

HUFFPOST BUSINESS

Accepting Change as a Positive Necessity

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Summer is behind us and as we get ready to go back to work or school, we may want to ensure we are doing so with an openness to new possibilities. Fall is a very good illustration of the positive effects of change and the significance that transformation can bring. It tells a compelling story and creates a vivid picture through nature. Change represents progress yet so often, it is met with resistance. At times, this resistance comes from concern or fear of the unknown effects the change may bring to oneself and/or to others. While we cannot control or even predict what changes will be presented to us on a daily basis, one thing we know for sure - and that is the only constant we can expect to face every day is change! Therefore, shifting our mindset to one that accepts change as a positive necessity in our careers and lives is likely to empower us for success.

Change is inevitable and in reality, it represents progress, moving forward in a way that yields more efficiency and/or effectiveness. Our goal is to embrace change and realize that we play a role in making it happen; leadership sets the tone and everyone contributes. Yes, it can be uncomfortable and challenging, yet change also allows us to grow and venture into new territories that may be quite foreign at first but very rewarding in the end. For example, when I first switched over to a smart phone from a blackberry, it took me a long time to get used to the touch screen. Fast forward to a few years later and I now have several devices and use numerous applications that allow me to be more efficient, creative and productive in my work.

We live in a global and multi-cultural economy and are doing business with individuals all over the world. Most organizations today have employees, clients, customers, vendors and other stakeholders throughout the world who are communicating and collaborating daily to achieve desired results. Every day we are faced with changes that may be in our economy, markets, industries, organizations, technologies, as well as leadership and people changes in our companies. When we can get comfortable with this fact and wake up every day embracing and welcoming change, we actually open ourselves up to never-ending opportunities and possibilities. In fact, managing change effectively is an essential leadership skill today. Not only is it required of leaders and managers but, as individuals, we all play a critical role in executing effective change.

Let me share another example to illustrate this point. In higher education, the traditional models of learning have been enhanced with virtual learning. The first several years I taught as a university lecturer, all the teaching was in a classroom. Over the years, a hybrid model was introduced and ultimately a completely virtual model. While I was resistant to these changes, I tried embracing them and have learned to appreciate the model much more than I ever imagined. As a matter of fact, many of the courses I have been teaching the past few years have been virtual which has

enabled me to work with a diverse mix of students from all over the world at any one time and the opportunity to engage every single student in a substantive dialogue which would not happen in a live classroom! These experiences have enriched my knowledge and learning is a way that would not have happened if I didn't open myself up to new approaches. Being flexible and agile is important in order to grow and succeed.

Change is a good thing, it is inevitable, it is necessary and it, more often than not, leads to progress. I always like to reference Ben Franklin's quote within this conversation, "*Life is ten percent what you make it and ninety percent how you take it.*" Putting this into practice can be difficult and require us to push out of our comfort zone. Doing so, however, leads to great things as we enhance our knowledge and experiences. One of my mottos is... "*Get comfortable being uncomfortable.*" When we do, we truly grow and open up a world of possibilities we would not otherwise experience. Keeping ourselves open and actively looking for and engaging in ways that stretch ourselves with new behaviors, strategies, skills and knowledge. Do you make this a priority for yourself? Do you welcome and embrace change as a requirement for growth? When we do accept change as a positive necessity, we see it as a requirement and opportunity rather than an obstacle. There are many proven practices and models for how leaders and managers can manage change effectively. What can each individual do to play a role in managing and executing change? I have learned to **ACT** to effectively deal with change and have coached individuals and teams to do so as well.

ACT now to effectively deal with Change:

Accept and Acknowledge the need for change

Communicate with all parties involved in a pro-active manner to Clarify and Comprehend the needs as well as the process required for the change to be implemented

Thrive in the progress change brings — *Throw yourself into the change, keep an open mind, Try new things, Test different approaches, Think about the impact on all, ask for and be open to feedback, Teach others your learnings, and Tell all*

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