

## CHANGE...A BRILLIANT OPPORTUNITY TO GROW!

Everything alive experiences change.

Seeds sown into the soil change over time to produce a plant, a tree, a beautiful flower. Every child that is born undergoes profound change in the process of becoming an adult. Even inanimate objects such as rocks change as they are buffeted by wind and rain.

As in life, change is par for the course in business. Anything and anyone that does not change with the times is eventually labeled obsolete and irrelevant to the strategic direction of the organization.

### *Could that be you?*

In my experience, when people face change, they adopt one of three different mindsets: the Skeptic, the Fence-sitter or the Supporter. Which one are you?

**Skeptics** operate with a mindset that “this too shall pass!” Changes are nothing more than “the flavor of the month” and really don’t pertain to them. They appear to go along with change, knowing in the back of their mind that whatever it is won’t work. To prove their point, they speak out against new initiatives. In meetings, they are present in body but absent in mind. Mentally they are somewhere else because they’ve resigned from accepting change. Skeptics have a limited future with the organization and may be invited to find their happiness elsewhere. Is this a wake up call? No! It’s a direct slap in the face. Change or be changed.

**Fence-sitters** accept or reject change depending on which side of the bed they wake up on. Their decision to either support change immediately or when it’s the politically correct thing to do is based on their personal gain and stake in the matter. Enterprise-wide changes that have no direct impact on what they put in their pocket mean very little to them. They stunt their own professional growth when they refuse to thrive when replanted. My advice to them is simple: Get off the fence. Embrace change for who you will become instead of what you will get.

**Supporters** “get it.” They don’t need to understand exactly how change will affect them in order to appreciate why it’s important. Their desire, demeanor and disposition support the positive aspects of change, and their approach to change is collaborative, considerate and consistent. Supporters behave in a manner that sends the message that they agree in mind and spirit and refuse to wallow in the land skepticism.

When it comes to change, Skeptics and Fence-sitters are rationally committed, while Supporters are emotionally committed. You might be wondering about the difference between rational and emotional commitment. **Rational commitment is the “what”** that you agree to give an organization when you’re hired: your time, talent and energy in exchange for financial compensation, professional development opportunities and the

chance to fulfill your career ambitions. **Emotional commitment is the “why”** – the passion and the purpose behind the work. It’s what keeps you in the relationship with the organization. When you are emotionally committed, your confidence increases and your heart flutters with complete satisfaction as you enjoy professional utopia.

Rationally committed employees do what they **have to do**; emotionally committed employees do what they **love to do**. Rationally committed employees see change as a threat; emotionally committed people perceive change as friend instead of foe.

The Corporate Leadership Council recently surveyed 50,000 employees from 59 different organizations in 27 countries, representing 10 industry groups. One of the key findings from this survey is that emotional commitment is *four times* as valuable as rational commitment in driving discretionary effort among employees.

Discretionary effort means you raise your hand to take on more work, you offer to assist others when they are overloaded, and you proactively go the extra mile to drive results without anyone tapping you on the shoulder to ask for your assistance. When you are emotionally committed to your organization, your brilliance is ignited because you cease wondering if you are valued and secure in your position.

The possibility exists inside all of you to be emotionally committed, to go the extra mile and to embrace change. The question is, will you do it?

Only you can decide if you will emotionally commit. Search your heart. If you realize you can never be a Supporter, perhaps it’s time to find your brilliance elsewhere. If, on the other hand, you choose to emotionally commit to change – and I do hope that’s your choice – demonstrate through your behavior that you’re onboard with your leaders and your organization:

- ❖ Become a “Yes and...” person instead of a “Yes but...” person (the word “but” negates everything you’ve said before it);
- ❖ Raise your hand and volunteer to help instead of waiting for others to do the work;
- ❖ Be solution oriented instead of challenge focused;
- ❖ Offer workable ideas and suggestions;
- ❖ Be proactive and go the extra mile.

Skeptics, I invite you to emotionally commit to change. Examine where you are and determine to be the change you want to see in your organization. Fence-sitters, instead of being emotionally committed only when change is in your best interest, choose to be emotionally committed to all change, all the time. And Supporters, continue to lead the way for the rest of the team. You are the future of the organization. Make it happen every day in every way.

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