Personal Reactions to Change
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Personal Reactions to Change Series

Activity

A. When I have to deal with change that I have no control over:
   I usually respond by …

   What I find most difficult is…

   The things which help me to cope are…

B. When dealing with change which I have initiated or had some control over:
   The things I find positive are…

   The things I find difficult are…

   The way I impact on others is …

   I know that because…
Personal Reactions to Change Series
Who Moved My Cheese As A Discussion Paper

About the Book
The book is about two mice and two little people (beings that were as small as mice but looked like people) who are looking for cheese. The cheese is a metaphor for what we want to have in life (a job, power status, relationships). The maze is a metaphor for where you spend your time looking for what you want (within the organisation, outside it, in the community, at home etc).

The Story
- Friends meet up the morning after a school reunion and want to know more about what's happening in people's lives. For many of them life turned out differently than they expected when they were at school. Most are struggling to cope with change
- One member of the group nearly lost his business due to the inability to respond to unanticipated change- but he heard a funny story that changed his attitude- that story was “Who Moved My Cheese”

The Characters
The Mice
- Sniff- sniffs out change early
- Scurry- scurries into action

The Little People
- HEM- Denies and resists change through fear
- HAW- learns to adapt when he can see something better

Every day these characters run through a maze sniffing for their own special cheese. The mice possessing simple brains look for the hard nibbling cheese as mice often do
- The little people with their complex brains, filled with values beliefs and emotions look for cheese with a Capital C- which they believe will make them happy and successful
- The maze is a labyrinth of corridors filled with dark corners and blind alleys-some of these contain delicious cheese
- Those who navigate the maze well have a better life
- Sniff and scurry use trail and error to navigate the maze- if one corridor is empty run down another
- Sniff (who has a big nose) smells out the general direction of the cheese, scurry races ahead to find It. They often go off in the wrong direction/ get lost but after a while they remember which corridors are empty and find their way
- Hem and Haw (the little people) also learn from past experience but develop more sophisticated ways of looking for cheese. Sometimes they do well but at times their beliefs and emotions take over and cloud the issue.
However they all find what they are looking for- their own kind of cheese at the end of one corridor- Cheese Station C. They all get up every morning and race to the station to eat cheese. Sniff and scurry hang their running shoes around their necks so they can get at them quickly if they need to. After a while the little people change their routine- they know where the cheese is and assume it will always be there. They just walk there. Hang up their jogging shoes and put on their slippers-"there's enough cheese here to last us forever". They decorate the walls of the cheese station as if it is their own. They move their homes and social lives nearer to the cheese. They become so confident the cheese will always be there they don't notice what is happening. Sniff and scurry however noticed the supply of cheese was getting smaller every day and weren't surprised when one day there was no cheese left. They new instinctively what to do. They dint over analyse things- they put on their running shoes and went off sniffing and scurrying in search of new cheese. Hem and Haw were not prepared- they hollered "who moved my cheese-it's not fair?!" Finding cheese inst easy- we all want it for different reasons- to live, be happy, to meet our tastes, to give us a sense of well being, feeling safe.
So they spent a long time deciding what to do- all they could think of was looking around Cheese station C for more cheese and continued to Hem and Haw- the more important the cheese is to you the more you want to hang onto it. The next day they came back to the cheese station in the hope the cheese will re-appear-it doesn't. Hem asks where are sniff and scurry. Haw replies "how would they know they are just mice- we are smarter and should be able to figure this out for ourselves" Haw points out they are not smarter at the moment and might need to change- stop analysing and go and look for new cheese. Hem says "no Im going to get to the bottom of this". Sniff and scurry however are purely focussed on finding new cheese- and find a new area Cheese Station N- and a huge supply of new cheese. Hem and Haw meanwhile go over and over what went wrong and blame each other for the situation they are in. Haw begins to wonder if sniff and scurry have found new cheese and tries to persuade Hem to look for something new. Hem says "I like it here, it's comfortable- its dangerous out there- Im getting too old and Im frightened of getting lost". They try to deny what's happening, become hungry and irritable. They start to believe the cheese must be nearby and make a hole in the wall eventually they realise the difference between activity and productivity- the cheese is not there. Finally Haw says look at us- we keep doing the same things over and over again and wonder why things don't get better. Haw decides to put on his running shoes and go and look for cheese. Hem says "why don't you just wait with me-they'll put the cheese back?" Haw says don't you
get it- its never going to be the way it was?” He’s scared but visualises himself eating a pile of tasty cheese- a thousand varieties. He says to Hem- “sometimes life moves on and things will never be the same- this is one of those times- its maze time!” he drew a picture on the wall of some cheese to persuade Hem to come with him- but Hem wouldn’t see it “if you do not change you become extinct”

