

The Worklife Journey: Journal

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Managing the "C" Word

Change is now the most constant attribute of daily work. Gone are the days of predictability and stability. The five year plan? - A relic of a world now obsolete. Countless articles, books and studies add insight into this growing phenomenon of today's world. Individuals and organizations alike struggle to keep pace and remain centered and productive. The answer lies in understanding the aspects of both change and transition, grasping the differences between them and maintaining a clear focus on our personal and corporate objectives.

First, let's separate the terms Change, meaning an alteration of an external condition, and transition, meaning the internal process that accompanies the change. A quick table will help to separate the two:

CHANGE	TRANSITION
EXTERNAL	INTERNAL
SITUATIONAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL
EVENT-BASED	EXPERIENCE-BASED
DEFINED BY OUTCOME	DEFINED BY PROCESS
CAN OCCUR QUICKLY	ALWAYS TAKES TIME

A simple example is the move from one office space to another (how many times has that happened to you!) The packing, confusion, phone and computer set up, while inconvenient, are fairly quickly and effectively accomplished. The more subtle aspects of the personal transition, the feelings of disorientation, leaving the access to friendly co-workers, the ease of access to files and equipment, even the change of lighting, may take much more time to process and become comfortable with. This is the result of our inner life of emotions, needs and desires. Unfortunately we plan the change but fail to manage the transition effectively. Increase this challenge exponentially with the growing rate of change in work and life and we can start to understand the rash of stress disorders and difficulty in keeping up.

Coaching Transition

We can better facilitate our journey through transition by grasping two aspects of our internal processes - our needs and our aspirations. The endings that result from change impact our mental, emotional or physical needs in some way and this, in turn, gives rise to anxiety and confusion. We all have different needs and will experience these endings in our own way, but they fall into four categories:

- The need for interactive communication and discussion
- The need for active, physical participation and completion
- The need for inclusive, supportive and creative options
- The need for familiar systems, procedures and control

At the same time, change also creates new opportunities for us to engage our interests and to pursue our personal goals. In the re-engaging phase of transition, we can explore these options, grow new abilities and even "re-invent" ourselves as we move into new challenges. Our interests and passions also fall into four categories:

- The passion for persuasive discussion and debate to influence decisions
- The passion for completion of physical tasks with equipment and technology
- The passion for creative thinking and design to help and support growth
- The passion for defining systems and procedures to measure and control



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WOW

Wow! It is time for a sidebar article again! Time sure flies when you are having fun - and I am definitely having fun! Now that certainly doesn't mean that it is easy - whoa, it is not easy, but, when it is fun, it is all worth it. Big question - what makes it fun? Well, you know our commitment to individuality and to the marvelous differences we all have - it is even truer in our personal definitions of fun at work. My take on it is that it is tied directly to our passions and interests. When I am engaged in my passion, you can't tear me away - and that passion is for people and creativity. This month's article is my favorite so far. The whole huge topic of Change and Creativity is at the forefront of business and personal success more than ever before. My degree in the theater and my 15 years in the profession have come home to roost in Coaching. Every day is an opportunity to help you explore YOU! My greatest satisfaction is in seeing the AHA happen in someone's eyes when they connect with themselves and their own passion. The world has truly become a stage as Shakespeare said 500 years ago and all the people are players. Important word - PLAYERS! It is in play that truly become ourselves. What is your play today? If it a miscalc for

you, take action to get the right part in the right play. Everything else will follow. As Shakespeare the Executive Coach once wrote, "To Thine own Self Be True. Then It Follows as the night does the day, you cannot be false to any other person". Check out our book, website and film of the month and for creativity's sake - HAVE FUN!!!!

The period between these two aspects of transition can be short or long depending on the intensity of the change causing it. Transition may even start before the change takes place and may continue long after the actual change is completed. The key here is to first be aware of your transition profile (needs and interests) and then to have a plan to actively manage your transitions as change occurs. Applying these concepts in a corporate setting can and will increase the effectiveness and success of organizational change as well as build the resilience of your workforce to ongoing change.

Creating a Climate For Effective Change and Innovation

What is at the heart of all of this change and transition? Why does the rate of change seem to be increasing at exponential rates? The simple answer is in the competition for creativity and innovative goods and services. The new strategic edge has become the rate at which companies can create not only better products but how well they actually define markets with innovative products.

"The business enterprise has two, and only two, basic functions: marketing and innovation. It is not necessary for a business to grow bigger; but it is necessary that it constantly grow better." -- Peter Drucker

An enterprise whose management does not foster creativity and innovation will not survive long. Businesses and organizations have to be designed to continually assure that their environments identify and explore new opportunities.

We define innovation as the effort to create purposeful, focused change in thought and organizational planning that opens up that enterprise's economic and social potential. Looked at another way, innovation is the means by which organizations and entrepreneurs create new wealth-producing resources. Sometimes it is coming up with new initiatives; more often than not, it involves taking developed ideas and applying them in new situations. Here are four critical components to creating the climate for creativity:

1. **Intelligent Matching** of the right persons with the right jobs in order to maximize their expertise and creative thinking skills. Making a good match requires the manager to have access to important information about employees and their preferences. This may mean using information available through assessments such as the Birkman or other instruments that indicate passions, values and preferences. Good listening and observation skills are also important. People express over time what interests and excites them. Are you listening?
2. **Freedom** to take different paths without censure. When creative people are free to approach their work the way they choose, innovation is more likely to result. This does NOT mean allowing total open-endedness or changing goals frequently or failing to define them clearly. It means encouraging the appropriate balance between structure and process, between spontaneity and control, between creativity and predictability.
3. **Diversity in the Work-Group** : To maximize the potential of innovation, managers need to create teams with a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds. When people come together with diverse intellectual foundations and approaches to work, ideas often combine in exciting and useful ways. Managers often make the mistake of putting similar people together. Their homogeneity may seem to create harmony, however, it does little to enhance the interplay that supports creative thinking.
4. **Organizational Support** : Creativity is truly enhanced when the entire organization and those at the top support it. Leaders must ensure that information sharing and collaboration is the norm. Political problems and gossip take people's attention away from work. That sense of mutual purpose and excitement must be encouraged by shared vision and mission. Usually the biggest hurdle to solving problems isn't ignorance--it's access to the right information at the right time. Sometimes the sharing of information within organizations is not easy due to geographic distances, political squabbles, internal competition and bad incentive systems that hinder the spread of ideas

Business leaders can and must change how they think about innovation. If people are given opportunities and encouraged to use good ideas from all sources inside or outside the company, innovation can be significantly bolstered in any workplace. Innovation and creativity are far less mysterious than some may think. If the company has the right attitude toward innovation and supports the managing of transition, change and innovation will flourish and lead the way.

Foremost among life's teaching is the recognition that humans possess the capability to deal with complexity and interconnection. Human creativity and commitment are our greatest resources." -- Margaret Wheatley

Movie	Book	Website
Whale Rider	The Living Company by Arie De Geus	The Creativity Website