***CHANGE TAKES COURAGE, BUT WHY SHOULD THEY CARE?***

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**C-H-A-N-G-E** – six little letters that can perpetrate so much anxiety. Reactions to a changing environment are always unpredictable. Leaders never exactly know how the communication of a change will resonate or be absorbed by the organization. Being prepared to address the resistance to push back from change is a key success factor necessary to achieve your goals as a change leader.

According to the Institute for Corporate Productivity, managing and coping with change is the number one critical issue faced by organizations today. In fact, in a survey of 631 executives, three of the top ten corporate issues anticipated in 2013 relate to change! Surprise anyone? Not me.

Organizations and cultures must transform to win. It’s just that simple!! More of the same just isn’t going to allow a company to survive in the future. To thrive, we must embrace change. But change is hard and for some people it is absolutely the last thing they want to do.

See, here’s the thing. People don’t change because of corporate policies or mandates or threats. People change because of **people**! They follow along because they believe what you believe. Alignment results from the employees seeing what is in it for them.

Your role as a leader is to be the inspiration that enables your team members to push beyond their uncertainties and redefine what they believe is possible. Engaging leaders create the culture that enables employees to choose to be part of the solutions.

Mehmet Oz says that people don’t change their behaviors based purely on what they know … they change based on what they feel. I believe he is right. It takes capturing both the heart and the head to fully enable and engage people to come along with the movement.

To help your team adapt to the new future expectations, ensure they know **why they should care**. Give them a reason to get excited about the future state that is being defined for them and with them. Four ways to accomplish this include:

**Communicate/Connect** – Early, often, consistently and in language they will understand. Eliminate the use of buzzwords or jargon. Speak to them in terms and phrases that they use every day and paint the line-of-sight that allows them to believe they, as an individual, can make a difference. Emphasize **WHY**. Provide a goal to work towards rather than a problem to run away from.

**Assess** Their Needs – Listen to them with empathy and determine the source of their resistance. Remember, listening is not just waiting your turn to speak. Stay present, attentive and reflective as you listen to their concerns and suggestions. Probe for a greater level of details by asking “tell me more.” Ensure everyone sticks to the facts. And ask what it will take for them, as an individual, to be successful.

**Recruit** Them To Help – Invite folks, rather than telling them, to be on your team. Encourage them to step just slightly out of their comfort zone. Let folks know that you are there for them and you won’t let them fail beyond reason. Achieve quick wins (by design) and celebrate ridiculously!

**Exhibit** the Desired Behaviors – Be **THE** role model for expected mindsets and behaviors. Create a meaningful sense of urgency. And actively manage less than desired behaviors in team members. Winning behaviors will be the dominant ingredient for amazing success.

Influence people to know why they should **C**-**A**-**R**-**E** and when they believe what you believe, they will go the extra mile.

In change, as long as the:

* pressure to change,
* truth about the current reality,
* well-defined plans to achieve the desired change, and
* the vision for and the benefits of the future state

collectively outweigh the level of resistance, transformation will occur. But, let any of those four elements fall absent from your culture, and your change process is destined for failure.

So, in the end, it’s just this simple. Your role as a leader is to make change possible. **Make…change…possible**. Not from a position of power, but because you inspired your team to have the courage to care as much as you do. And when you make change possible, you and those around you will be simply amazing!

*Eric Kulikowski is a leader development coach, professional speaker and an author. In his 25 plus years in leadership, Eric’s success has been built on a platform of employee engagement, cultural significance and change leadership. It is his belief that leaders are not well prepared to succeed in a chaotic environment. That is where he comes in. Amazing leader engagement is a clear marker of a great organization. Eric coaches and mentors leaders on how to effectively share their power and create a wildly engaged team. More information is available at* [*www.DareToBeAmazing.com*](http://www.DareToBeAmazing.com)*. Or to discuss your specific challenges and goals, please email Eric at* *eric@daretobeamazing.com* *to schedule a conference call.*