• Hem was still wondering who moved my cheese- Haw was wondering” why didn’t I get up sooner and I could have moved with the cheese?”. He stuck his head out of the maze- frightened he felt the pull of the familiar . Then he wrote a note on the wall-“what would you do if you weren’t afraid?” Fear can be a good thing. Weak and demoralised he found it hard to run but told himself “better late than never”

• Haw got lost a few times, wondered if he’d ever find the answer, but found little bits of cheese to keep himself going- things had changed since the last time he was out there

• Whenever he felt down he reminded himself it was better than being in Station C with no cheese- and that, at the end the cheese that was left was mouldy and didn’t taste so good

• He wouldn’t have been taken by surprise if he’d watched what was going on- he wrote on the wall- stop and smell the cheese so you know if its getting old

• He finally came across a huge cheese station but it was empty- he was devastated- thought about heading back to Station C- Hem would be there and he wouldn’t be alone. Then he remembered- the times he felt at his best in the maze was when he was moving forward He wrote on the wall-“movement in a new direction helps you find cheese”

• He embraced his fears and ran down the dark corridor- he though “why do I feel so good? I don’t have any cheese and I don’t know where Im going?”- he felt free. The more he focussed on eating new cheese the better he felt

• He began to focus on what he could gain instead of what he might loose and found some new cheese to keep him going, but when entered the new station he found all the cheese was gone. He wrote on the wall “ the quicker you let go of old cheese the sooner you find the new” He decided to go back to see if Hem was ready to join him- Hem said said thanks but I want my own cheese back, and Im not going anywhere till I get what I want”

• Haw felt better – at least he had the guts to move on- what you think you are afraid of is never as bad as what you imagine

• He used to spend his time thinking about not having enough cheese, it not lasting as long as he wanted-he used to think more about what could go wrong than right. He wrote on the wall “it is safer to search in the maze than remain cheese-less

• He noted when you change what you believe you change what you do

• You can believe change will harm you and see it as a threat, or see it as an opportunity

• He realised he would have found the new cheese by now if he’d anticipated the situation, and not been so afraid
• He went back out into the maze using his notes on the wall as a guide. He hoped Hem would see them too.
• He found Cheese Station N - the biggest chunkiest pile of cheese he’d ever seen - and there were sniff and scurry - their fat little bellies showed they’d been there for some time.
• He realised he’d learned something from his chums who keep life simple - when the cheese moved they moved with the cheese, they adapted and were well prepared for bigger changes that were sure to follow.
• He realised the biggest inhibitor to change is what lies within you - and, there is always new cheese - whether you recognise it at the time or not!
• Before he tucked in he put his running shoes around his neck in case he needed them.
• He wondered about Hem - was he still hemmed in? he thought about going back for him but realised he’d tried everything - he needs to see the advantage of changing himself. And then he heard the familiar patter of his friends tiny feet!

Haw wrote on the wall: Change happens - they keep moving the cheese-smell the cheese so often you know when its getting old - the quicker you let go of old cheese the sooner you find the new - savour the taste of the new and enjoy it. Be ready to change again - they keep moving the cheese.

Key Questions
• What parallels can you draw with organisational life/ local government?
• Your Group or Service?
• What does this tell us about attitudes to change?
• Which behaviours were helpful/ unhelpful?
  a) Our own? Which character are you? What will you do differently?
  b) Other peoples?
  c) What do we need to take account of when managing change
  d) How will this change the way you manage change in future?

