedom to think, say, do and/or have what we love (desire).

Summary

The wisest among us take this understanding even farther. They know that love is all there is and that fear (a.k.a, the repulsive force) is just an illusion or misperception. Thus, masters never experience fear or panic. And they never seek to exert power or control over anyone or anything. Instead, these masters live lives of courage, peace, curiosity and love.

Simple eh...(if only).

Cheers / Don't Worry, Be Happy / May the (one true) force be with you!

Dan

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE PITFALLS & SUGGESTIONS

by Garry McGonigal


Briefly touching on the topic of corporate changes Good or Bad

When folks within an organization, or external consultants, start promoting the concept that 'change is good', we should ring the fire alarm. We should shout loudly 'hold on, let us take a long deep look at what you're talking about'. The next words should be, 'where does this fit into our overall strategic plan'. 'Ahh, we don't have one?' Forest fire time!

Analogies aside, the key point here is that change, for the sake of change, isn't good. Just because someone, regardless of position, states we need to make changes or that change is a good thing, does not automatically make them correct. In fact as the rest of this article will point out? Approaching change in this manner is often destructive.

If you do not have a strategic business plan, then you have no strategic goals, no structure or frame work, no design against which to evaluate a proposed change. If the change maker's position is that by going through and undertaking a change, these strategic plans will evolve? Baloney.

There are many people in business and in government who just cannot plan. They may just not have that particular skill set or are often without the formal training necessary for the role of 'planner'.



Yet too many of these managers despite being without planning skills, are the very ones who push for change because they view change as good. Or, someone told them it was a good idea.

'Change' is also used as a method to buy time, to defer, or avoid a decision. The old axiom states that by restructuring your department, you buy a couple of years before having to make 'real' decisions.

Bottom line? -- if you can't plan, don't try to implement change. There is nothing more frightening to witness, than Change projects under the control of decision makers lacking rudimentary planning skills. The plans fail to take into account what happens under the topmost layers of human interaction during the change process.

In this context, a 'layer' refers to the secondary consequences of actions. -- i.e. they want to make some organizational changes, but they struggle with the concept of outcomes. A simple example, when you move person A to B's office. Where do we move person B? and so on (the ripple effect)?

When they are 'planning' changes to the business process, they fail to define or assess the secondary impacts. They are unable to deal with detail... it's someone else's problem. But they want changes made. These are the 'single layer people'.

In any discussion relating to change, there are fundamental questions requiring solid answers: 'How does this change affect and support the strategic plan? Why is this change process even necessary? What are the risks?' If we don't ask these questions, we ultimately fail as managers of Change.

There is an increasing belief in organizations that change is good. Staff at all levels are forced to embrace change and anyone who doesn't, isn't with the program, is unwelcome, and is due for dismissal.

Not all change is good. Changing work flows and processes, just to tinker, or because someone heard about it at a conference, or because an executive needs to demonstrate a perceived improvement, is ill-considered.

The pressure on some organizations to change is deadly. All the right phrases and intent may have been used, but rarely does someone take a step back and ask 'WHY?'. Why do we really need to do this? WHAT are we going to gain by doing this? WHAT are we going to lose? What is the strategic plan and value? What is the risk to the employees and to the business?

Most organizations are so involved in rushing about, so short of key people and thinkers who are experienced in strategic planning, that they just try to do it. A few even use 'change' to cover or mask their own inefficiencies, and buy time hoping that by doing so, the real 'problems' will go away on their own.

Until the front end assessment, the strategic plan, and then operational plan(s), are all worked out, there is no sense overhauling the organization. Once those are in place, then, and only then, can effective change management take over.

I have witnessed first hand, organizations jumping into major changes because someone said they needed to make changes. And two years later, they have come full circle to where they were at the beginning.

In the meantime, staff and clients, were all stressed to the limits. If an external entity audited what took place, they would conclude it was all wasted effort.

I just got back from a week long forum where the majority of those in attendance represented those at the front lines... 'where the rubber meets the road'. And much of the discussion was on the same topics as those discussed in 1977.

The sad part is that staff and clients will be put through the same changes and stresses, as those in 1977 without learning from the lessons learnt in 1977, or in the 1980s and the 1990s. Scary to see this reinvention over and over. And why? Again, because of a lack of some good people willing to take leadership and do their homework.

Some observations from where the rubber hits the road.

Cheers

*There is nothing wrong with making mistakes,
Just don't respond with encores*

Anonymous

MC&T IS PUBLISHED IRREGULARLY ON A MONTHLY
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All comments are always welcome! Send them to me at Pdejager@technobility.com

Change Seminar Opportunity

I will be holding four one day Change workshops, at the following locations and dates.

Montreal, QC	June 1 st 2002
Philadelphia, PA	July 19 th 2002
Orlando, FL	July 28 th 2002
Toronto, Ont	August 10 th 2002

*The fee structure is unique. \$595.00USD for your first attendee.
\$250.00USD for additional team members.
\$100.00USD for one admin assistant.*

The course format? A hands on, interactive workshop designed to teach the Change Process Model and Change Implementation Strategies as outlined in MCT0103 & MCT0107 (archived at www.technobility.com). The workshop will address both the Theory and the practice of Change Management Projects from a Team perspective.

Each attendee will also receive a copy of The Change Chronicles Video, a \$75.00 value.

Contact me at pdejager@technobility.com if you're interested in sending your Change Management Team to this seminar, or to arrange an in-house event. *Class sizes will be restricted to 30 attendees.*

MY SERVICES & PRODUCTS

I'm primarily a speaker/consultant on issues relating to Change and the Future. You can contact me via e-mail at pdejager@technobility.com or call me at 1-905-792-8706 to discuss how I might be of service to your organization.

My primary speaking topics fall under the umbrella of Change, Technology and the Future. Here are some sample titles.

Managing the Impact of Change...

Basically everything I talk about in this journal are topics I consult and speak about. Let's discuss how I might be of service to you. If I can't help you, I know someone who can.

Commerce ends with an E!...

Our focus is first on our 'commerce' and then on the Internet

The Rule of 100 in your business...

Why rapid change in ANY direction forces you to re-examine your business, your industry and even society.

Technology in Context...

What instant access to information means to any industry.

The Erosion of Boundaries...

What does the ever increasing flood of technology mean to life in general?

The drive to simplicity in the face of complexity...

Why Cities in Italy are reversing the clock on Technology.

The Vapour Point of Product

What happens when it costs less to build it yourself than to buy it from a store? An examination of the near future of Rapid Manufacturing.

And Truth Picks... now published!

See www.truthpicks.com for online ordering!

If you enjoyed the approach I used in 'Small Change' then you'll enjoy Truth Picks, a collection of 130+ similar observations on a wide range of topics.

That's it... see you next month!
Peter de Jager