

Managing Change in Yourself & Others

Change

Change may well be the *dominant constant*.

Everything appears to be in flux. Our increasingly diverse population is changing the fundamental assumptions that shape our American culture.

Organizations, both public and private, are changing their name, size, shape, composition and purpose. The definition of "family" is undergoing a radical overhaul as the frequency of single parents, blended families and other non-traditional family arrangements out-number the "traditional" family. Safe places are vanishing at such a rate that, for many people, personal security can no longer be assured. Our deepest held understanding of the role and expectations of a man and a woman are undergoing radical change. Technology bewilders us by making obsolete cutting edge innovations of just twelve months ago.

Longevity based employer-employee relationships are being replaced with more temporary and fluid arrangements. Health care organizations are downsizing, out-sourcing, and flattening their organization structures to remain responsive to consumer demands and government regulation. At the same time, employees, no longer trusting in the "company loyalty - job security" trade, are forced to take more *personal responsibility for the management of their career*.

The champions of change exalt; "*change is good!!*" But the real human beings who must accommodate the uncertainties and ambiguities of the transition between the old way and the new often feel run-over by a

process they didn't ask for and, don't see a need for.

Yet, as we hurl toward and beyond the year 2000, the pace of change will likely continue if not increase. Managers must simultaneously deal with their own change struggles and manage changes that impact their staff members.

Managing Change

Managing change in oneself and facilitating change in employees is a very complex process. Real change is personal, it can't be ordered or legislated. People change from the inside out. ***Hearts and minds must accept and understand before change can become real.***

The process is made complex by human nature. Some types of changes are welcomed by most everyone. However, more often than not, people are apprehensive to varying degrees about change. Feeling more comfortable and secure with the known and familiar, there is a tendency to "dig in your heels" when change is in the offing.

The Change Process

To one degree or another, most people move through a ***process of change*** in somewhat predictable stages.

First there is ***denial*** - "*This just can't be happening. I'll ignore it and it will go away.*" Once denial breaks down, many people become determined to ***resist*** or ***fight*** the change - "*They just can't do this. I won't stand for it - I'll put a stop to this nonsense.*"

