

Influence

in•flu•ence ['ɪnfluəns] *ability to effect change in your sphere of responsibility*

Leading From The Core

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, check your values, worldview, or core. By whatever name, each of us responds to challenges from an internal framework, best described by John Maxwell as security, guidance, wisdom and power.

- **Security** represents your sense of self worth, or lack of it.
- **Guidance** comprises the standards and principles that govern decisions and actions.
- **Wisdom** describes your perspective on life, how its various parts apply and relate to each other.
- **Power** is strength to accomplish things, energy to make choices, and capacity to overcome limiting habits and cultivate effective ones.

How strong is your core?

Do your decisions and personal conduct change depending on circumstances? Do your core values limit or expand your potential as a leader?

Answering these questions requires serious self-reflection. Growth and effectiveness as a leader requires understanding who you are — and where you stand — at your core.



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Change: From Fear to Hope

Change leadership skills can be learned.

AS THIS NEWSLETTER WENT TO PRESS, JPMorgan Chase was proceeding with its acquisition of Bear Stearns in a hastily arranged buyout of the failing investment bank rival. Delta and Northwest had announced plans to merge, creating the world's largest airline. Bear Stearns' 14,000 employees worldwide await news of their future. More than 100,000 workers combined at JPMorgan, Delta and Northwest are surely wondering how their jobs might be affected.

Other companies will initiate changes that may or may not make headlines. And thousands more employees will face revised job responsibilities, a new boss or a layoff.

Research indicates less than 30% of corporate change initiatives succeed. One primary reason is leaders mismanage the human side. Many leaders believe that if structural, financial or technical changes are implemented well, people will fall in step with the new order. But change only succeeds

if people move successfully through three stages of psychological adjustment.

First, people must let go of old realities, embracing that there's no going back to old ways. Only then can individuals move to the second phase: a scary, unsettled place

The change and transition experience is both predictable and manageable.

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Change: From Fear to Hope

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dubbed the “neutral zone”. During this critical stage, each person must overcome anxieties and fear and prepare to move in a new direction. Finally, the process is completed when the individual arrives at a new beginning with renewed energy, purpose and identity.

A change event – such as a layoff announcement – is situational, outcome-focused and relatively quick. The three-stage transition to a new normal extends over a longer time period. People need time to cope with loss of the familiar. It takes time to adjust to new relationships, behaviors and places. The process is uncomfortable and downright painful if mismanaged.

Fortunately, the change and transi-



tion experience is both predictable and manageable. Leaders can prepare for, understand and do the right things at the right times. They can successfully navigate through their own psychological stages even as they skillfully assist others through the transition. Change leadership skills can be learned.

Sadly, many organizations falter because leaders are human too. A natural human reaction is to withdraw emotionally. Another typical mistake happens when leaders dismiss others’ emotional distress. The opposite response is needed during organization-wide upheaval – or when one new team member comes on board.

Leaders bring hope by reaching out, acknowledging natural human anxieties, and responding in ways that help people transition to higher potential.

MORE AT VJHOLCOMB.COM - LINK TO THE ONE-PAGE SUMMARY OF *LEADING CHANGE: WHY TRANSFORMATION EFFORTS FAIL*, BY JOHN P. KOTTER. THE FULL ARTICLE WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE MARCH-APRIL 1995 ISSUE OF *HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW*, THEN REPUBLISHED IN JANUARY 2007 AS AN HBR CLASSIC. THE ONLINE SUMMARY CAPTURES KEY ACTIONS TO TAKE AND PITFALLS TO AVOID FROM AN ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE.



Power Coaching for Change Agents

*Is your organization facing a reorganization, merger, or other significant change?
Are your leaders prepared to manage the human side?*

Power Coaching provides a 90-day, structured format for leaders to become more effective in the role of change agent. We provide assessments, feedback, and seven, 2-hour coaching sessions. The process is designed to equip individual leaders to understand, prepare for, and act effectively through the change process.

We have only one mission at VJ Holcomb Associates: to help create a better world by developing strong leaders.

VJHA coaching programs are delivered only by experienced leadership development professionals. Please contact us to discuss your needs: Email coach@vjholcomb.com or call **203-389-0720**.

Personal Change Survey

Are you having a hard time dealing with change?



You know you are having a hard time dealing with change if any of these statements are true:

- I am easily irritated by other people's behaviors.
- My old ways of doing things are now met with resistance, especially by people in new roles.
- I feel overwhelmed and unproductive most of the time.
- I sometimes feel discouraged or insecure about my future.

Power Coaching Tip

Take a step back. Reflect on where you are in the change/transition process described in the main article, *Change: from fear to hope*.

Make time for an activity you really enjoy. Take a vacation day to relax, exercise, read a book, or spend time with a good friend. The goal is to have some fun.

Keep your eye on the prize. Eventually, you will work through the process.