Lets Be In Control for a Change!

posted on *jimsimpsonconsultancy blog*

Change can be exhilarating and fun and change can also be hard and painful. People are fantastic, creative and adaptive creatures that drive change in society and organisations for good and for ill. Organisations and groups go through a process of change as well. What we want in our own lives and in the organisations we work in is to be in control of change and adaptivity as much as we can be. Where change is happening around us we can be in control of our responses, so that we can make the most out of the world.

People who are trying to change public services and communities, or trying to change themselves, or helping others create change might enjoy thinking about the stages of change we go through as we adapt to 'the new' and 'the now'. Below on pages 10 and 11are graphical representations of the psychological highs and lows we experience when things are changing around us and within us.

This is a short section from a management and development training workshop. Also have a look at change management workshop for a sample of Jim Simpson Consultancy's training on change management in organisations and look at change quotes for a fun and insightful compendium of famous quotes.

Below is extracts from a training workshop on change management delivered to various in house management groups, post-experience student groups and development workers

Change Management Diploma Workshop
Jim Simpson, Senior Lecturer

University of Brighton

Three levels of change
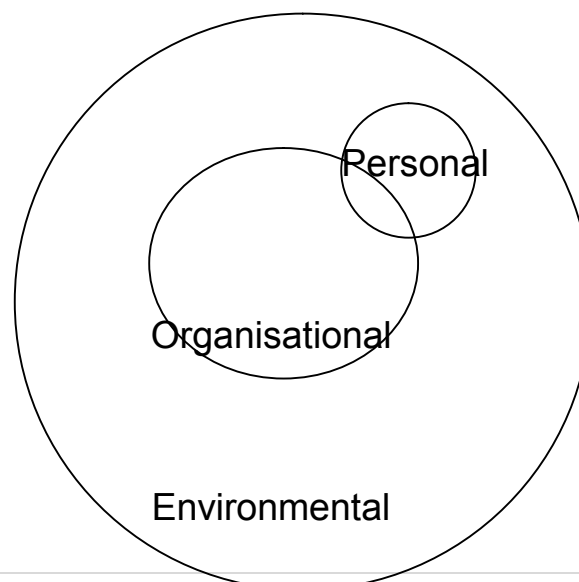
Personal level change -
Knowledge, understanding, circumstance, feeling, behaviour, learning, direction

Organisational level change-
Strategy, design, process, style, policy
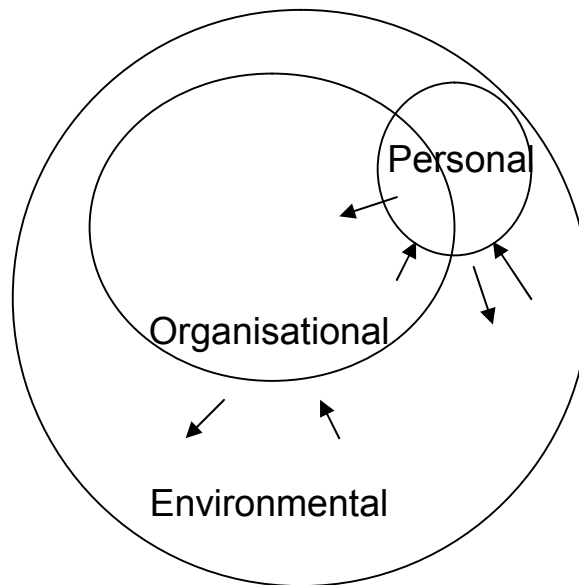
Environmental level change -
Marketplace, community, political, economic, social, technological

Personal

Organisational

Environmental

Three levels of change

Change direction ⟶

Change is about what people can make happen and about what happens to them. Change works in both directions

Personal

Organisational

Environmental

What is change ?

"*Nothing is permanent but change*"   Hericlitus

"*Change is not what it used to be*"   Charles Handy

Change is ……"*the act or an instance of making or becoming different*"

……"*an alteration or modification*"

(Concise Oxford Dictionary)

Change is about:

Improvement

Exploration

Innovation

Doing things differently

New behaviours

Questioning the present

Creating the future

Environmental Change

Environmental monitoring of the present is complex and future theorising similarly so

The pace of political, economic, social and technological changes is highly variable

By its very nature the broad environment that surrounds the organisation is diverse whilst the organisation is more narrowly confined

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Group Exercise

List some examples of profound changes that have taken place, what effects did these changes have ?