Key Learning Points-General
• The only thing in life you can be sure of is change (link to quotes on slides) - and sometimes it will be radical not incremental.
• Success can breed complacency and even arrogance (link to slides organisations that fail to reinvent themselves die - blue ocean v red ocean strategy. Those who are unwilling to take calculated risks/move with the times loose the cheese.
• Burying your head in the sand - focussing on the way we have always done it is a recipe for disaster!
• Scan the environment and read the runes.
• Its good to evaluate and analyse- (sometimes disastrous mistakes are made because people don’t do enough of this) but don’t suffer from analysis paralysis- the early bird gets the worm!
• Aiming for 100% perfection is unrealistic- you can probably do 50% of the change now and get results
• How often do we analyse our own response to change as well as those we manage?
• Flexible and adaptable people aren’t fixed on the ways we do things around here- there are open to new ideas
• Being flexible agile and responsive is key to survival- keep your running shoes at the ready
• Our view of life and future possibilities can be unhelpfully constrained by our past experience. This can mean we chase our tails doing what we’ve done- being active rather than productive
• People will make mistakes at the beginning/go off in the wrong direction but will usually learn from that
• Change is scary
• Negativity breeds negativity and fear spreads
• Our role as managers is to paint pictures of the new cheese- why it’s more tasty will be better for everyone
• Don’t assume all change is good- people need to be convinced intellectually and emotionally
• Ensure good communications, scotch rumour
• Don’t deny complexity- demystify it for people- present it in a meaningful way
• Train develop support and encourage, involve people in change
• Get them to explore their own attitudes to it- give them coping strategies
• Each of our employees will have different motivations/reasons for resisting and will need to be treated differently
• Explain why the old ways of working need to go- why new ways are better
• Use the five whys technique to help understand drivers- why its important for them and their role
• Persuade people your intended approach will deliver the outcomes, is sound
• Check for understanding
• Recognise what stage people are at (shock acceptance denial etc and help people move through it (see slides and CPCR notes)
• Moving desks roles territory affects peoples deeper structures- the emotional effect should not be underestimated. Often people may complain about other things- when this is at the root of it
• Play to strengths- know which roles are being played
• Buddy sniffs and scurries with Hems and Haws
• Play to strengths- give people a role in change- sniffs can sniff out the markets and competition, scurries like to get things done and like taking the vision forward. Hems are the anchors that slow us down- too set in their ways or uncomfortable to change- however if we sell how change will benefit them eventually they will sign up
• Tap into their motivations- variety, job satisfaction/security, work
• With people, status and recognition, the need to fulfil what they are capable of
• Spend every available minute painting positive pictures- visualising change, explaining why the old ways weren’t effective
• Celebrate the ending and help people let go
• Celebrate quick wins
Personal Reactions to Change Series

Managing Self the Team and Thinking

Self Management
Your own ability to cope with setbacks is really important- if you lose your grip someone will have seen it, overheard it, told someone else about it and your ability to influence others will be compromised.

Some quite good team leaders are debilitated by a pessimistic or negative outlook which manifests itself in gestures, impetuous outbursts or overall mood. Where this negativity becomes fixated individuals can become known as toxic. When people in the team behave in this way behaviour needs to be picked up and managed

Build Self Concept
Your self concept is your self esteem. What we feel about ourselves is based on how others treat us- if you behave unfairly to me I might adapt myself and let you kick me. People with a positive self concept are comfortable in their own skin irrespective of what anyone else thinks

Activity
Make three lists
- 6 qualities you have
- 6 achievements
- 6 skills

Keep reminding yourself of those

Use Constructive Imagery
Use Constructive Imagery with yourself and with your team. Take a long hard look at where you are where you want to be and how you will get there. Let people vent- get their feelings out. Ask them to picture what they would see hear and feel if it was working. Say goodbye to those behaviours and move on

Constructive Thinking
Positive Thinking without the evidence is no more than wishful thinking. Construction thinking is more evidence based and requires “thinking skills” Psychologists identified 12 thinking errors that hinder the ability to cope with change

The 12 Thinking Errors:
- Focus on the negative
- Discount the positive
- All or nothing stance
- Labelling
- Mind reading
- Fortune telling
• Magnification
• Emotional reasoning
• Personalisation
• Blaming
• Generalisation
• Absolutism

Thinking Skills
• Help your team develop thinking skills.
• Identify and write down common thinking errors
• Learn to challenge the internal critical voice and promote the positives
• Nurture relative thinking- displace absolutism
• Re-label and reduce emotive language
• Help people see the bigger picture

Constructive Imagery
• Identify the change that is threatening
• Visualise the team in 6 months coping
• Visualise the team in 12 months feeling positive
• Visualise the team in 18 months, enjoying some success

Now what’s the first step?