

# Change and How to Deal With It

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## Table of Contents

Learning Objectives .....	1
The Change Process .....	4
The Change Cycle.....	9
The Three Stages of Personal Change .....	10
The Pace of Change .....	16
The Pyramid Response to Change .....	23
The Four Room Apartment Strategy.....	27
Controlling Change.....	35
Do People Resist or Welcome Change? .....	38
Resistance to Change .....	41
Strategies for Dealing with Change .....	50
Seven Steps to Ironing Things Out .....	53
Some Facts About Attitude.....	56
Debrief of Workshop .....	58

**Change and How to Deal With It**

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**Learning Objectives**

At the completion of this workshop, you will:

- Accept there are no normal or abnormal ways of reacting to change, but that we must start from where we are.
- See change not as something to be feared and resisted but as an essential element of the world to be accepted.
- Understand that adapting to change is not technical but attitudinal. Change is not an intellectual issue but one that strikes at who you are.
- Recognize that before we can embrace the way things will be, we must go through a process of grieving, and of letting go of the “way things use to be.”
- See change as an opportunity for self-motivation and innovation.
- Identify strategies for helping change be accepted and implemented in the workplace.

**My personal objectives are:**

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“Some say change is difficult. However, change is a piece of cake (or perhaps cheese). If you want a real challenge, try to sustain change—especially a change that requires commitment from all who do the work.”

*Excerpt from “Fish Sticks”*

Change is all around us today. We change where we live. We change the furniture in a room. We change bosses. We change departments. However, unless, as individuals, we come to grips with the underlying psychological effects of radical change, we will be ill-equipped to deal with that change and to help others deal with the change.

***Programs don't fix people. People fix people.***

Once we understand why we find change so threatening, we can begin to accept and manage change, for ourselves and for others.

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## The Change Process

Change is about doing things differently, seeing things in a new way, adjusting to surprises, ideas with new twists.

### 1. Change is both toxic and tonic.

You are:

- thrilled by possibilities
- excited by newness
- stimulated by prospects
- fearful and uncertain
- anxious and worried

Sometimes you don't know which is which.

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How are you feeling?

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### 2. Change requires exchange/expanded thinking.

You must:

- give up something to get something
- unlearn and relearn
- exchange a secondary role for increased power and leadership
- exchange old values for new values

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- give up your cushion of comfort for greater personal visibility and accountability

What are you exchanging? How might you expand your thinking?

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### 3. Change is stressful.

You realize:

- the unknown is part of the change
- there exists uncertainty and ambiguity about results
- the demands have increased
- there are different pressures
- you must learn to cope

What aspects do you see as producing stress for you?

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**Changes...Changes...Changes...**

I hate them! I love them! I fear them.

I do not understand them!

I do not want to know about them!

**Why can't things be like they always have been?**

## The Change Cycle

In adapting to change, it is helpful to be able to analyze what William Bridges has called the *Change Cycle*, three discrete stages each of us goes through in accommodating ourselves to any change--an **ENDINGS** stage, where we let go of something stable, known and dependable, a middle, **NEUTRAL ZONE**, where we are forced to hang in mid-air, without orientation to the past or the future, and a **BEGINNINGS** stage, where we plunge headlong into something unknown and unknowable--our own future.

**The Chinese  
word for change  
is two  
characters:**

## The Three Stages of Personal Change

### Endings

- All change begins with an ending
- Just because we understand something doesn't mean we accept it. Western culture teaches us to intellectualize. If we understand it, we can deal with it. However, we don't always have the skills to deal with emotional reservations. Like the organ reject theory, the mind may know it's good, but the body still rejects it. It's the same with change. Intellectually, we accept change, but emotionally, we may still resist that change.
- Change is often viewed as loss.

- Studies show that as little as a 15-20% change in a job description will cause people to describe having a "whole new job."

### Transitions/Neutral Zone

- Time to complete endings and begin new patterns.
- Strong needs for support from others.
- Major transitional unleash powerful conflicting forces in people.
- Western culture avoids the experience. The neutral zone is treated like a busy street to be crossed as quickly as possible. However, it is important to take the time to complete endings, and integrate new patterns.

- Most organizations and many people skip transitions and jump to new beginnings.

**Beginnings**

- Organizations think beginnings long before people do.
- There is often conflict between the organizational impetus and the critical mass to make it happen.
- At this stage, people need “drawing” leadership (Vision and Purpose) rather than “pushing” management (Goals and Plans).

1. Think of a change you have experienced. Did you feel threatened at the time? Did it open up new insights, or opportunities, or possibilities?