In the past 10 years
In the past 50 years
In the past 100 years

How have these effected you or your organisation ?

What do you think are going to be major changes in the next 5 to 10 years ?

Experts statements on change

Leaders at all levels must become obsessive about change. Change must be the norm, not cause for alarm. Furthermore, the incremental changes of today must almost unfailingly be in support of a non-incremental change - that is, a bold goal to be achieved in record time.
Make "what, exactly, have you changed?" the most common question in the organisation. Ask it a dozen times a day at least.

Tom Peters 'Thriving on Chaos'

Firms are considered to be the Darwinian creatures of the economic textbooks, buying cheap and selling dear. In the same way that an automatic and impersonal process of natural selection determines the rise and fall of species so competition ensures the survival of the fittest economically, the weaker firms losing out. But whilst competition may be Darwinian, there is nothing 'natural' about the social, legal, institutional and cultural context in which it takes place. In fact firms have hugely different constitutions in different capitalist economies. At moments of crisis their readiness to restructure and refocus their business can be immensely different.

Will Hutton 'The State We Are In'

Corporate entrepreneurs are the people who test the limits and create new possibilities for organisational action by pushing and directing the innovative process. They may exercise their power skills in a number of realms - not only those "responsible for innovation". I have found corporate entrepreneurs in every function……some were *system builders* (eg new departments, long range planning, budgets) some were *loss cutters* (eg. faster production, replacing obsolescence) others *were socially conscious pioneers* (eg developers of task forces to reduce turnover of sales staff new structures for engaging employees in solving productivity problems) And there *were sensitive readers of cues about the need for strategic shifts* (eg cutting out losing product options)

Rosabeth Moss Kanter - 'the Change Masters - Corporate Entrepreneurs at Work)

Classic Industrial bureaucracies are pyramidal in structure, with a small control group at the top and an array of permanent, functional departments below. The Super-Industrial corporate form is more likely to consist of a slender, semi permanent "framework" from which a variety of small temporary modules are suspended. These move in response to change and can be spun off or re-arranged as required by shifts in the outside world. Spinning off subsidiaries and contracting out can help a company become more adaptive - but it also makes it more dependent on the performance of other firms - that's why I suggested that, as Bell cutback on its own operations and organised them into "modules", it needed to strengthen the "framework" that held them together.

Alvin Toffler - the Adaptive Corporation

Personal Change

"I wanted to change the world. But I have found that the only thing one can be sure of changing is oneself."

Aldous Huxley

Change in oneself is about both [1]active and reactive responses. Every day we respond to hundreds of stimuli and situations and develop emotional and intellectual habits to deal with them.

We learn from positive and negative experiences and attach these labels to changes.

Individual and group exercise

First identify an important learning experience that was negative and one that was positive. Think carefully about change experiences that were deep-rooted. Describe them in note form - what happened; what emotions did you experience? what were the results?

Second discuss each of these in a group - find out what coping strategies were used in each of the change situations.

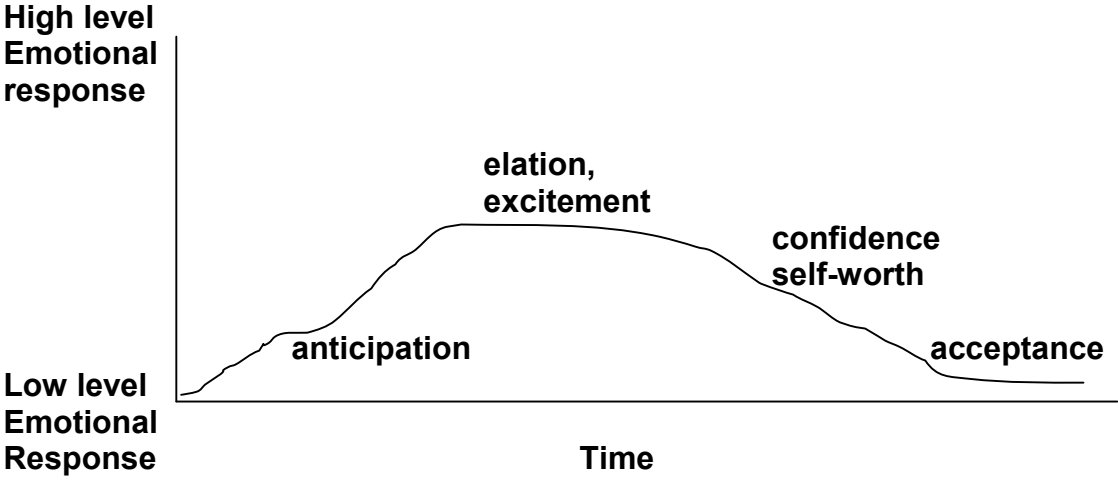Are there common coping strategies that were used or are they diverse?

