



Paper Coach

Dealing with Change and Transition

Change
is the
rhythm
of living

This Paper Coach is intended to be delivered as part of handouts for a SkillSnax® webinar, or as part of one-to-one coaching.

It provides tips and ideas that will help you to understand:

- How change affects you
- The process of change and how you can manage that in self and others
- How to recognise positive and negative behaviours in others
- How change, grieving, setbacks, challenges and great news can all cause similar behaviours
- Understand the role of leadership and management in workplace change

Change is the rhythm of living and many of us for many reasons embrace or avoid change. This Paper Coach seeks to highlight some general aspects of dealing with change and loss in the workplace and in life. We suggest that you seek further expert support and advice if required.

Two Parts to Change

Change has two parts:

1. **The New Horizon** - where you are trying to get to (known or unknown)
2. **The Journey** - the steps along the path from where change begins to where you end up. This is referred to as transition

The new horizon may be a goal, a desired outcome, a workplace strategy or embedding a life change. Change, even if a painful process of grieving, does have a desired goal (e.g. “when will I be free of this pain and loss?”, is hope for a new horizon that is happier and ‘pain free’). Hope and the desire for something better, are the main ingredients of part one of change, and so in organisational change, it is critical that leaders can communicate the new horizon with as much clarity as possible. In addition, they must also communicate ‘WHY’ change is necessary and what the ‘BENEFITS’ will be once achieved. This keeps everyone focused on the new horizon and offers a goal.

In a grieving process, the new horizon may change regularly and may require small steps and small goals.

The Journey/Transition will have its ups and downs, but eventually will take an individual to a new and more developed place. The horizon, in terms of development and performance is always at a higher place than the start point of the change. This is hard to grasp: how can losing a loved one or a job be good? That is because the final destination brings with it increased skills and abilities that were not known prior to the change/loss. For example, a woman who loses her life partner may grieve deeply for that person, but the end result is that she learns how to live alone, be independent and make life decisions as a single person.

However, many perceive most change as something that is negative or not wanted. That is because change is hard wired into us all as potential threat, and from a primal perspective questioned as possible loss of life and limb! The initial shock of change brings with it a freeze response that triggers fight or flight. This initial paralysis or shock can be huge if related to the death of a loved one, friend or colleague, or small if related to the loss of a file on your computer system. Whatever the cause, the brain still releases the same messages and chemicals that put our



Life is change.

Growth is optional.

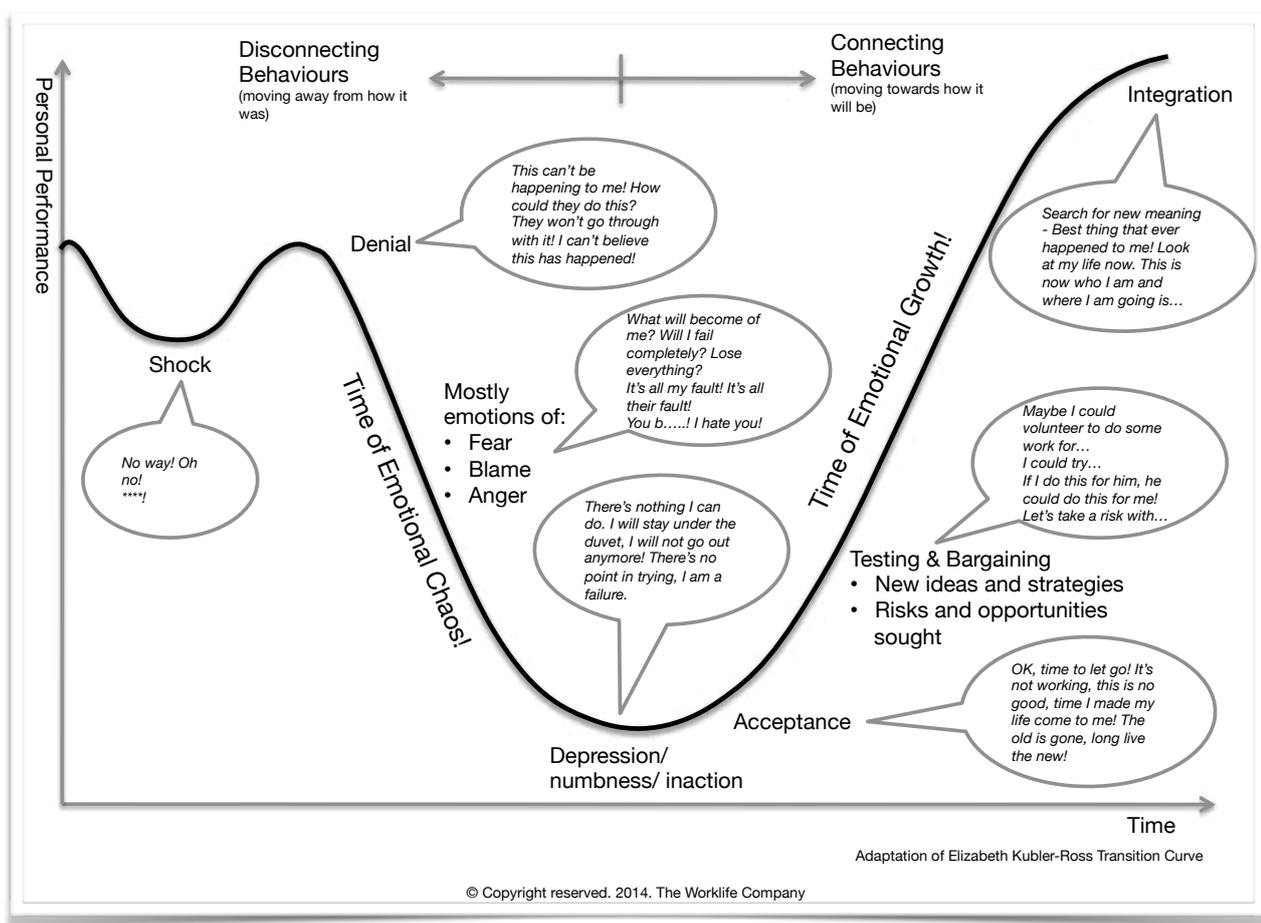
Choose wisely.

