

PIPA Advance On Track

PIPA ADVANCE PROFESSIONAL & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SECTION



Welcome to our regular feature, On Track. Training is important to all of us, whether new or experienced. In this section we will feature articles on various aspects of formal and informal training and development. Let us know what you would like to see in future issues; and if you have anything you would like to share with others, please send it to us at: newslettereditor@pipaonline.org

Trusting The Process Of Change

By: Alison Griffiths, Director - Unicus Coaching & Development

Summary

At the last AIOPI Conference, I had the great pleasure of running mini or 'speed' coaching sessions. Each of the topics the clients brought to the sessions involved some kind of dilemma over a change in circumstances – mainly at work or involving both work and personal life. This inspired me to write this article to provide some tips and concepts around managing change and trusting the process of change.



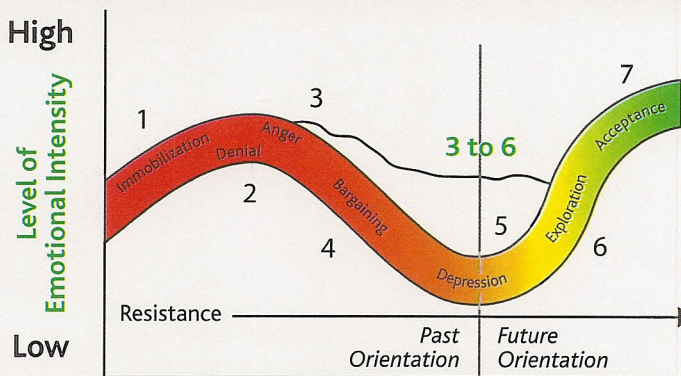
Alison Griffiths

'Trusting the Process of Change.' What does it mean? Why is it important? How would we implement it and when? This article introduces an additional dimension to personally managing change, by following the adaptation of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's Change Curve (see Figure 1). It suggests how we can better manage our normal response to unwanted change in a way that reduces anger and frustration (3 & 4) and avoids the real low points (5). We can consider this whether that change be with the people around us, in our personal lives, at work or with our careers.

There are usually 3 key aspects that can get in the way of us managing change in a calm, constructive way - our attitudes, emotions and behaviour.

It is widely recognized by psychotherapists and psychological coaches that by changing the way we think and feel about

Reaction Pattern to a Negative Change



Adapted from "On Death and Dying" by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

1. Immobilisation/Shock - Surprise at event or change 'I can't believe it'
 2. Denial - Head in Sand 'It hasn't happened' 'Things will return to normal soon'
 3. Anger, blaming others, on downward spiral
 4. Bargaining - Trying to retain the status quo - frustration
 5. Depression - Really at a low period. Everything seems hopeless, lack of confidence, self esteem, apathy
 6. Exploration/Experimental - Beginning to test the possibilities of the situation, seeing the positive side and how change could benefit
 7. Acceptance - Making decisions on what ideas are working, wvvhich options to consider seriously - on way UP - optimism and enthusiasm mixed with integration - the change is becoming the 'norm' and being accepted
- 3 - 6 Trusting the Process of Change - helps in reducing Frustration and getting stuck in the past, avoids Depression, allows time for reflection, recovery and a calmer passage to Exploration of new ideas

Figure 1

a situation, we automatically change the way we respond to it and behave. For example, if we are kept in a queue at the Post Office after leaving our car on a double yellow line; how differently would we behave and our stress levels be if we accepted that we took the decision to leave the car illegally and should face the consequences, compared to blaming the queue for putting us at risk? So, if our attitude can affect our emotions and behaviour, it is important we have some techniques for managing it.

Management Of What Is 'In' And 'Out' Of Our Control

As we know, stress occurs when we feel out of control, which is one of the reasons why unwanted change can be stressful. Referring to Figure 1, once we have acknowledged change, the first thing to do is regain as much control as we can between Stages 3 and 6 by simply asking ourselves:

- What aspects of this situation are in my control? (e.g. my attitude to it)
- What opportunities could it bring?
- What am I afraid of and what can I do to overcome that fear?
- What are my options and which look most favourable or need more research?

Next, consider which elements you cannot control (ensuring that there is nothing there that you can). Having done that, take time to consider the value of not having to control these elements. What does that give you? (Then stop beating yourself up about the fact that you can't!)