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2. What did you do that helped you accept the change and move on? What things did other people do that helped?

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3. Do you remember feeling like you were confused, or angry? Did you have moments of anticipation and energy?

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4. Do you have some success stories to share, some times that change brought better things than you had expected?

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## The Pace of Change

Traditionally, change was a short burst of disruption followed by a longer period of stable operations. Today, there are no longer any rest periods; change is continuous and enormous.

1. What are the implications of this trend for your organization?

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2. How will it affect your role?

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### Reactions to Change

People react differently to change.

*The Innovators*

*The Early Adopters.*

*The Early Majority.*

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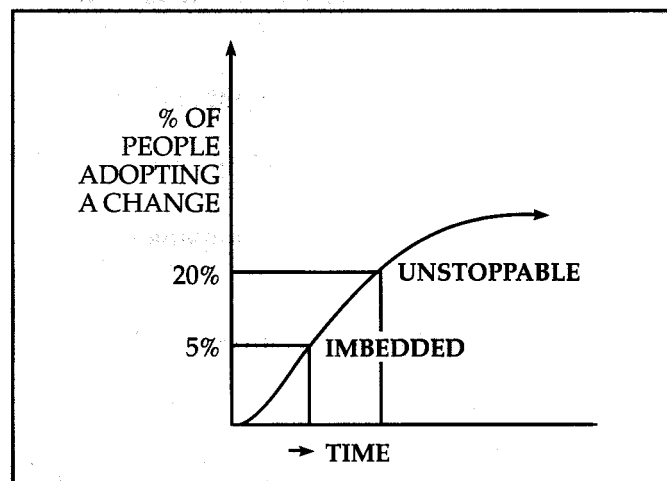
*The Late Majority*

*The Late Adopters*

*The Diehards*

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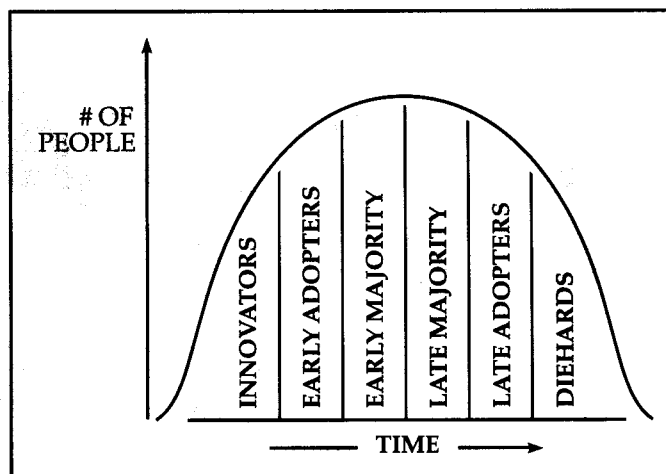


When 5 % of the people in a group adopt a change, the change is *imbedded*.

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When 20% adopt it, the change is *Unstoppable*. So, get the *Innovators* and *Early Adopters* on board and the success of your change is assured.

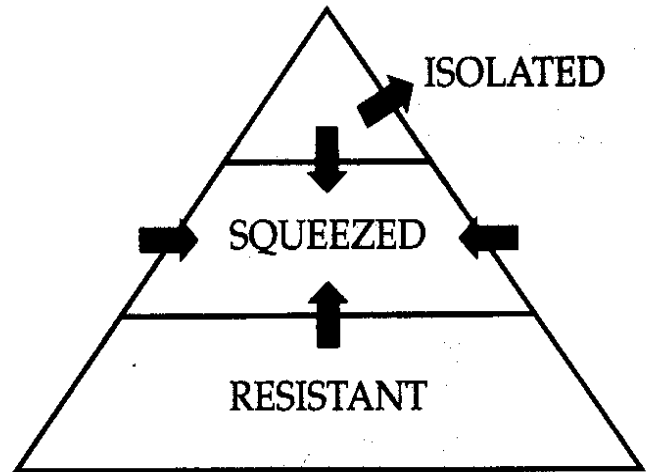


Changes are adopted at different rates in organizations. The *Innovators* try things first, followed by the *Early Adopters*. These are people you need to get on board first. Focus your efforts on them, not the diehards. Some people are never able to change; they are casualties of war.

## The Pyramid Response to Change

### **Top Management**

In a traditional company, top management has a hard time coming to grips with the direct implications of the change. They often underestimate the impact that change has on their employees. They tend to isolate themselves. Often they engage in strategic planning sessions and gather information in survey reports.