Are there parallels for change management at the organisational level ?

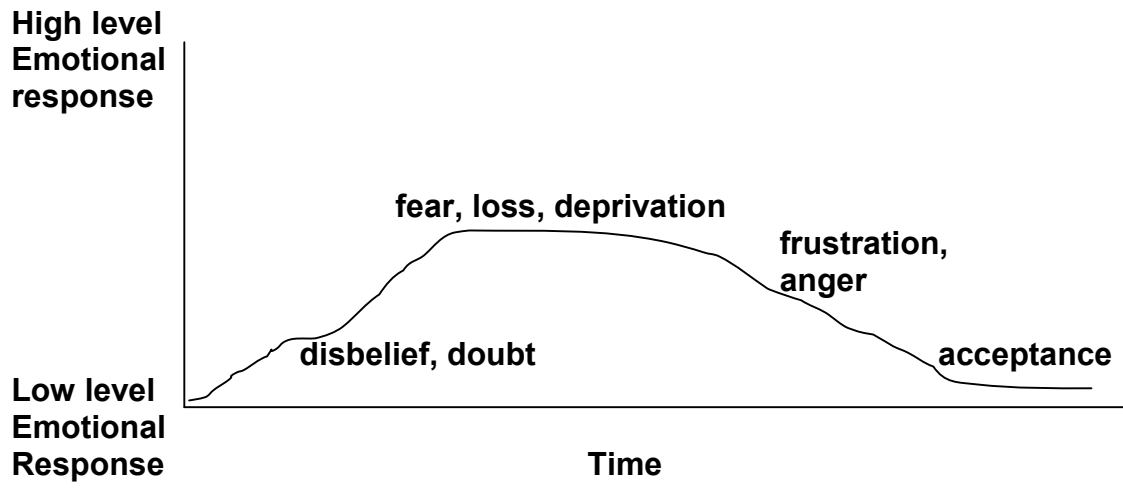
The Psychology of change

Positive change experience

High level
Emotional
response

elation,
excitement

confidence
self-worth

anticipation

acceptance

Low level
Emotional
Response

Time

Negative change experience

High level Emotional response

Low level Emotional Response

fear, loss, deprivation

frustration, anger

disbelief, doubt

acceptance

Time

Learning Processes and Change

Revans model and definition of learning

L = P + Q

Learning = **P**rogrammed Knowledge plus **Q**uestioning Insight

Learning:
Changed knowledge, changed motivation, changed belief, physical ability

Programmed Knowledge:
Uncontested (relatively !), factual, observable, the stuff of textbooks, assimilating existing knowledge, learning as product

Questioning Insight:
Asking why, changing patterns of understanding, learning new knowledge, learning as process

The Learning Organisation

Based on the notion that learning only comes from people. Problem then of making intrinsic personal learning an extrinsic organisational asset in order to make change possible.

Adaptive learning is about *coping;* doing what we do better and correcting defects.

Generative learning is needed to *create* knowledge and thus change in a future orientated way

Learning organisations generate meaningful, collective learning enabling alternatives to the 'theory in use' to be thought of, tested, experienced and reflected upon

A behavioural model of change

Change can often be made to be less effective as those favouring change have to build up their persuasive resources in response those resisting change building up their arsenal of restraint. The result can be considerable wasted energy in win-lose organisational politics.

This model aims to reduce resistance and defensiveness alongside the behaviours that go with it.

(Adapted from Argyris, C - 'On Organisational Learning')

Stage	Description
Orientation phase	Teams brainstorm the problems; look at organisational effectiveness
Steering phase	Change management processes results and fills in gaps
Explicit change stage	Change becomes revealed; educative work on defensiveness, conflict, rivalry
Tentative plan stage	Tentative plan checked for operationality
Plan stage	Those involved asked for response on the change plan and the process of creating the plan