This simple exercise creates an element of reality and rationale around the situation

and helps subside fear. From that point you can begin thinking about what you really want to happen. What is your goal? Now is also the time to start to let go of trying to control everything that comes next. This may sound somewhat paradoxical. Let me explain.

To achieve what we want requires desire, intention and the belief that we can - which is what we quite often question.

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Why do we doubt our ability to have what we want? Is it because we feel we don't deserve it, think that it is out of reach or because we can't work out how we can do it, and therefore cannot believe it can happen? What if we could let go of the 'how', allow ourselves to deserve it and imagine it in our reach? What if we open our minds to the possibility that it could happen and 'Trust the Process' that can help it happen?

This means challenging limiting and inhibiting beliefs that we have developed from past experience and influences. It means being open-minded to events taking place that we could not have predicted or controlled. If we think back, I am sure we can find examples of when this has happened in our lives. For example, focusing on a specific job and the next time you open the paper, there is the advertisement; or thinking about a particular person you would like to catch up with and then meeting them unexpectedly. We would generally describe such events as coincidences. Coincidences are very important during the change process and there are methods we can use to strengthen the opportunity for coincidences to occur.

The Value Of Coincidences

Let us think back to a time maybe when you set the goal of buying a new car. Once you had decided on which model you wanted or your friends put suggestions in your mind, how often did you start spotting those cars? I bet it seemed like they are everywhere! Basically, what we are doing is filtering information into our consciousness that otherwise would not have been important and would therefore have gone unnoticed. The same thing can happen when we set our goals to manage the change we desire. Through clarity of

desire and intent we begin to notice things around us because they are important and could help us achieve our goal – we then explain them away as coincidences.

So what are these coincidences telling us? What are the events that occur as a result of them? They may not always seem favourable. However, they are usually signs that enable us to get where we want to be even if not in the same way as we had expected. For example, we have been let down when purchasing the house of our dreams. We believed that we had found the perfect house. The next day it falls through. We are devastated and go for a coffee to drown our sorrows and discuss what's next. At the Café we see a flyer for another property fresh onto the market. This is through an agency we had not been to. At this agency we find another house which is much better than the first and brings other advantages that we would not have otherwise thought of. The challenging bit is trusting those signs - in other words trusting the process of change.

Understanding the importance of coincidence helps us to look at how we can challenge our attitudes further and increase our belief beyond our current reality. Let us assume that whatever is about to happen next could in reality go in our favour or against our wishes. In the world of quantum physics every event has a moment when either could happen. Scientists continue researching the reasons why an individual's subconscious can in fact determine that outcome. We have heard the expression in Performance Management, 'If you think you can or think you can't you're absolutely right'. Can you remember an event – maybe winning in a raffle, when on reflection you subconsciously knew it was going to happen? What if we could transfer this

philosophy to allow us to achieve our goals during change? We can! The question is what do we do to enable it? This can be as complex or as simple as you wish depending on which book you read! To keep it simple I have provided six important steps:

1. Set your desire or goal by writing or drawing it, then signing and dating it
2. Look at and read it regularly
3. Have the intention of achieving it
4. Believe in the ability that it could happen (even if you don't yet know how)
5. Take whatever action is necessary – however, don't over-control events (trust the process that unfolds. If it doesn't seem right, use techniques for managing stress and continue steps 1-5).
6. Spend quiet time to relax and imagine yourself either with your goal achieved or after it is achieved. Keep in mind how you will be feeling, thinking, what you are seeing, and doing - now that you have your desire. Keep in mind the impact on others and imagine the best for them also. Do these exercises daily to reduce stress, increase belief and enable the desire to manifest.

What we find often happens is that the desired outcome unfolds and occurs in a way that we never could have imagined or planned. If you think back, you may even recall times when you have experienced such sequence of events without being conscious of them.

So what does all this mean? Basically, that by acknowledging change is occurring, taking control of the elements we can, letting go of the aspects we can't and focusing on our desired outcome, we can in

effect help to jump ourselves from No 3 on the change curve to No 6 – thereby reducing anger and frustration and avoiding depression. On reflection, could we have made our lives easier if we had taken this approach in the past? What possibilities could we open up if we do so in the future? What do we have to lose?

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This article has been approved by the Association for Coaching. Alison is a (founder) member of

the Association for Coaching and active on the Organisational Development team.

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