They avoid communicating or seeking bad news, because it is difficult for them to admit they don't know. They expect employees to "go along" when a change is announced and

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blame their middle managers if people resist or complain about the change. They often feel betrayed when employees don't respond positively.

### **Middle Management**

Managers in the middle feel the pressure to "make the organization change" according to the wishes of top management. They feel pulled in different directions. Middle managers often lack information and leadership direction needed to focus on multiple priorities. They are caught in the middle, and often fragmented because they don't have clear instructions. They are besieged with upset, resistant or withdrawn employees who no longer respond to previous management approaches, and they feel deserted, blamed or misunderstood by their superiors.

### **Employees/Workers/Associates**

Workers often feel attacked and betrayed by changes announced by management. They are often caught off guard, not really believing that "my company could do this to me". Many respond with resistance, anger, frustration and confusion. Their response can solidify into a wall of

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“retirement on the job”. They become afraid to take risks, be innovative or try new things. They experience a loss of traditional relationships, familiar structure and predictable career advancement patterns.

## The Four Room Apartment Strategy

<p>1.</p> <p>CONTENTMENT</p> <p>We like the status quo</p>	<p>4.</p> <p>RENEWAL</p> <p>We have lots of energy for creative work.</p>
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<p>2.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DENIAL</p> <p>We are afraid to admit that things have changed. We spend a lot of energy holding onto the past.</p>	<p>3.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CONFUSION</p> <p>We still have some anxiety but we are ready for constructive action.</p>
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"We can trace many failures to techniques and models foisted onto people living in Contentment or Denial. That's why there's no cause-effect connection between techniques and transforming systems."

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"To mobilize energy we need to be with people in Confusion or Renewal."  
*M. Weisbord, Discovering Common Ground, 1992*

## The Four Rooms Theory of Change in Your Organization

1. What is the occupancy rate for the four rooms in your department or organization today?
  2. Has there been a recent increase in occupancy in the Denial and Confusion rooms? If yes, what factors are contributing to this?
  3. What are the different types of resistance to change are people exhibiting?
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4. What is the average amount of time people take to pass from Denial through Confusion to Enlightenment in your organization?
  5. Do some individuals or groups seem to be stuck in Denial or Confusion?
  6. Where do you predict resistance to change is likely to emerge or re-emerge, in your organization? What dynamics will be at play?
  7. How does the culture, history, and structure of your organization affects the level and type of resistance to change?
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8. Do you keep all the apartment doors open by providing opportunities for open democratic dialogue about work climate, working relationships, etc.?
  
9. Are you able to handle criticism about change issues without becoming defensive or taking it personally? Do you maintain a sense of humor?

**The items that I would circle as most relevant in my department/organization are:**

**NUMBERS**      \_\_\_\_\_

What strategies might you suggest to try and move as many people as possible from the confusion room to the renewal room?

List of Strategies	


## Controlling Change

In the space provided, think about a recent change in your organization and describe which aspects of that change were **givens**, which were **negotiables** and which were **controllable** in the space provided:

<b>GIVENS</b>	<b>NEGOTIABLES</b>	<b>CONTROLLABLE</b>
Aspects of the change we cannot control	Aspects of the change we can influence or discuss with other groups	Aspects of the change my team can control



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## Do People Resist or Welcome Change?

1. Is it true that people basically resist or resent change? (Check only one answer)

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

2. If you answered "Yes" to Question 1, list some specific reasons why people tend to resist change.

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3. If you answered "No" to Question 1, list some specific reasons why people might welcome change.

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## Resistance to Change

People resist change--or do they? Does an employee resist an upward change in pay rate, or increased vacation allowance? Do you hang on to a cranky old car and resist being given a new one?

Does a supervisor resist an imposed schedule change that has him/her representing the department at an important reception for the new company CEO rather than finish the quarterly budget? All these changes are likely to be warmly welcomed and be implemented with great cooperation from the people concerned.

What makes these changes different from those that people resist?



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### Key Factors in Successful Change

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### Empathy: The First Key to Successful Change

A practical definition of empathy is "putting yourself in the shoes of the other person"

In managing change, the first key is to know to what extent the change will be resented or rejected, accepted or welcomed. If everyone is enthusiastic about it, it is probably wise to proceed immediately. But if it will be resented and resisted, it is probably wise to reconsider or go slowly.

In order to be accurate in analyzing the degree of resistance or acceptance, it is necessary to consider each person individually. The better a manager knows the individuals who will be affected by the change the more accurate will be his or her analysis of their reactions.