Karen Kaiser-Clark

whole body and mind on red-alert, and trigger both the fight-flight and the transition response.

The Transition Curve

Many years ago, Elizabeth Kubler Ross (On Death & Dying) studied the process of grieving as part of her life's work to improve end of life care. Elizabeth discovered that any loss (death of a loved one, pet or even loss of your car keys) triggers the transition process. Shown below, we now know that this curve is experienced not just during negative loss, but also as a result of a positive change, like a new baby, getting married or a job promotion; suggesting that



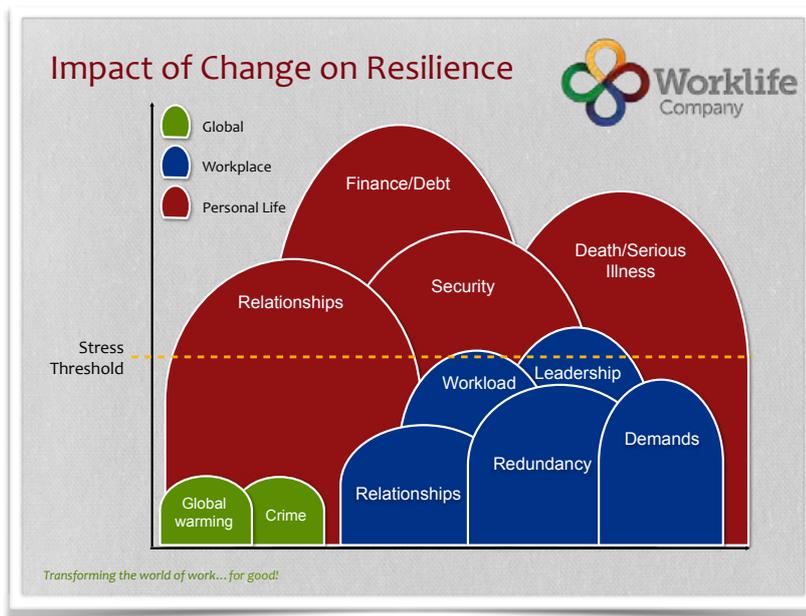
change and loss are two sides of the same coin. That is because all change (even the good stuff) involves loss of some kind because to accept the new, you must let go of something. For example, getting married means letting go of the single life, or accepting a job promotion means leaving the old and familiar role. The more we understand about this process, the better equipped we can become to able to cope with our and others' responses to grieving/

loss and change/loss. This is part of building our emotional resilience.

