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Personal Reflection Journal: Change Module  
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Murray Johannsen once said “Leading change is like bailing a boat...you must stay at it to keep afloat.” This saying applies not only on a personal level but also in an organizational level as well. In the book *Influencer The Power To Change Anything* (2008), the book cited several examples of how people use influence strategies to change someone or to change a community practice. All the stories mentioned in the book were memorable but two stories stood out. The first one is about the Delancey Street Foundation. How Dr. Mimi Silbert helped change the lives of hard-core drug addicts and gang members by teaching them to work together through non-violence approach using the principle “each-one-teach-one,” in which each new resident becomes responsible for guiding the new arrival. (Delancey Street Foundation, 2007) Residents are initially taught personal skills such as breaking old habits, basic personal hygiene and basic work habits. Once they are ready, the residents then go to one of the vocational training schools where they are taught new skills by more experienced residents. As they work their way up, so too are the privileges that go along with it culminating with renting their own apartment until they are ready to mainstream into society. (Delancey Street Foundation, 2007) The second story is about how Dr. Donald Hopkins and his staff at the Carter Center worked to eradicate the Guinea worm disease plaguing West Asian and sub-Saharan villagers. By getting the villagers to filter their drinking water and avoiding the water sources when they are infected by the disease, Dr. Hopkins’ team put a sizeable dent on the infected population from an estimated 3.5 million in 1986 to 130,000 in 1995. (Directors of Health Promotion and Education, 2010)

### **What were my key learning from this module?**

The Human Dynamics of Change was a key learning for me. Much like Elizabeth Kubler Ross’ 5 Stages of Grief, the Human Dynamics of Change slide pointed out how people go through 5 stages of emotions when faced with the prospect of change: denial, resistance, anger, try out, and rejoicing. I know most people react to change in a negative way but seeing the slide just made so much sense to me. In the case of the Delancey Street Foundation residents, new arrivals come in with an attitude of just being there to avoid or instead of getting a prison sentence. However, once they get the sense of responsibility and the feel of accomplishment every step of the way, they begin to care not just about themselves but about their co-residents as well.

The second key learning for me is managing change personally. I thought I knew how to manage myself well when I am confronted with change. True, I might have some anxiety about it but I always prepare myself mentally. What I did not realize until now is that I fail miserably when it comes to focusing on what I can control and influence. I get bent all out of shape on things I have no control over. Now that I know that, I am hoping that the next time I encounter change, I would be better able at managing it by using Covey’s Circle of Influence/Concern and asking myself “Can I influence this at all?” If the answer is no, I would have to learn to let it go and not stress out about it.

My third key learning is that resistance comes in several forms. Whenever change is introduced in the organization or in any setting, there is always a person or two who stand out because of the many questions they ask. I used to think they are so interested in this change that is why they come prepared with questions. Little did I know, they are showing some resistance to the change.

#### **What beliefs and understandings were confirmed?**

Organizations change due to crisis or to increase revenue. Whenever companies announce some changes, the people affected always question why there is a need for change when everything seems fine. The most vocal ones would always say "They just want more money." That comment is partly true. Organizations change when there is a need to improve revenue by maintaining market competitiveness. Organizations also change when they are faced with crisis. Be it a result of progress such as new technology or when conflicts arise.

Everyone seems to have an idea of why people resist change. Some resistance stems from fear-the fear of failure, the fear of having additional work, the fear of the unknown or the fear of losing the status quo, while others are resistant because of their experience of failed programs in the past.

Managing change organizationally. For the change to be implemented successfully, the organization must provide the workers with the knowledge, the skill set and the motivation. At the Delancey Street Foundation, the residents are first taught basic knowledge in personal care and work habits. Then they acquire the skills through the vocational schools. As they move up, they are motivated by the prospect of having their own apartment and mainstreaming with society.

#### **What theories or practices did you disagree with?**

Motivational interviewing. William Miller developed this method of using open and non-directive questions to help others examine what is important and what is required so they could live according to their values. (Kerry Patterson, 2008). Call it motivational interviewing but these days, I believe they call it Intrinsic Coaching. Perhaps it works better when you use this approach in a group but I have tried this method with my patients who are non-compliant with their treatment regimen and it does not work most of the time.

#### **What are your personal strength and challenges in this area?**

Part of my personal strength is being able to adapt to the changes that is currently going on in my organization. Because most of it is geared towards technology, I am mostly the only one eager to delve in to the new process. Since I now have a better understanding of why people resist change as well as an idea of how this resistance is manifested, I am in a position where I could help my co-workers navigate through the changes and become comfortable with it. As for the challenges, being able to communicate clearly as well as keeping the momentum would be something that I need to work on. I realize that because my co-workers are older and do not really care for technology; I have to consider different ways to teach them the new processes. A combination of verbal, written and visual instructions would be helpful. Once they learn the changes, I have to keep at it so they become proficient and comfortable.

Maintaining momentum will not only make the transition easier but it should make for a happier working environment.

**What key concepts and/or tools will you apply and how?**

Identifying resistance behaviors and taking that opportunity to educate my co-workers through clear and open communication. Rolling out the change in phases, so that the people affected by it are not overwhelmed. As in the case of implementing the Readmission Assessment Tool at my work, it is not enough to have just one meeting and the rest in back and forth emails. To be a proponent for change, I have to make sure that every single member of the team has an input in this new process. Maintaining that open line of communication is very important so there is clarity of the roles and responsibilities of each member. Being available to answer questions no matter how ridiculous the questions may be is very important.

Change, much like death and taxes is inevitable. For change to be successful, those affected need to know what is expected, have the skills necessary to adapt and have the motivation to sustain the change.

## **Bibliography**

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