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### **Participation: The Second Key to Successful Change**

Empathy, the first key, requires a manager to determine feelings and reactions toward a change. The second key, participation, requires a manager to get involvement from those concerned with and affected by the change.

Participation is a very important factor in the successful management of change. It begins with a philosophy among all levels of management beginning at the top. They must believe that participation can benefit both the organization and the employees.

It then requires implementation. In most cases a formal approach is best. This would include a specific program such as quality circles with its structure and training. In some cases an informal approach can be successful.

Not only can participation contribute to the quality of the change, but it can also be significant in increasing the acceptance of those who must implement the change. And this is what "managing" change is all about. It involves both the decision itself and its implementation. A "good" decision based on all the available facts can fail because of

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lack of acceptance resulting in resistance and even sabotage. Participation is the key that can contribute to both quality and acceptance and results in a win/win solution for both supervisor and employees.

### **Communication: The Third Key to Successful Change**

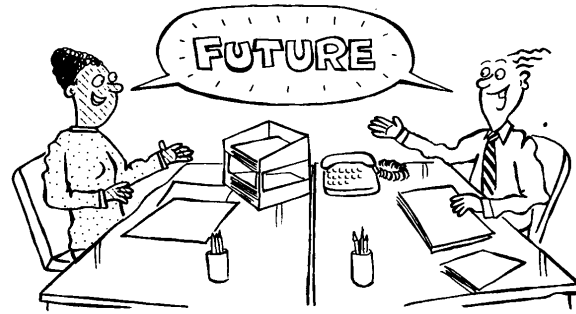
Communication, the third key, requires the manager to maintain continuous, complete, and clear communication with all persons affected by the change. It probably isn't necessary to point out that communication is one of the three keys in managing change. Every manager knows that. But it is important to call attention to the following aspects of communication that are frequently misunderstood or often ignored by managers.

**Definition:** "Communication" means to "create understanding" and not merely to send information. If people don't understand, the manager has not communicated.

**Who:** The criteria for deciding to whom to communicate should include those who want to know as well as those who need to know.

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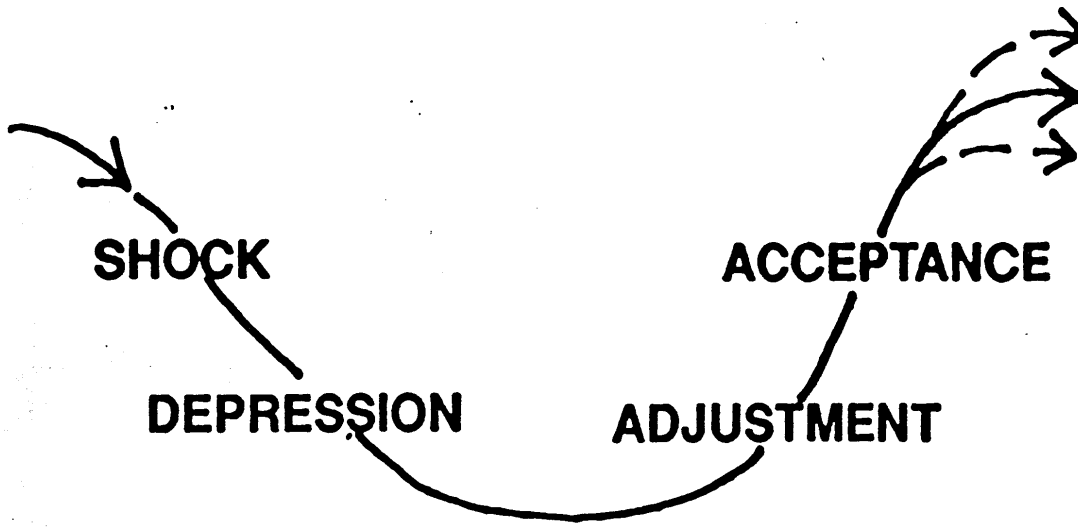


**When:** Care should be taken regarding the timing of the communication. First of all, managers should be told before non-managers and union officers get the information. Secondly, those who will be affected should be told as far in advance as practical.

**How:** Managers should give thought to the method of communicating before doing it. It is important to understand the advantages and disadvantages of oral and written communication. When making a decision, it is also important to use empathy. In most cases, oral as well as written may be necessary to get understanding as well as to gain acceptance. In very few cases well written communication alone will do the job.

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**Emotional Roller-Coaster of Change**



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Questions:

Not *if* you go through it, but .....