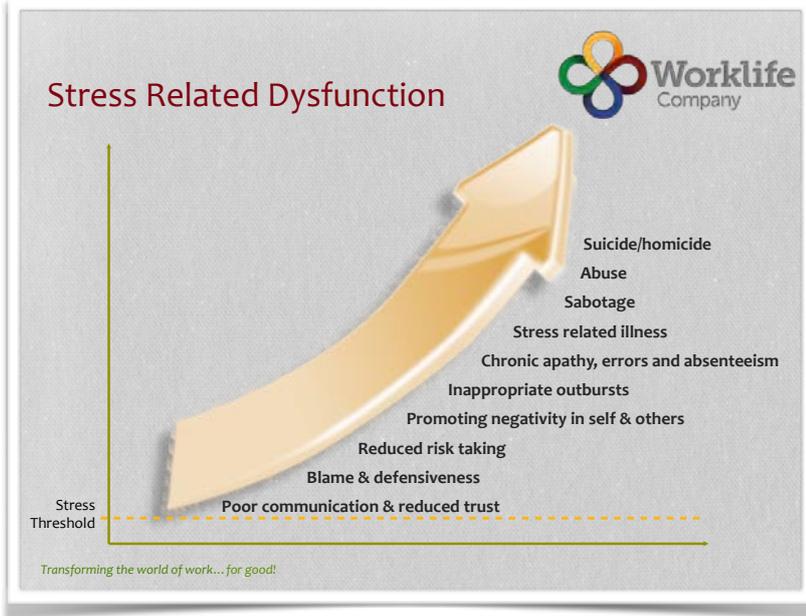
Coping with multiple changes at once can sometimes lead to high levels of stress and dysfunction. When we are going through change it is normal to feel confused, anxious, uncertain and even angry – especially if you are experiencing a number of changes in work as well as in life. As shown in the diagram below, change and our reaction to it can be much more extreme if there are more changes than we can cope with. Be mindful of this if managing a team. Announcing a small organisational change may be trivial to you, but to someone who is also

going through divorce, losing their home and leaving their family, may just regard it as the last straw. People are not one-dimensional, and therefore change must be communicated and managed sensitively.

We can become uneasy during change - some even try to run away or avoid the situation, which is why there can sometimes be an increase in sickness absence, or



turnover of staff during a major change program. If understood, it can become a catalyst for support and eventual growth in individuals and organisations. Understanding the dynamics of change and transition helps us to adapt to a constantly changing environment. If you manage others, it is important to be cognitive of changes in people's behaviours and any sudden reduction in their performance/capability. When individuals are transitioning through the disconnecting aspects of loss (shown below), then their productivity and performance will be lower. It is during this time that managers may decide to set lighter duties, offer time-out or seek expert support. This is best done through dialogue, one-to-one sessions and (if more grave), with the support of your HR team, EAP provider, staff counselling services,



change experts, and/or coaches.

The time taken to transition varies depending on the circumstance, individual and what the loss relates to. There is no prescriptive time, every circumstance and individual case is different. However, it is a mature and sensible manager that listens and supports his/her employee through the grieving process in a

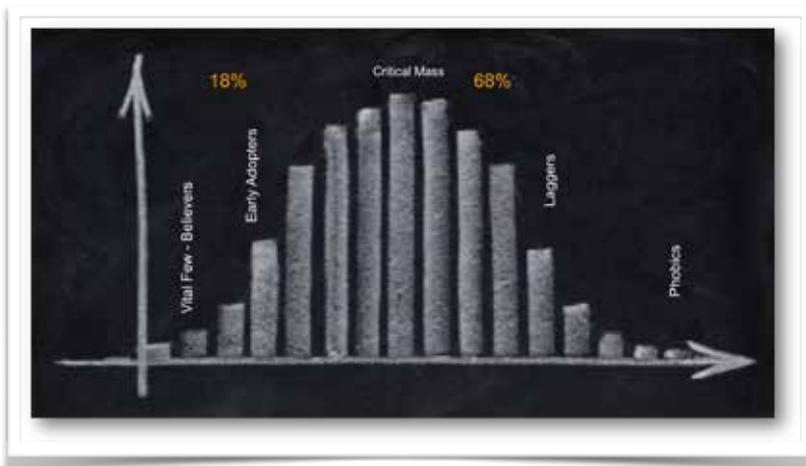
sensitive and accommodating way. Grieving the loss of a loved one, especially a child, cannot be dictated by blanket policy. Equally, loss of a word document on a computer may frustrate for a couple of hours until it is re-generated, but loss of a job, loss of a colleague or transformational change may take longer.