- \* **When?**
- \* **How deep?**
- \* **How long in it?**
- \* **Whether you ever really do accept the change?**
- \* **If so, to what degree of acceptance?**

– Other Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Strategies for Dealing with Change

### Acknowledge Reactions

Everyone affected will have a reaction. It is important to be aware of this. Even positive change is a transition, so even those who will be pleased with the changes will have some reactions they did not expect.

### Deal With Emotions

Recognize and deal with emotions constructively. It is important that everyone accepts their own feelings for what they are and channel them appropriately. Find a suitable and harmless means of expressing them. Share them with those you trust, write them down or even speak into a tape recorder.

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### Identify Adjustments

Identify what adjustments people need to make. You will be able to play a major role here for all people concerned. Individuals may need some guidance as to what changes they need to make and how they might approach the new organization and their role in it.

### Understand Phases

Understand the different phases of managing change. Sharing this information with all the people who are affected will promote a greater degree of understanding amongst the whole group. Sometimes, especially in these circumstances, shared information creates a bond and a new language to use in discussing and making sense of what is happening to the people and the organization.

### Manage Stress

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Manage the stress of traumatic change. Workshops can be very helpful to everyone. These not only provide practical coping strategies, but they also send the message that it is acknowledged that everyone has felt the impact and that the organization is willing to do something about it.

## Seven Steps to Ironing Things Out

1. **Remove all masks.** No conflict can be resolved unless people are sincere about making things work out.
2. **Identify the *real* problem.** Often the real problem lurks somewhere underneath the apparent problem. For example, Jaime has a problem with the schedule, when in actual fact he feels he is doing more than his fair share of the work.
3. **Communicate in a manner certain to be received.** Communication is the ultimate tool for positive possibilities. You must listen, and clarify that you understand the other person. Then you can tell your story, in such a way that they understand where you are coming from.

4. **Give up a “must win” attitude.** You could “go to the wall” defending your position yet never truly win. No conflict can ever be considered resolved if one party wants to “get even” some day.
  5. **Develop several possible solutions.** Most situations can go in a variety of ways if enough time is given to finding possibilities.
  6. **Evaluate options and select a solution.** From identifying options, it is easier to move on to evaluating which approach will work best. It may seem simplistic but when you can choose the *best, most workable choice* for both sides, you are more apt to have a sustainable solution.
  7. **Acknowledge and preserve the value of the relationship.** Resolving conflict is about preserving relationships. Otherwise we wouldn't try to resolve disputes. One of the key benefits of having a process for ironing things out is that the parties involved have a greater chance of maintaining the relationship.
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### The Conflict/Opportunity Test

1. What is the conflict?
  2. Who are the players?
  3. If this conflict is resolved, what are the benefits?
  4. If this conflict is not resolved, what are the payoffs or benefits for me?
  5. If the conflict is not resolved, what harm can follow?
  6. If this conflict is resolved, will the benefit create a better situation than before the conflict arose?
  7. Whatever the outcome, can I see that the conflict added a positive dimension to the potential outcome?
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## **Some Facts About Attitude**

**Attitudes are contagious. Is yours worth catching?**

**No other word will have more impact on your future.**

**A positive attitude is your most priceless personal possession.**

**Your attitude is always showing.**

**You have many attitudes or mental sets.**

**Attitude is the way you look at your whole environment.**

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**What you see in life influences your attitude.**

**Attitude is a highly personal thing.**

**The attitude you send out is generally the one that comes back to you.**

**The more positive your attitude, the more effective your efforts.**

**Negative environments make the challenge greater.**

**Your attitude is You.**

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## Debrief of Workshop

1. What happened for you during this workshop? What did you feel? What did you see or hear that was important to you?

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2. What are some **key learnings** for you? What specifically are you taking away from this workshop?

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3. **Action Plan.** How will you implement what you have learned on the job?

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**Suggested Reading List**

You will find the following books very helpful as you pursue this topic further:

1. Robert E. Quinn, Building the Bridge As You Walk On It, Jossey-Bass, 2004
2. Stephen C. Lundin, PhD, John Christenson and Harry Paul, Fish Sticks, Hyperion, New York, 2003
3. William Bridges, Managing Changes, Making the Most of Change, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Da Capo Press, 2003

4. Spencer Johnson, MD Who Moved My Cheese, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 2000.
5. John P. Kotter, Leading Change, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, Mass, 1996.
6. Kouzes, James M. and Barry Z. Posner, The Leadership Challenge: How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1990
6. Jampolsky, Gerald G., M.D., One Person Can Make A Difference: Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things, Bantam Books, Toronto, ON, 1990