Managing Change and Transition

In any organisation you will find that people react to change differently; some people are positive about change, others not. On the change distribution curve shown, you can see

(starting from the left hand side), the five groups of people behaviours often visible during change. These are:

1. Vital Few
2. Early Adopters
3. Critical Mass
4. Laggards
5. Phobics



The vital few make up about 14% of the total population of employees and not only believe in the change that has to happen, but have often anticipated or been a catalyst for it happening. They are not only committed to the change, but take responsibility for getting things going and are

Tips for Managing Change at Work

1. Involve! Involve! Involve!
2. Tell stories to make it stick, to explain the 'why' of change involve employees in the metaphors and structures
3. Create grass roots participation through open-space and world café
4. During redundancies, remember to manage survivors – guilt and 'why keep me?' are serious transitional concerns for those that remain employed
5. Use the prioritisation matrix and time tools to assess where you have come from and going to
6. Use physical space to communicate progress and celebrate results
7. Repeat the 'WHY' and the 'BENEFITS' at every opportunity
8. Run focus groups to create dialogue, network groups for special interest and disruptive facilitation to accelerate change.
9. Understand why People Resist and respond appropriately:
 - Need for security, safety, and routine
 - Messages from the past
 - Inner voices and labels
 - Fear of failure

accountable as part of the change process. Then there are the early adopters, they see the commitment from the vital few and follow suit. As followers, they take ownership for making things happen and also for bringing others on board - it only requires a total of 18% of believers and early adopters to assure momentum for change. These early adopters are great at planning, implementation, communication and relationship building to create more followership. Involving, networking and engaging others is key to the early adopter, and they are the ones that bring the critical masses with them. At 68%, the organisation will achieve a tipping point of change devolvement, which means that there are now enough people involved for it to stick. This is when the laggards sigh with heavy heart as they let go of their resistance and join in too. Only then are you left with the final few - the Phobics - who either have to fit in or flit away. As Simon Sinek says in his book 'Start with Why' - "the only reason phobics have touch-tone phones is because they can't buy rotary phones anymore!".

When leading or managing change, and to make change happen, move from left to right – don't try to convince the laggards and phobics! You will just waste vital time and energy. Work with your believers and early adopters towards the 18% number. Emancipate change, create disruptive space and allow the incredible to happen. We call this Better Change!

Strategic Organisational Change

We can no longer place attention on leading change, but rather, accommodating change. That is the new world. Organisational and Human Resilience will come as a result of adaptability, nimbleness and letting go of controlling change through a dedicated change team.

Better Change does not use traditional project based change management processes to effect change, but new techniques that are inspiring, emergent and generative. These are outcome driven, dynamically facilitated and utilise open space cultures, technologies and sharing. Change is an active participation and emancipation of all employees, and builds belonging, organisational learning through internal crowd-sourcing and new development models and activism through multiple communication and activity approaches.



Why Better Change?

Emancipation and involvement in change can only be achieved truly, if people believe in the purpose, goals, values and intents of leadership. Growth, progress, success, sustainability... words and intents on the lips of many business leaders, but these words alone do not create change.

In recent years we have seen 'Growth without conscience' and experienced its impact on society wellbeing, not to mention organisational and human wellbeing. Those days of greed and selfish behaviour serve as a stark reminder that the focus must be 'growth with conscience'. Leaders who create followership and participation, understand that their purpose is not just to make money, but to make a difference. This requires clarity of cause, articulated in a compelling way that inspires the belief of others in the calling towards something better.

Creating a Living Organisation™ is one that is focused on striving for a common cause that is good, and requires

strong and uncompromising values that underpin every single system, process and living being in that organisation.

Our world, communities, people and future generations deserve better; so, we had BETTER CHANGE.

Better Change, places Honesty, Hope and Honour at the heart of its guiding principles and provides the culture and climate for progress with conscience in the landscape.

Better Change can cause substantial constructive as well as necessary destructive shifts in leadership and organisational function as new ways of leading and operating are introduced, and old ways are dismantled and unlearned.

These constructive and destructive aspects are necessary if an organisation is to let go of barriers and be courageous about future opportunities.



Better Change OD Consulting is change delivered in a participatory, dynamic and active way, using techniques that accelerate the change process in viral, connected and social ways.

To find out how Worklife Company can support you to create and sustain a great company to work for and do business with, please get in touch.

Further information and Contact

About the Worklife Company



We are a Leadership and Organisational Development Consultancy

Our purpose and ambition is to transform the world of work for good, by creating better organisations to work for and do business with, resulting in improved organisational and human wellbeing.

For good, does not just mean forever, but also goodness; leadership focused on **growth with conscience** from the inside out and the outside in.

- Goodness from the outside-in aligns customer advocacy with modern operating systems and strategy.
- Goodness from the inside-out allows a leadership culture that sustains organisational and employee wellbeing.

The result is ***a great organisation to work for and a great organisation to do business with.***

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